



# The Maronite Voice

*A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA*



*Volume VIII*

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*July - August 2012*

## ***Where In The World Would You Find the Freedom That We Have In This United States of America?***

*Dear Friends:*

As you know, both myself and Bishop Gregory were in Lebanon for approximately three weeks in June to attend the Annual Maronite Bishops' Synod and various meetings. It was a great experience for both, receiving and sharing ideas with other Maronite Bishops from around the world.

On my return, as the plane flew over American soil, I began to reflect on the various countries which we passed over. My heart went out to the people of Syria, Iraq and Jordan in the Middle East where there is persecution and heartache. I realized more and more, in that part of the world where Jesus began His teachings, the people endure much danger and are even losing the faith that has been instilled in them from Apostolic times. This is due to the environment in which they live.



Except for Lebanon, there is no freedom, no liberty, no justice for all, as we enjoy in this great country. I begin to ask, do our people appreciate what we have in this great land? Yes, we are not perfect, but we must remind our immigrants and natural citizens alike, that despite our defects, where in the world would you find the freedom that we have in this United States of America? Let us thank God for his goodness to all of us for we are able to live in the land of the "FREE and the HOME of the BRAVE."

During this time of the year as we celebrate the Fourth of July, let us thank God for all those who continue to work and sacrifice to make this the greatest country in the world. We must continue to pray for those who serve our country and for peace.

God Bless the United State of America, the World, and each of you. Happy Fourth of July!!!

+ The Most Reverend Robert J. Shaheen  
Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon

## Schedule of Bishop Robert Shaheen

**July 2 - 9, 2012**

Annual Clergy Conference and Maronite Convention, Saint Antonio, Tex.

**July 27- 29, 201**

Deacon Ordination. El Paso, Texas.

**August 12- 16, 2012**

Our Lady of Lebanon National Shrine, Annual Pilgrimage, North Jackson, Ohio. □

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## **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](http://www.Namnews.org)

## **Eparchial Appointments**

### **Eparchy of Saint Maron**

**H**is Excellency Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, has made the following Eparchial Assignments, effective July 23, 2012

- ◆ Extended the appointment of **Rev. Edward Nedder** as Pastor of St. George Church, Providence, Rhode Island, for three years
- ◆ Extended the appointment of **Rev. Jack Morrison** as Pastor of Our Lady of Purgatory Church, New Bedford, Mass., for three years
- ◆ Extended the appointment of **Rev. Larry Jensen** as Pastor of St. Joseph Church, Waterville, Me., for three years
- ◆ Renewed the appointment of **Rev. Paul Mouawad** as Pastor of St. Sharbel Church, Newtown Square, Penn., for six years
- ◆ Renewed the appointment of **Rev. Samuel Najjar** as Pastor of Saint Michael the Archangel Church, Fayetteville, N.C., for six years.

### **Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon**

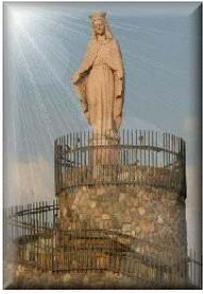
**H**is Excellency Robert Shaheen, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, has appointed **Fr. Andre Mouhanna** as Pastor of St. Rafka Maronite Church in Denver, Colorado, effective July 14, 2012. □

## **Eparchial Condolences**



**Imelda (Joan) Beshara**, the mother of Monsignor Ronald Beshara, passed away on Saturday, June 2, 2012. She is predeceased by her husband, Nasry Beshara, and her son, Monsignor Ronald. She is survived by her daughter, Donna Harrison, and two grandsons, Ronald and Ben Lee Harrison. Condolences can be sent to Mrs. Donna Harrison, 4786 Arthur Street, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418.

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 the family of Joan Beshara. May God grant her eternal rest and consolation and peace to Donna, her sons and the family and many friends. □



## North Jackson, Ohio 47<sup>th</sup> Assumption Pilgrimage

August 13, 14, and 15, 2012, mark the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in North Jackson, Ohio. “The years have passed quickly and many visitors and pilgrims have come to

Mary’s home for many reasons. All have left with God’s blessings and graces,” says Msgr. Anthony Spinosa, Rector.

### *Pilgrimage Schedule*

#### Monday, August 13

12 noon Maronite Divine Liturgy  
7 p.m. Fr. Matthew J. Albright, Chaplain of John F. Kennedy Jr. and Sr. High School in Warren, Ohio, will celebrate a Roman Rite Mass. Candlelight procession will follow.

#### Tuesday, August 14

12 noon Maronite Divine Liturgy  
2 p.m. Rosary  
3 p.m. Virtual Pilgrimage of Lourdes (ninety minute spiritual program focusing on the Apparitions of Lourdes)  
7 p.m. Bishop Nicholas Samra, Melkite Bishop for the Eparchy of Newton, Mass., will celebrate a Melkite Liturgy followed by a Paracletic to the Blessed Virgin Mary, which includes Procession and Falling Asleep of the Virgin, led by Monsignor George Appleyard of St. Peter and Paul, Carnegie, Penn.

#### Wednesday, August 15 *Feast of the Assumption*

10 a.m. Maronite Divine Liturgy  
12 noon Maronite Divine Liturgy with Anointing of the Sick celebrated by Bishop Robert Shaheen and Bishop Gregory Mansour  
2 p.m. Maronite Divine Liturgy  
4 p.m. Maronite Vespers chanted by the Antonine Sisters  
7 p.m. Maronite Pontifical Liturgy celebrated by Bishop Robert Shaheen and Bishop Gregory Mansour. Candlelight procession will follow.

The National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon will open all three days at 9 a.m. The Cedars Dining Hall will be open from 11 a.m. until 11 p.m. with many varieties of ethnic foods and desserts.

The National Shrine is located at 2759 North Lipkey Road in North Jackson, Ohio. For further information on the Shrine call (330)-538-3351 or visit the website [www.ourladyoflebanonshrine.org](http://www.ourladyoflebanonshrine.org). □

## Dartmouth, Massachusetts A Joyful Retreat



On June 1 - 2, 2012, the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light hosted a women’s retreat at their Mother of the Light Convent in Dartmouth, Mass. Seven young women from St. Theresa Maronite Church in Brockton, Mass., and Our Lady of the Cedars Church in Boston, Mass., attended. The theme of the retreat “Rest In His Light” was planned to give the women a chance to come away from the hectic rush of daily life and rest their bodies and souls by nurturing their relationships with Jesus, and in joyful fellowship and communal prayer.

The program included presentations on the life of prayer, Sacred Scripture, personal reflection, guided adoration before the Holy Mysteries, *Ramsho* and *Safro*, recreation and even *dabke* on the beach! They shared great laughs, times of quiet, and deep prayer as they drew closer to one another in Christ’s radiant light. This short time apart was grace-filled, as expressed in the words of some of the participants:

“*The Resting In His Light* retreat was so beautiful. There are honestly no words to describe the Holy Spirit’s presence, but you know when he is there. The first time we had adoration in the chapel I had a hard time hearing God, because I was doing most of the talking, and even when I tried to listen it felt as if there was a wall between us. It’s kind of like talking and I wanted him to hear me, but there was a wall; maybe I was asking him things that he did not want to answer at that moment.

Well, anyway, on the second day I went to confession. After confession I felt like the eyes of my heart were again open, and the wall was broken. It felt wonderful to receive with a pure heart. The second adoration went by so quickly, and I wished it could have lasted longer. When I quieted my mind and my thoughts, I could feel the Holy Spirit’s presence. The Spirit does not really speak in words, but I know he is telling me something, I am not really sure what, but it was beautiful. It was so nice to dedicate twenty-four hours to talking to and learning more about God. I learned that there is always room for our relationship with God to grow, even though sometimes it feels like we have reached our limit. God is infinite.” □

# *Patriarch Bechara Rai's Second Pastoral Visit to the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon*

## **Saint Louis, Missouri**



Patriarch Rai celebrates the Divine Liturgy at St. Raymond Cathedral in St. Louis, Mo., assisted by Archbishop Paul Sayah (right) and Bishop Robert Shaheen (left).

by Shelly Vitale

The Most Reverend Robert J. Shaheen DD., Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, Monsignor Moussa Joseph, Rector of St. Raymond Maronite Cathedral, and the family of St. Raymond were blessed and honored to receive His Beatitude Bechara Peter Rai, Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, and his Vicar General, Archbishop Paul Sayah. The Patriarch was in St. Louis, Mo., May 16 - 22, 2012. He arrived at St. Raymond Cathedral on Wednesday, May 16, and was greeted by a large crowd of welcoming parishioners. On Thursday, May 17, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Ascension. The clergy of the Eparchy concelebrated. On May 18 and 19 he celebrated the 2012 Baccalaureate Mass and spoke at the 2012 Commencement Ceremony at the Chaifetz Arena at St. Louis University where he received an Honorary Doctorate of Humanities degree. During his speech, he thanked the St. Louis University community and Father Lawrence Biondi S.J., President, for inviting him to be a part of the festivities and honoring him with an honorary degree.

On Sunday, May 20, His Beatitude celebrated the Divine Liturgy at St. Raymond Cathedral. Again, the clergy of the Eparchy concelebrated. The St. Raymond Ladies' Society, followed by the Order of Saint Sharbel and the Knights of the Order of St. Gregory the Great formed the Honor Guard. All eyes focused on the Patriarch as he conveyed his heartfelt message. He spoke of keeping our traditions alive and our connection to the Liturgy and to Lebanon. He thanked those who made his stay so welcoming including: Bishop Robert

Shaheen, Monsignor Moussa Joseph, Edward M. Rice Auxiliary, Bishop of Saint Louis, Father Lawrence Biondi and Father Paul Stark S.J., Vice President for Mission and Ministry at Saint Louis University, the Honorable Mayor Slay, and all those who volunteered their time. Following the Liturgy a complimentary brunch was served at the Cedars Hall. His Beatitude was honored by distinguished guests and parishioners. Bishop Robert Shaheen and Monsignor Moussa Joseph presented His Beatitude with a beautiful picture of the Blessed Mother and the Patriarch was very touched by their thoughtfulness. After the brunch, His Beatitude graciously met with a long line of excited well-wishers. All were more than happy to wait for an opportunity to speak with him.

On Monday, May 21, the Patriarch was asked to be the keynote speaker at a conference at Saint Louis University titled "Immigrants and Refugees." This conference focused on the "social, political, legal and ethical problems and solutions found by immigrants."

On behalf of Bishop Robert Shaheen, Monsignor Joseph and the entire Saint Raymond community, we congratulate His Beatitude on receiving an Honorary Degree from Saint Louis University. We are very grateful to the Patriarch for the time he spent with us and we will keep him in our prayers and in our hearts.

## **Detroit, Michigan**



(From left) Chorbishop Michael Kail, Msgr. Louis Baz, Chorbishop Fawzi Elia, Patriarch Rai, Archbishop Paul Sayah and Bishop Massoud Massoud.

by Christine Rahi Kassab

His Beatitude Patriarch Bechara Peter Rai celebrated a special Pontifical Liturgy on Monday, May 14, at St. Maron Cathedral in Detroit, Mich. The Divine Liturgy was offered in remembrance of the living and deceased members of the Rai family and all the parishioners of St. Maron Cathedral.

His Beatitude is the cousin of Dr. Daher Rahi, who has been an active member of St. Maron Church for more than fifty years. Rahi is one of the founders of the Order of Saint

Sharbel, and he wore the Order's special Medal of Honor for the occasion.

The Liturgy was led by the Pastor of St. Maron, the Reverend Msgr. Louis Baz, who welcomed His Beatitude and thanked him for the special visit. A crowd of more than 400 people packed the church to capacity.

His Eminence Cardinal Edmund Szoka, Minister of Finance, the Vatican; Archbishop Paul Sayah, Vicar General of the Patriarch; Bishop Robert Shaheen of the Eparchy of Lady of Lebanon; Chorbishop Fawzi Elia, Vicar General of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon; Reverend George Shalhoub, Pastor of St. Mary Greek Orthodox Church in Livonia, Mich.; Father Paul Taraby, Pastor of Our Lady of Lebanon in Flint, Mich.; Father John Paul Bassil, who is in charge of the mission of the monks for the Mariamite Order in Ann Arbor, Mich.; Abbott Boutros Taraby, of the Mariamite Order in Lebanon; Right Reverend Joseph Antypas, Pastor of St. George Greek Orthodox Church in Troy, Mich.; Chorbishop Michael Kail, Pastor of St. Maron Church in Youngstown, Ohio; and Chorbishop Alfred Badawi, Pastor of St. Sharbel in Warren, Mich., and St. Rafka Mission; and Bishop Massoud Massoud concelebrated.

Special guests in attendance included the Honorable Bachir Towk, Consul of Lebanon, and his wife, Nicole, and His Excellency Ambassador Yousef Ghafari.

During his sermon, His Beatitude spoke eloquently in Arabic - with translation in English - about his message of Communion and Love. Members of the Lebanese media - including *Telemiere/ Norsat* and LBC - covered the event along with members of the Detroit press corps. A story about His Beatitude's visit to St. Maron was published the following day in *The Detroit News*. Following the Liturgy, His Beatitude blessed a beautiful handmade mosaic of St. Rafka, which was donated in his honor to St. Maron Church by Dr. Daher and Mrs. Jeanette Rahi and their family.

Following the Pontifical celebration, Dr. and Mrs. Rahi hosted a special reception in honor of His Beatitude at St. Maron's Hall. Rev. Msgr. Baz welcomed His Beatitude and all the clergy present and expressed the love and respect felt by all the parishioners of St. Maron. Rev. Father George Shalhoub gave the Benediction.

Dr. Raymond Rahi, the son of Dr. and Mrs. Rahi, gave a very emotional speech depicting the events that led to the election of the Patriarch in Lebanon as related to him by his father. He then introduced his father, Dr. Rahi, to the podium.

Dr. Rahi thanked the Patriarch for his special visit to Detroit, and he expressed his deepest hope that the Patriarch's mission would be crowned with success and love by all the people he visits throughout the world.

His Eminence Cardinal Szoka also addressed the crowd. Cardinal Szoka, who has met His Beatitude many times in Rome, welcomed him warmly to Detroit, speaking eloquently in both English and Italian. Dr. Rahi then introduced His Beatitude to the cheering crowd. Patriarch Rai delivered a beautiful speech and thanked Msgr. Baz and the Rahi family for the beautiful welcome and reception.

Word were received from high officials and Dr. Rahi's friends from Lebanon that the entire Liturgy at St. Maron's Cathedral and the following reception were televised in their entirety throughout Lebanon.

## Flint, Michigan



Assisted by Archbishop Paul Sayah, Patriarch Rai blesses a stone commemorating his visit to Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Flint, Mich.

by Paul Massoud

When I told my non-Catholic or Roman Catholic friends about the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East's coming to Flint and celebrating Liturgy with us, I usually would get blank stares and slow nods. To them, there is only one person of this magnitude in the world. But as Maronites, we understand the true importance of his visit.

Having a title of Patriarch of the East gives the idea that there is a Patriarch of the West. Pope Benedict XVI is the Patriarch of the West, though recently he struck that title from the list of names the Pope is called.

For us in Flint, Michigan, it was a tremendous honor to have someone of that status come to our city. He is the first Patriarch to visit Our Lady of Lebanon in Flint, and we have waited thirty-six years for this opportunity to greet our Patriarch in our home parish. It showed the unity and love that Patriarch Rai has spread since his elevation to Patriarch. Unity was shown by making us feel like we are all part of the same Maronite flock, whether it is as a member of a church in Lebanon or here in the United States. His love was shown by treating us as his own parish by leading us in service and breaking bread with us afterwards.

We started our celebration with a procession from the rectory with priests, bishops and clergy who came to commemorate his visit. He blessed a stone dedicated in his honor, as the people gathered around. We continued the procession into the church where we celebrated the Divine Liturgy.

Patriarch Rai spoke in his homily about registering to be citizens in our home countries. He stressed that Christians are not well represented in the Middle East and we should work to change that. He also talked about the need for all Maronites to remain loyal to the teachings of their ancestors.

Following the Liturgy the Patriarch took pictures with parishioners and blessed them all. He even came down from the altar to members of the parish that couldn't make it to the altar for pictures or his blessings. He processed through the courtyard into the hall for a cake cutting ceremony and dinner.

The Patriarch was honored by many local dignitaries including State Senator John Gleason, Flint Township Supervisor Karyn Miller, Flint Mayor Dayne Walling, and Flint Township Emergency Financial Manager Mike Brown. Other members of the local Mideast community including President of the Arab Heritage Council Mona Sahouri, and Director of the local Lebanese American Chamber of Commerce, John Akouri. They welcomed His Beatitude and presented him with the keys to their cities.

Hanan Chammas, a parishioner, wrote the Patriarch a poem. After the dinner the Patriarch gave a speech about the many varieties in our community and reminded us all to be faithful to Jesus and to show our faith by following in His way. He then allowed more of those attending the dinner to take pictures and finally gave his blessing to all present before leaving.

From the warm welcome to the reluctant good bye, the Patriarch made every one of us feel like we had a place in his heart and were the sheep of his flock. It was an honor for our little corner of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon to be graced by our esteemed and pious leader of our faith, Bechara Peter Rai, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East. □

## Aliquippa, Pennsylvania *Elevation to Mission Status*



Recipients of the "Small Things With Great Love" Award. From Left to Right: Julia Michael, Josephine Ayoob, Father Simon El-Hajj, Najla Thomas and Kay Tisak.

by Jeannette Ayoob Urban

The Maronite Community of Aliquippa, Penn., had a lot to celebrate the evening of their 10<sup>th</sup> annual grand *haffli* on April 21, 2012. Unbeknownst to the crowd, it was announced at the start that Bishop Gregory Mansour will elevate the twelve-year old Community to Mission status as of June 1, 2012. Led by Father Simon El-Hajj, Administrator, the Community will take on the name Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Maronite Mission. The crowd was overjoyed and the news was met with applause.

Also during that evening, Josephine Ayoob, Kay Tisak, Julia Michael and Najla Thomas were recognized with the "Small Things With Great Love" award, modeled after Mother Teresa, for all the work they have done for this

Maronite Community.

In addition, the Silver Massabki Award was presented to Steve and Alice Michael, in celebration of sixty-five years of marriage and for their example of living out the Maronite way. Surrounded by their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, Steve and Alice were presented with the certificate and Blessed Massabki recipient pins by Fr. Simon. The celebration lasted late in the evening with dancing to music provided by David Hakim and Band. □

## Easton, Pennsylvania *Golden Jubilee of Priesthood*

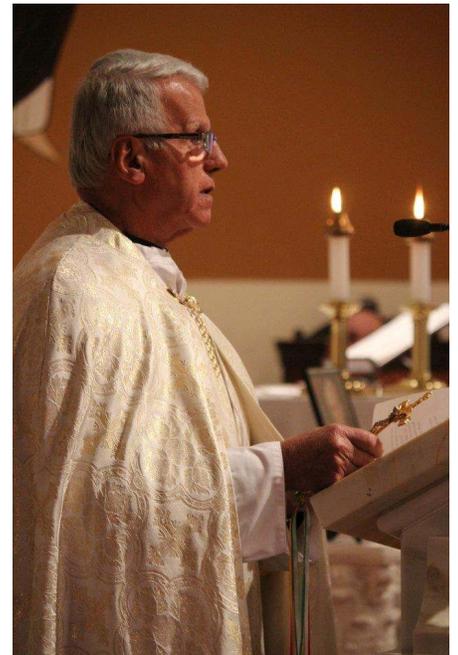
by Anthony Koury

On Saturday, March 24, 2012, Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church in Easton, Penn., hosted a Golden Jubilee celebration for Father Francis Doumit. Father Francis is a native priest-son of the village of *Kfarsghab*, Lebanon, the ancestral village of the majority of parishioners of Our Lady of Lebanon Church. Fr. Francis was recently named a Monsignor by His Beatitude Patriarch Bechara Peter Rai, during his pastoral visit to Canada.

The celebration began with a Liturgy of Thanksgiving. Father Francis was the main celebrant and homilist. Fr. Damien Paul Damien, Pastor of Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Easton, and Fr. Paul Mouawad, Pastor of St. Sharbel Church in Newtown Square, Penns., concelebrated. Deacon Anthony Koury assisted.

Following the liturgy, 350 guests attended a banquet in the Church hall in Father Francis' honor. The invocation was given by Father Paul Mouawad, followed by the singing of the American National Anthem led by Antoinette Elias and the singing of the Lebanese National Anthem. Mr. George Daniel then offered a toast before dinner.

After dinner, the program began with remarks offered by the Honorable Salvatore Panto, Jr., Mayor of the City of Easton, Pennsylvania, who issued a proclamation declaring "Father Francis Doumit Day" in the city of Easton, Pennsylvania. Members of the St. Theresa Sodality offered remarks or made a presentation. The Holy Name Society, and the Parish Council offered remarks. Presentation were made from U.S. Senator Pat Toomey by his Regional Manager, Marta B. Gabriel, and from the MYO/MYA. Father Francis' nephew Sharbel Koorie, spoke on behalf of the family, and



Simon Koorie introduced Deacon Anthony Koury as the toastmaster.

Chorbishop Dominic Ashkar, Pastor of Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Washington, D.C., paid a brief surprise visit to his seminary friend to congratulate him. Father Francis expressed his gratitude to Father Paul Damien, Deacon Anthony Koury, and the parish family of Our Lady of Lebanon in Easton, and all who helped in any way, especially those who worked in the kitchen to prepare and serve the banquet.

Father Francis' priestly ministry began on March 17, 1962, when he was ordained a priest of Jesus Christ by the Most Reverend Antoine Abed in St. Maron Cathedral in Tripoli, Lebanon. From there, Father Francis' priestly ministry would take him to Australia, Canada and the United States of America. Father Francis spent over thirty-five years in Canada, first in Quebec and then in Montreal, where he is currently serving. Father Francis has divided his priestly ministry between Canada and Easton. In addition to visiting with nieces and their families, he would often help the pastor by celebrating the liturgy and allowing the pastor to take some vacation time as well.

Following the conclusion of the banquet, Father Francis was able to greet his guests and present them with a copy of the icon of Our Lady of Deliverance. On the day of his priestly ordination on March 17, 1962, Father Francis presented the exact same icon as a remembrance. It was truly a very beautiful occasion to celebrate this milestone in Father Francis' priestly life.

We pray that God will send more laborers into His vineyard, as priests, and men and women devoted to the consecrated life, in order to continue the work of all the devoted priests and religious who now serve the Lord and His people. We congratulate the new Monsignor-elect and wish him many more years of health, happiness, and continued fruitful ministry among the people of God. The formal ceremony of investiture will take place in Canada in the near future by the Most Rev. Youssef El-Khoury, Bishop of the Eparchy of St. Maron of Canada. □

## Minneapolis, Minnesota 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary



John and Barbara Simon of Saint Maron Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding

Anniversary with their family and friends. A Divine Liturgy for their intentions was celebrated by Msgr. sharbel Maroun, who presented them with a Papal Blessing on this occasion. □

## Boston, Massachusetts MYA First Retreat

by Selena Francis

On March 16th, Our Lady of Lebanon Our Lady Cathedral hosted their annual MYA/MYO retreat in Brooklyn, New York. Maronite churches from other parts of Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania also sent their youth and young adults. It was the first time that Our Lady of the Cedars of Lebanon in Boston, Mass., sent its MYA to join this spiritual event. As a newly established MYA organization, it was a great opportunity to get out and meet our counterparts. As members we have been doing community events such as fundraisers for designated philanthropies and volunteer work around the church. Meeting other group members was a great way to discuss ways they have been also getting involved. Not only was this the first time the MYA attended this event, it was also my first time.

When we arrived in Brooklyn, we were welcomed with open arms by the parishioners of Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral. Before the youth and young adults participated in the Stations of the Cross, we had the opportunity to bond over a meal cooked by the women of the church.

The theme for this year's retreat was "Your Relationship with God." The MYA and MYO were separated during the discussions to allow us to focus on topics related to our age groups. Bishop Gregory Mansour spent the majority of his time guiding our discussions. He was able to answer many questions the young adults asked regarding modern-day topics such as stem cell research. Putting aside twenty-four hours and completely dedicating myself to God was something I have never been able to do before. As a young adult, I have been juggling a full-time job, applying to graduate programs, and making time for family and friends. This retreat has been able to show me it is possible to put time aside for God.

One of the highlights of our trip was meeting Jim Caviezel, the man who played Jesus in the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*. He gave the MYA group a passionate talk about his experiences prior, during, and after filming *The Passion of the Christ*. It was an inspiration to meet someone with such fame yet even stronger faith. Jim and his wife's casual entrance into the church was not a mere coincidence, but a blessing. Confession and Liturgy were offered at the conclusion of our trip. Since I have not attended confession since my First Communion, confession reminded me of the virtue of humility and honesty.

I want to thank Fr. Georges El-Khalli, Pastor of Our Lady of the Cedars of Lebanon Church in Boston for making this trip to Brooklyn possible. Both the MYA and I are eternally grateful for Bishop Gregory's devotion to making this an unforgettable retreat. I also would like to thank Monsignor James Root [Rector of the Cathedral] and all the parishioners who cooked our meals during our stay.

I want others in our community to have the opportunity to share the same experience I had. The friendships that I made are everlasting because we share the same faith, culture, and values. The sense of connection our whole group felt helped solidify the reason why they joined the MYA and I can see us growing much stronger in the future. We will take the many values and advice that we learned and use them to make our group stronger. This retreat has encouraged me to grow in my faith. I am looking forward to involving more of our youth in future trips and hope to make this a yearly tradition. □

## Houston, Texas *Silver Massabki Award*



From left: Fr. Milad Yaghi, Pastor; Nabil Joubran, Rita Joubran, Fr. Malek Abou Tanos, Fr. Pierre El- Khoury.

Our Lady of the Cedars in Houston, Texas, is blessed to have members who unselfishly give of their time, talent, and treasure for the good of the parish. These members have given their time to help with parish functions, have used their talents to aid the parish in everything from singing in the choir to designing the parish buildings and have used their treasure to financially support the parish. Though it is nearly impossible to recognize each of them individually, the National Apostolate of Maronites (NAM) allows parishes to recognize individuals or married couples who have unselfishly served their parishes with the Silver Massabki Award. This year, Our Lady of the Cedars honored Nabil and Rita Joubran with this award on Easter Sunday, April 8, 2012. □



## Orlando, Florida *Chrismation Class*



Markenson Bosse (Joseph), Lisa Fernandez (Valerie of Milan), Titiana Fernandez (Teresa of Calcutta), Nadjine Jean Francois (Monica), William Sleiman (William Vercelli), Bogdan Stolarz (John of Damascus), Gregory Stolarz (John the Baptist), Lukasz Stolarz (John the Apostle) and Oliwia Stolarz (Elizabeth) received their Confirmation at St. Jude Maronite Catholic Church on Pentecost Sunday, May 27, 2012. The names in parentheses are the names chosen by the confirmed. □

## Pleasantville, New Jersey *Memorial Day Celebration*



From Left, Northfield Mayor Vincent Mazzeo, Absecon Mayor Peter Elco, Pleasantville Mayor Jesse Tweedle and Fr. Elie Saade.

by Majdi Nammour

Memorial Day is the annual U.S. holiday that honors those who lost their lives in military service. Memorial Day was first observed in 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of both Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery. About

566,000 U.S. service personnel have died in combat from the Civil War through the Vietnam War, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. More than half of them died in World War II. In honor of all the soldiers that died in these wars a memorial tower showing names of all veterans from Atlantic County was built in front of Our Lady Star Of The East Church in Pleasantville, N.J.

Our Lady Star of The East, Maronite Catholic Mission, hosted a Memorial Day ceremony Sunday, May 27, 2012. The memorial program began following a noon Divine Liturgy celebrated by Fr. Elie Saade and attended by locals and politicians. Fr. Saade in his homily stressed the importance of remembering our veterans while celebrating the holiday weekend with a strong message: " Today we remember everyone who died for our country and for us that we might live in freedom. Our religion taught us how to die so others might live, and not how to kill others that we might live. Our religion taught us how to sacrifice ourselves so others might have life abundantly and not to sacrifice others so we might enjoy life.

"Our Religion taught us to love our enemies and pray for our persecutors, and not to kill everyone who doesn't agree with us. Our Religion is a religion of peace; that is how we can understand the message of Jesus to his disciples: "Peace be with you."

"However, peace is not a passive attitude, it is not being spectators in this world. Peace is a commitment to change the world and make it a better place reflecting the image of God. God created us free; thus, our vocation is to live this freedom and protect it, and to liberate every brother and sister in humanity who are enslaved to their economical, political, social, or religious conditions. Freedom cannot be enjoyed in one part of the world and oppressed in other parts. Hence our duties to liberate all nations from the power of darkness, as our Lord commanded us: "Preach the Good News to all nations."

Following the Divine Liturgy, Fr. Saade led a procession from the church to the veterans memorial clock tower outside, where Honor Guests were present, Pleasantville Mayor Jesse Tweedle; Absecon Mayor Peter Elco; Northfield Mayor Vincent Mazzeo; and Egg Harbor Township Mayor James "Sonny" McCullough. Members of Absecon VFW Post 9462 and Pleasantville American Legion Post 81 honor guards; and the Knights of Columbus 4211 Council of Pleasantville. The mayors present at the ceremony addressed the community with a short message focusing on the meaning of this day. American Legion post 81 honor guard fired shots and the tower bells were chimed seven times in honor of their memory. A minute of silence was taken to honor those who have died in our Nation's defense and to keep the true meaning and spirit of Memorial Day alive. Flag Salute, and then Presentation of Cross-Grand Knight Lenny Cupano, and a Poem by Jerry Savell. Finally, OLSE choir performed 'let there be peace on earth.' This event was in the news in different TV channels (NBC40, ABC...) and many local newspapers. After the ceremony OLSE had a cook out for all guest and parishioners.

## Health Fair

On June 3, 2012, Our Lady Star of The East, Maronite Catholic Mission, held its first annual public health fair

hosted by Medamerica physicians and staff. The fair included free screening for diabetes, hypertension and kidney disease. Physicians from different specialties were present including: internal medicine; nephrology; endocrinology and diabetes; and chiropractic medicine.

The attendees interacted with the physicians and received counseling regarding weight management, neck and back problems, and anti-aging treatments. The event had a great success and local public attendance was high. □

## New Castle, Pennsylvania Chrismation and Graduation



On Sunday, April 22, 2012, five children of St. John the Baptist Maronite Church in New Castle, Penn., received the Mystery of Chrismation. For various reasons they did not receive the Mystery at the time of Baptism. Pictured with their Pastor, Fr. Claude Franklin, they are wearing their "crowns." Left to right, they are Lucas "Matthew" George, Christopher "John" Piccione, Emme "Gianna" George, and Gianna "Mary" Thomas and Michael "Maron" Teropoli.

On Sunday, June 17, 2012, the parish community of St. John the Baptist celebrated a Father's Day and Graduate Sunday Liturgy honoring all dads, grandfathers, godfathers, and uncles as well as its 2012 graduates, Lindsay Beshero and Michael Hudson. □

## Summer Break

The Maronite Voice wishes its readers an enjoyable, safe and God-filled summer. The Maronite Voice will not be published in August. It will appear again in September. The deadline for the September issue is August 25, 2012. □

## Glen Allen, Virginia 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Food Festival



by Chet Wade

“A Recipe for Community” was how the local newspaper described the 28th annual Lebanese Food Festival held by St. Anthony's Maronite Catholic Church in Glen Allen, Virginia.

In documenting the preparations for the festival, the Richmond Times-Dispatch said that while “there's no conductor, no shiny musical instruments,” the work going on in the kitchen in the days leading up to the event was “every bit a symphony.”

And that's what it takes to feed an estimated 25,000 people who showed up for this year's event, held May 18-20 at the parish grounds about fourteen miles west of Richmond. Lots of organization and plenty of dedication, blended with boundless love for sharing the traditions of Lebanese food, music and dancing.

“We are truly blessed, both to have so many parishioners who are willing to do so much to make the festival a success, and to have such wonderful traditions to share with our friends and neighbors across Central Virginia,” said Monsignor George Sebaali, pastor of St. Anthony's and “director” of the “symphony.”

“This festival is more about our church being able to bring together all generations, to share in the faith and love we have for God and for one another than it is about eating great food. The food is just an extra blessing.”

Attendance was strong despite several other popular events scheduled in the region during the same weekend. As is tradition, preparations began in earnest in January, where lessons learned from previous events were applied to plans for the next edition of what has become one of the region's largest and most popular food festivals. Cooking started in February, with schedules and production goals for two teams - the crews that cooked on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Regular email updates went out from Parish Council President Cathy George during the cooking season to let everyone know how the friendly competition was going.

“It is a truly remarkable accomplishment for a relatively small group of people to make enough food to feed 25,000 guests, but they do it every year,” Monsignor Sebaali said.

“Our parishioners take pride in our homemade food.”

The numbers are truly remarkable. Seventy-five cases of squash were cored and filled with ground beef, rice and spices. About 500 pounds of fava beans and chickpeas went into the falafel. Shawarma sandwiches required 1,300 pounds of marinated beef and 1,500 pounds of marinated chicken.

But those numbers are dwarfed by the 25,000 pies and 20,000 stuffed grape leaves that were prepared and served. The meat, spinach, cheese, and spinach and cheese pies have become legendary in the Richmond area.

Along with the cooking, many other preparations are required to make the festival a success. Dancers - preschoolers through young adults - practiced in the months leading up to the festival. Arrangements for seating, tents, permits, traffic control and security, publicity, electrical services, freezers and coolers, and other logistics had to be completed.

Once the festival began, it was all hands on deck. Three shifts with at least ninety volunteers per shift were needed to make sure all ran smoothly.

Some attendees were already waiting when the festival opened each morning at 10 a.m. By noon each day, crowds spread out across St. Anthony's 15-acre complex. Most enjoyed making their selections ala carte, then sitting at the pavilion or in other outdoor seating. Others brought blankets and spread them under the trees. Still others opted for sit-down dinners served in the social hall. The last guests strolled out at closing time, 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 8 p.m. on Sunday.

About a hundred parishioners - including some pre-schoolers participating in their first festival - performed traditional Lebanese folk dances throughout each day of the festival. Live Lebanese music was performed all three days by the Mazloom Family band, made up of one family from St. Anthony's parish. Hundreds of other parishioners staffed the kitchen, food and drink booths and dining room, and handled other arrangements.

“We are glad when it is over,” Monsignor Sebaali said. “We thank God for what he has given us, we relax a little, catch up on the things we couldn't do when we were getting ready for the festival. Then it is time to think about the next festival.” □

## Brooklyn, New York Annual Food Festival

by Salma T.Vahdat

The last big bash before the summer solstice was celebrated by our Cathedral community and thousands of visitors on Saturday and Sunday, June 2 - 3, 2012. With rain threatening to put a “damper” on the festivities, parishioners scurried to set up food courts and attractions. Banners of sponsors were hung, the entertainment stage was wired, the kitchens were crackling with activity and it was almost time. Then to everyone's relief, the clouds parted and the sun shone as bright as the smiles on the happy faces of the volunteers. We were good to go!

And the people came! And ate. And played. And danced. And sang. From noon until 10 p.m., the street alongside the Cathedral was full of merrymakers. The aroma of Lebanese



food filled the air, and the delicate desserts tempted all to forget a diet for a brief respite. The children enjoyed the rides and competitions, cotton candy and popcorn. Vendors satisfied the needs of shoppers.

Eddie Osama and his musicians once again entertained the crowds with Middle Eastern music and songs. Of course, once the music started the *dabke* lines sprouted up and snaked through the street. The DJs kept the party going also. Then it was time for the "piece de resistance" of the evening! Our celebrated folkloric dance troupe, comprised of members of the Maronite Young Adults organization, appeared in full costume and began their rhythmic and dynamic routine of Lebanese dance. The audience was transfixed and in awe of the dancers who were just magnificent! When they were finished the crowd was on its feet, cheering!

It was a festival to be remembered. We are already looking forward to a repeat next year. Many thanks to co-chairpersons, John Safi, Michel El Khoury, Rosie Sarkis Baron and their committees and the volunteers of the Cathedral community who make such a success possible. □

*the Deadline is...* **Deadline for next month's issue of** *The Maronite Voice* is August 25, 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.

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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](http://www.stmaron.org). □

## Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

### July 2 - 8, 2012

Clergy Conference and NAM Convention, San Antonio, Tex.

### July 9 - 10, 2012

Telelumiére Board Meeting, Detroit, Mich.

### July 11, 2012

Ordination of two Auxiliary Bishops, Brooklyn, N.Y.

### July 15, 2012

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

### July 22, 2012

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

### July 27 - 29, 2012

Fr. Kevin Beaton's Silver Anniversary, Roanoke, Va.

### August 2, 2012

Ramadan *Iftar*, Brooklyn, N.Y.

### August 4, 2012

Our Lady of Lebanon Church Annual Festival, Easton, Penn.

### August 5, 2012

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

### August 10, 2012

Installation of Bishop Malone, Buffalo, N.Y.

### August 11, 2012

Homily and Talk to Youth at the Syro-Malabar Catholic Convention, Kerkonkson, N.Y.

### August 12, 2012

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

### August 13 - 15, 2012

Our Lady of Lebanon National Shrine, Annual Pilgrimage, North Jackson, Ohio

### August 19, 2012

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

### August 26, 2012

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

### August 27 - September 4, 2012

Eight Day Personal Silent Retreat

### September 4, 2012

Annual Divine Liturgy, Gloucester, Mass.

## Uniontown, Pennsylvania A Touch of Lebanon



by Dr. Mabel George Howard

A celebration of Lebanese culture, cuisine, music, dancing, entertainment and fellowship describes the first annual Spring *Hafli* at St. George Maronite Catholic Church in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Entitled "A Touch of Lebanon," and held on April 21, 2012, at the Duck Hollow Golf Club in Uniontown, the *hafli* was sponsored by the St. George Maronite Men's Group [MMG]. To begin the festivities, Father Nadim Helou led the group in an opening prayer. Masters of Ceremony Philip Howard, MMG President, and Tom George, MMG Secretary/Treasurer, continued the program. They welcomed everyone, spoke of our ancestral Lebanese roots, and extended a sincere thanks to all who worked diligently to make this event successful. They also recognized all church groups who are committed to supporting and working in cooperation with Father Nadim for the pastoral care of the Parish and the spiritual and economic growth of our American Lebanese Community. Before dinner, a special prayer was recited for our pastoral leader with a toast of goodwill.

A panoramic view of the filled banquet hall revealed parishioners of St. George and other guests who enjoy Middle Eastern customs and culture. The Ladies Guild of St. George prepared an overwhelming abundance of delicious hors d'oeuvres and Lebanese bread followed by a delectable full course meal. The dance floor was crowded all night, especially for the traditional *dabke*. By the end of the evening, nearly everyone was asking the MMG committee members to begin planning next year's *Hafli*. The Maronite Men's Group expressed their expectations that everyone would enjoy the celebration, strengthen spiritual and ethnic bonds, share happy memories, and solidify friendships. The MMG will certainly continue working together for the perpetual advancement of the parish. □



## Together In Christ - Encounter 2012

The Eastern Catholic Bishops of the U.S.A. are sponsoring three Encounters of their respective Churches this year which will take place in three locations: Cleveland, Ohio (September 20-23), Los Angeles, Calif. (November 1- 4, 2012) and for the Eastern United States at St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Church in Hillsborough, N.J. (October 11-14, 2012). These gatherings and the one in Hillsborough in particular, are geared for the laity and clergy with the theme: "Together In Christ, The Spirituality OF Discipleship: A Call To Holiness."

An Encounter is a time for all Eastern Catholics to meet and to grow in the Lord, and to study themes that would assist them in fostering more spiritual and educational growth in their parishes. By having an Encounter in our region, it will be easier and more convenient for more participation of the laity and clergy. Also, follow- up meetings and programs within a certain region will provide more growth for our Churches since parishes of Eastern Traditions have so much in common.

A special day for clergy who have pastoral commitments in parishes will precede the weekend. The weekend Encounter (Friday evening through Sunday brunch) is mainly geared for the laity who are asked to arrive on Friday for a welcome and hospitality. The main focus will be on Saturday and Sunday. Four plenary sessions will be held.

The first session, entitled "Who is the Church?" will be led by Rt. Rev. Damon Geiger of the Eparchy of Newton. The second session, "Activity of the Royal Priesthood," will be led by Dr. Maureen Dadonna of the Eparchy of Passaic. The third session, "Blueprint for Church Growth," will be led by Sr. Marla Marie Lucas, MSCL, of the Eparchy of Saint Maron. The main session entitled, "The 'How' and 'What' of Lay Leadership: Action - Put on Christ!" will be presented by the Most Reverend Peter Libasci, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester, New Hampshire.

On Sunday, *Matins* and the Divine Liturgy will be celebrated followed by the keynote address entitled, "Servant Leadership: Be All That You Can Be!" presented by the Most Reverend Nicholas Samra, Eparch of the Melkite Eparchy of Newton.

Registration is \$75.00 per person for the Encounter. A discount for early registration of five or more from one parish is available at \$50.00 per person. Hospitality and meals are included in the registration fee. Vendors of Eastern Catholic books and icons are being invited to complement the Encounter.

Previously, Encounters were held in 1999 in Boston, Mass., and in 2006 in Chicago, Ill. They were held mainly for bishops and invited clergy and laity. This year's Encounter is open to all who want to learn, pray and grow in Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ.

The Eastern Catholic Bishops have formed a national body, and a region in the US Catholic Conference of Bishops. They represent the following traditions: Armenian; Byzantine-Melkite; Romanian; Ruthenian; Ukrainian; and Syriac-Chaldean; Maronite; Syro-Malabar; and Syro-Malankara. For more information and registration, visit the website: [Encounter2012EasternCatholicChurches.org](http://Encounter2012EasternCatholicChurches.org). □

## Lincoln, Rhode Island *Silver Jubilee of Priesthood*



From left: Deacon Enzo DiGiacomo, Fr. Edward Pieroni, Fr. Ed Nedder, Bishop Gregory Mansour, Chorbishop Joseph Lahoud, Fr. Paul Mouawad and Deacon Norman Hannoush.

by Joseph P. Checrallah, Jr.

On Sunday June 24, 2012, His Excellency Bishop Gregory J. Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, joined over 500 friends, family and parishioners of St. George Maronite Catholic Church of Lincoln, Rhode Island, and celebrated a Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving, commemorating the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ordination of Reverend Edward T. Nedder, Pastor. Chorbishop Joseph Lahoud, Fr. Edward Pieroni and Fr. Paul Mouawad concelebrated. Deacons Enzo DiGiacomo and Norman Hannoush assisted.

The Liturgy was followed by a celebration at the Venus DeMilo in Swansea, Mass. The Honorable Anthony J. Solomon served as Master of Ceremonies. Chorbishop Joseph K. Kaddo gave the Invocation. Georgeann Thomas sung the American National Anthem and Giselle Zaarour sung the Lebanese Anthem. Remarks were made by His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour, Fr. Edward Pieroni, Pastor of St. Raymond Church in Providence, and Fr. Ed's nephew George Nedder, who told many wonderful stories of his beloved uncle, and how much of an incredible influence he has always been throughout his life.

Fr. Ed's journey to the Priesthood began in 1963 when he attended Queen of Apostles Seminary in Dedham, Mass. He graduated from Catholic University with a Bachelor's Degree in 1967, and a Master's Degree in 1968. He had attained fifteen credits toward a Doctorate when he chose to take a leave of absence to care for his ailing father. While caring for his father, Fr. Ed taught at Matignon High School in Cambridge, Mass., and became Chairman of the Latin Department, while holding a second job at Sears & Roebuck for fourteen years. He was recently honored with the Cardinal Cushing Medal for his service and dedication to Matignon. He also served as an Auxiliary Police Officer in Dedham for three years.

Fr. Ed was ordained a Deacon on May 14, 1983 and served at St. Anne Church in Readville, Mass., and Our Lady of Cedars of Lebanon Church, Jamaica Plain, Mass. In 1986, Fr. Ed returned to Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary

and was ordained to the Priesthood by the late Archbishop Francis M. Zayek at Our Lady of the Cedars of Lebanon Church on June 20, 1987. He celebrated his first liturgy on Father's Day, June 21, 1987 which he dedicated to the memory of his father.

Fr. Ed was honored in 1989 as a Fourth Degree Knight, and granted the title Knight of the Holy Sepulcher in 1998, and has served on the Presbyteral Council of Priests for five years, a group chosen by the Bishop to assist in the governance of the Eparchy.

From 1987 to 1992, Fr. Ed was given his first assignment as Pastor of Our Lady of Purgatory Church in New Bedford, Mass., and then as Pastor of St. Anthony Church, Springfield, Mass., from 1992 to 2006, where he oversaw a major renovation, and coordinated its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. In July of 2006, Bishop Gregory assigned Fr. Ed as Pastor of St. George Maronite Catholic Church in Lincoln, RI, where he oversaw its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, and has been assigned the task of establishing a new permanent home for the parishioners.

As a token of appreciation, Fred Simon presented to Fr. Ed, a beautiful ivory hand woven, gold inlaid vestment from Lebanon. The event concluded with a benediction given by Reverend Paul F. Mouawad, past Pastor of St. George. The evening was a memorable event, a fine tribute honoring a much-admired, beloved and respected individual, truly a selfless man of God, who continues to share the Gift of his priesthood with his beloved family of parishioners at St. George. □

## Glen Allen, Virginia *Vacation Bible Camp*

by Cathy George

The children at Saint Anthony's Maronite Catholic Church in Glen Allen, Virginia, explored the wilderness at Bible Camp this year on June 25 - 29, 2012, with the Sunrise National Park program. Forty-five children participated this year along with adults and teens who guided them through the week. The children aged tree through twelve listened to the stories of Jesus calming the storm, multiplying the loaves and fishes, being tempted in the desert, and Jesus as the Good Shepherd. They also heard the story of Paul and Silas in prison. They discussed times in their lives when they need to rely on Jesus, as well as times when they are tempted. They even reviewed the seven Mysteries and the signs of Baptism, Chrismation, Reconciliation, and Eucharist. They enjoyed arts and crafts that dealt with the theme of each day, outdoor games, and music centers as well.

The children enthusiastically prepared four Maronite hymns for their ending prayer service, as well as the readings and petitions. Following the prayer service, the children performed their camp songs and had snacks with their parents. In spite of a violent summer storm early in the week with no power and extreme heat, everything turned out well and everyone enjoyed the camp. □



## Brooklyn, New York Ordination to Subdeacon



From left: Subdeacon Vogl, Bishop Mansour and Subdeacon Youssef.

by Salma T. Vahdat

On Saturday, May 26, 2012, a symbolic and ancient ritual of the Maronite Church was celebrated at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn, N.Y. Elevated to the Order of Subdeacon were Norbert Vogl of the Cathedral and Brother Mariam Youssef, a seminarian in the Order of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal.

The Cathedral was brimming with the Vogl family, coming from near and far, members of the Franciscan family and parishioners of the Cathedral. The clergy was well represented also. Bishop Gregory John Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron; Bishop Emeritus of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, Stephen H. Doueihy; Msgr. James A. Root, Rector of the Cathedral; Msgr. Maroun Asmar and Rev. Jack Morrison represented our own Rite. Three of the six founders of the Franciscan Friars, Rev. Andrew Apostoli, Rev. Benedict Groesche and Rev. Michael were also in attendance. Accompanying them were two deacons and Rev. Gene Fulton of the Latin rite and thirty order members. Several sisters of the Order also witnessed the ceremony, coming from monasteries in the New York region.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated by the attendant clergy with Bishop Mansour delivering the homily including a prayer which summarized the role of subdeacon. Addressing the two candidates, he stated their needs were now melded with the Church's needs. He outlined the nine ranks in the Eastern Church: cantor, lector and subdeacon; deacon, archdeacon, priest, monsignor, chorbishop and bishop. He said the two candidates would be ordained in three of those ranks as cantor, lector and subdeacon.

Before communion the ordination ritual took place. With each ordination, the candidates were processed around the Cathedral, led by their respective sponsors and with each ordination another piece of vestment was placed on the candidate until they were finally elevated to their rank. Their first act as subdeacon was to distribute communion to the congregation.

Norbert Vogl is originally from Vermont where most of his extended family reside. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Math and Computer Science from Clarkson University as well as a Masters degree in Computer Science from Penn State University. He is currently employed at the Thomas J. Watson Research center of IBM, where he is responsible for developing the monitoring infrastructure of IBM's Smart Cloud Enterprise offering. He is married to Leila Nassar and was introduced to the Maronite Rite, certainly by his wife and further instructed by Bishop Stephen H. Doueihy, Msgr. Ignatius Sadek, Rev. Francis Marini, Bishops Joseph Tawil and John Elya. He currently serves at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral. He is well loved by all.

Brother Youssef is new to the Cathedral family but no less welcome. He is a Lebanese and a Maronite by birth. His history is interesting to note. Being a man of many talents and success he was nevertheless perplexed with his mode of life and he sought direction through prayer and reflection. Responding to the call, he decided to forfeit his possessions and follow the way of the Franciscans on the path to glory. He will remain in the Maronite Rite as a Franciscan.

Following this most impressive ceremony all were invited into the Cathedral Social Hall for a luncheon served by members of the parish organizations. The community delighted in the occasion, and joy was radiating among all throughout the afternoon.

## Mother's Day Celebration

by Salma T. Vahdat

Brooklyn Heights, N.Y., was awash in sunlight on a warm spring morning greeting the parishioners who came to celebrate the Divine Liturgy on Mothers Day. It was a day of tribute to our mothers, living and deceased, and to the Patroness of the Cathedral, Our Lady of Lebanon.

The MYO of the Cathedral had assumed the responsibility for assisting at the Liturgy. The reading, the rite of peace and collection were assumed by them. Bishop Gregory was gracious in his homily, reminding us of the bottomless love of a mother for her children. Drawing the analogy of Holy Mother Church loving her children was further food for thought and reflection.

Following the Divine Liturgy, the MYO invited the community to enjoy a Mothers Day brunch in the Cathedral's Social Hall. Their enthusiasm for serving the Cathedral and its community is commendable and indicates a sense of what is to come as they mature and assume the stewardship of the eparchial seat. They are a credit to the community and credit is deserved for their mentoring by Theresa Abi-Habib, their moderator. □

## Food For Thought

To maintain a joyful family requires much from both the parents and the children. Each member of the family has to become, in a special way, the servant of others.

*Pope John Paul II*

## ***Where Do Men Discover Their Calling to the Priesthood***

The good news is that vocations are growing across the universal Catholic Church. There are areas like Africa where the growth is extraordinary and places like Europe where growth remains stagnant. Yet the fact remains there is growth. In the United States, being such a large country, the growth is uneven, with some areas showing rapid growth and other areas reflecting minimal increases. The reality is, however, for the first time since the 1960s every diocese in the Catholic Church had more seminarians than they did the prior year. This is an amazing fact and clearly is a product of our prayers for vocations and the power of the Holy Spirit. This growth is taking place even though the Church has faced scandal and contends with the influences of a materialistic and secular society.

One might ask why these men of all ages and backgrounds are choosing to live a life of celibacy dedicated to God. Why are they choosing to follow Jesus Christ despite negative events in the Catholic Church and opposition in society? It is clear from research that the choice is not made based upon societal influences or even family desires, but because of a personal relationship with Jesus. The fact is that a vocation to the priesthood is personal and men answer the call to follow Jesus and His Church regardless of the negative influence of society.

The next question might be where do men discover their calling to the priesthood and how is this calling nourished. The answer is found, in part, by reviewing some of the highlights of a 2010 survey of seminarians. The survey was done by Vision Vocations Guide and reported by Dennis Coday in the National Catholic Reporter. Some of the findings include:

- ◆ 84% indicated they found their vocation in prayer
- ◆ More than half said their encounters with a priest, religious brother or sister affected their decision greatly
- ◆ The majority spoke of the importance of spiritual direction and opportunities to live in community as a positive influence
- ◆ 40% found discernment weekends and recruiting events to be a positive influence in making their vocation choice
- ◆ Most also thought it was essential that the priests were living a "...life of faithfulness to the Church and its teachings."

Those surveyed also indicated that the majority used email and smartphones, although discernment blogs and web-based postings had less of an influence on them than did personal conversations and interactions.

So what does this mean for Maronites? It means we must be encouraged by the growth in the Catholic Church and learn from what is working. Thus it means that as Maronites we must continue to offer places of prayer and worship that are faithful to God and His Church. We must reach out individually and invite men to follow Christ. We must improve our seminary discernment weekends. We must do more vocation presentations in our local parishes. There needs to be greater and more regular use of social media to meet potential candidates where they are in their life. We must do all this and more as we pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to work in the hearts of those discerning to follow Christ as a priest. □

### **Prayer For Priestly Vocations**

Father, in every generation You provide ministers of Christ and the Church.

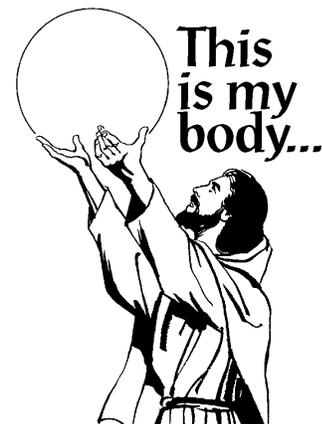
We come before You now, asking that You call forth more men to serve our eparchies in the ministerial priesthood.

Give us priests who will lead and guide Your holy people gathered by Word and Sacrament.

Bless us with priestly vocations so that we can continue to be a truly Eucharistic Church, strengthened in our discipleship of Jesus Christ, Your Only Son.

Raise up, we pray, men who are generous in their service, willing to offer their lives and all their gifts for Your greater glory and for the good of Your people.

We make our prayer in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, through Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.





## Episcopal Election

**H**is Beatitude Bechara Peter Rai, the Patriarch of Antioch of the Maronites, with the consent of the Synod of Bishops of the Maronite Church meeting pursuant to canon 85 paragraph 2 (2) of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, has transferred:

**Bishop Camille Zaidan**, Bishop of the Patriarchal Curia, to the office of Archbishop of *Antelias* of the Maronites (Catholics 156,028, priests 162, religious 353), Lebanon. He succeeds Archbishop Youssef Bechara, who resigned from the pastoral care of the same archdiocese in accordance with canon 210 para. 1-2 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches.

**Bishop Francois Eid O.M.M.**, Eparchial Vicar of Cairo, Egypt, and of Sudan of the Maronites, to the office of Patriarchal Procurator before the Holy See, having received prior Pontifical assent. Bishop Eid will receive the title of Eparchial Bishop Emeritus of his former eparchy, under the terms of canon 211 para. 1 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches.

The Synod of Bishops of the Maronite Church has elected the following Archbishops and Bishops, all of whom have received prior assent from the Holy Father:

**Fr. Moussa El-Hage O.A.M.**, Superior of the Convent of Sts. Sarkis and Bacchus in *Ehden* and *Zghorta* [Lebanon], as Archbishop of *Haifa* and the Holy Land of the Maronites (Catholics 7,000, priests 11, religious 9), Israel, and as Patriarchal Exarch of Jerusalem and Palestine (Catholics 504, permanent deacons 1) and Jordan (Catholics 1,500, priests 2). The bishop-elect was born in *Antoura*, Lebanon in 1954 and ordained a priest in 1980. He studied in Jerusalem and in Rome and has held various offices in his religious order as well as being active in pastoral work and education. He succeeds Archbishop Paul Nabil Sayah, who had earlier resigned from the pastoral care of those circumscriptions to take up the office of Bishop of the Patriarchal Curia.

**Fr. Paul Rouhana O.L.M.**, Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches, as Bishop of the Patriarchal Vicariate of *Sarba*, Lebanon. The bishop-elect was born in *Amchit*, Lebanon in 1954 and ordained a priest in 1982. He studied in Belgium and in France and been active in education at "Saint Esprit" University in *Kaslik*. He succeeds Bishop Guy-Paul Noujaim, who resigned from the pastoral care of the same archdiocese in accordance with canon 210 para. 1-2 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches.

**Fr. Maroun Ammar**, Rector of the major seminary of *Ghazir*, as Bishop of the Patriarchal Vicariate of *Joubbe*, Lebanon. The bishop-elect was born in *Haje*, Lebanon in 1956 and ordained a priest in 1983. He has served as pastor in various parishes and is a judge at the Court of Appeal of the Maronite Tribunal of Lebanon. He succeeds Bishop Francis Baissari, who resigned from the pastoral care of the same archdiocese in accordance with canon 210 para. 1-2 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches.

**Fr. Joseph Mouawad**, Vicar General of the Eparchy of *Jbeil* [Byblos], Lebanon, as Bishop of the Patriarchal Curia. The bishop-elect was born in *Mayfouq*, Lebanon in 1970 and ordained a priest in 1995. He studied in Rome and has been active in pastoral work, as well as teaching theology at "La Sagesse" University in Beirut and "Saint Esprit" University in *Kaslik*.

**Fr. Georges Chihane**, Patriarchal Administrator of *Haifa* and the Holy Land of the Maronites, Israel, and Patriarchal Exarch of Jerusalem, Palestine and Jordan, as Eparchial Vicar of Cairo, Egypt and Sudan of the Maronites (Catholics 5,500, priests 6, religious 3). The bishop-elect was born in *Haret Sakhr*, Lebanon, in 1953 and ordained a priest in 1979. He has served as pastor in various parishes in Lebanon, France and Jordan. □

## Prayer, Commitment and Fraternity For Syria

**O**n June 21, 2012, the Holy Father received participants in the annual general meeting of the Reunion of Organisations for Aid to the Oriental Churches (ROACO). In his remarks to the group Pope Benedict XVI mentioned the social and economic crisis which, "due to the global dimension it has taken on, does not spare the more economically developed parts of the world and, even more worryingly, also affects the most disadvantaged areas". Above all in the East, "homeland to ancient Christian traditions," this process "generates insecurity and instability also at the ecclesial level, and in the ecumenical and inter-religious fields. These factors nourish endemic wounds of history and make dialogue, peace, coexistence among peoples and authentic respect for human rights even more fragile, especially the right to religious freedom for individuals and communities."

In this year's meeting, representatives from the Holy Land were joined by prelates from the Syro-Malabar Church in India, the Greek-Catholic Church of Ukraine, the Apostolic Nuncio to Syria and the President of Caritas in Syria.

"This," the Holy Father said, "is an occasion to reaffirm my closeness to the great suffering of our brothers and sister in Syria, in particular the young innocents and those most defenseless. May our prayers, our commitment and our concrete fraternity in Christ ... help them not to lose the light of hope at this moment of darkness; and may God give wisdom of heart to those in positions of responsibility, that all violence and bloodshed may cease."

The Pope went on: "May the international community spare no effort to help Syria emerge from its current situation of violence and crisis, which has already gone on a long time and risks becoming a generalized conflict which would have highly negative consequences for the country and the entire region. I also make an urgent and heartfelt appeal that, in the face of the dire need of the population, the necessary humanitarian assistance be guaranteed, also to the many people who have had to abandon their homes, some of whom have taken shelter in neighboring countries. Human life is a precious gift which must always be protected."

(Continues on page 24)

# First Holy Communion in the Maronite Eparchies in the U.S.A.

## Brooklyn, New York



**E**lysa Abdel Massih, Kaitlyn AlHaddad, Marvin AlHaddad, Gael Diab, Kevin Diab, Vanessa Eid, Eli Abi Daher, Patrick Chamoun, Jenna Abi Habib, Andrea Khoury, Maya Mattar, Tiffany Chouki and Julia Courgi received their First Holy Communion on May 6, 2012, at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y. □

## Orlando, Florida



**L**auren Bishai, Joseph Bishai, Melissa and Thadeus Bosse, Jason Casas, Mighel Angel Choy, Luiz Israel Culcas, Christina Danielle Daccache, Edward Daniel, Alexander Scott Dehle, Yusuf Semaan Farris, Sebastian Shing wu Kee, Jeremy Lara, Christian Lizyness, Amanda Marzouk, Sarah Marzouk, Marc Christian Nasnas, Christopher Frederick Nassif and Teyah Younes received their First Holy Communion on May 5, 2012, at St. Jude Maronite Church, Orlando, Fla. □

## Lawrence, Massachusetts



**A**lex Martin, Anthony Rizkallah, Devyn Burke, Diana Carreno, Edward Karam, Elio Zaarour, George Safi, Isabell Karam, Joey Abi Moussa, Josephine Maroun, Lucas Haydar, Madison Becht, Marie Clement, Max Sheehan, Rachel Haydar and Rebecca Charabaty received their First Holy Communion on May 5, 2012, at St. Anthony Maronite Church, Lawrence, Mass. □

## Lawrence, Massachusetts



**A**lliana Fiato, Brian Zraket, Chaniel Abou Ezzi, Christopher Merheb, Elias Saab, George Hbaiter, Hady Youssef, Jason Maroun, Jennifer Bouraphael, Joseph Chahine, Joseph El-Boustany, Michael Hanna, Natalia Fiato, Rozana Geha, Ryan Bouchrouh, Sadie Cadell and Zachary Tavares received their First Holy Communion on May 6, 2012, at St. Anthony Maronite Church, Lawrence, Mass. □

# *First Holy Communion in the Maronite Eparchies in the U.S.A.*

## **Buffalo, New York**



**J**onathan Shady, Madeline Bittar, Trevor Khang, Andrea Jreige, Maya Mahfoud, Chanel Chbat, Kristin Sfeir, Sabrina Damian, Norah Kaban, Nathan Khoury, Iman Khoury and Mark Moawad received their First Holy Eucharist on Sunday, May 6, 2012, at St. John Maron Church in Williamsville [Buffalo], N.Y. □

## **Danbury, Connecticut**



**D**ylan Jowdy, Joy Jowdy, Jack Sullivan, Zara Harb, Mathew Merhi, Bella Lore, James Leather, Logan Kovacs, Kayla Rushforth, Clarissa Rosario and Alexander Rosario received their First Holy Communion on Sunday May 6, 2012, at St. Anthony Church in Danbury, Conn. □

## **New Castle, Pennsylvania**



**A**ndrew Demko, Genevive Hanna and Jonalyn Wharry received their First Holy Communion on April 29, 2012, at St. John the Baptist Church, New Castle, Penn. □

## **Scranton, Pennsylvania**



**L**ucy Abdalla, Robert Abdo, Anthony Bamford, Katherine Harding, Ava Hazzouri and Ava Tayoun received their First Holy Communion on May 6, 2012, at St. Ann Maronite Church, Scranton, Penn. □

# *First Holy Communion in the Maronite Eparchies in the U.S.A.*

## **Dallas, Texas**



**C**arlyn Hamad, Sarah Hawbaker, Annette Kheir, Mariam Medina, Odette Kheir, Miriam Salloum, Mary Marincel, Nanci Anderson, Daniel Youseff, Liam O'Flaherty, Nicholas Tabbah, Nicholas Anderson and Michael Harb received their First Holy Communion on May 13, 2012, at Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Dallas, Tex. □

## **West Covina, California**



**P**aul Abdo, Sarah Abdo, Brandon Aun, Patrick Azzam, Matthew Chidiac, Anthony Ghanem, George Habib, George Hitti, Amanda, Jabbour, Edward Jabbour, George Kamar, George Kassir, Hanna Mahfoud, Kayla Mahfoud, Richard Maroun, Angel Moreno, Nicole Mouawad, Edwardo Sanchez, and Marcos Sanchez received their First Holy Communion on May 5, 2012, at St. Jude Maronite Church, West Covina, Calif. □

## **Phoenix, Arizona**



**M**egan Braidy, Tia Braidy, Naya Karam, Layla Nassif, Madelene Nseir, Joseph Nseir, Fay Zeyadeh, Joseph Ters, Madelene Ters and Dalida Youssef received their First Holy Communion on May 6, 2012, at St. Joseph Maronite Church, Phoenix, Ariz. □

## **Tulsa, Oklahoma**



**F**adi Kandalaft, Jorge and Alfonso Enriquez received their First Holy Communion on May 20, 2012, at Saint Thérèse Maronite Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma. □

# *First Holy Communion in the Maronite Eparchies in the U.S.A.*

## **Saint Louis, Missouri**



**J**acob Meadows, Allie Mahfood, Abby Mahfood, Rana Issa, Peter Slinkard, Jasmine Sholy, Gabriella Adem, and Isabella Risk and John Sabat (not pictured) received their First Holy Communion on May 6, 2012, at St. Raymond Cathedral, Saint Louis, Mo. □

## **Warren, Michigan**



**J**oseph Aboujaoude, Elias Ayoub, Joe Deek, Cynthia El-Khoury, Renee Elian, Terasia Elias, Cecelia Fay, Layan Ghali, Yousif Ghali, Alex Housey, Alyssa, Jajou, Charbel Karam, Chris Karam, Aya Massarani, Charbel Moubarak, Marc Naddaf, George Nemer, Alexia Pickard, Dominic Rodegeb, Elena Souaid, and Anthony Tenn received their First Holy Communion on May 05, 2012, at St. Sharbel Maronite Church in Warren, Mich. □

## **San Diego, California**



**A**idan Abou Jaoude, Lena Adnan, Laith Adnan, Ananda Attiq, Ashley Chammas, Nour Frangieh, Amber Goría, Joseph Habchy, Anthony Hage, Marc Hage, Natalie Hage, Fadi Henry, Farah Henry, Majd Issa, Mirna Issa, Wesam Kanim, Michael Kabban, Ryan Koussa, Henry Madany, Paul Madany, Elie Raad, Sandra Sifo, Christopher Thomas, Anthony Yazakel and Elena Yazakel received their First Holy Communion on May 6, 2012, at St. Ephrem Church, San Diego, Calif. □

## **Flint, Michigan**



**I**sabelle Klanseck, Nella Atou, Katie Wofford, Adam Hawa, Mark Lindhurst, Mya Hanna, Samir Alkhouri and Jasmeen Damouni received their First Holy Communion on May 1, 2012, at Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Flint, Mich. □

# *First Holy Communion in the Maronite Eparchies in the U.S.A.*

## **San Francisco, California**



**M**atthew Issa, Jonathan Hardan, Kristen Rizkallah, Jude Hardan, Ryan Rizkallah, Tony Fram and Sophie Bousaba received their First Holy Communion on May 6, 2012, at Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Church, San Francisco, Calif. □

## **Houston, Texas**



**C**hris Saliby, Noor Wakim, John Mutammara, Leia Maksoud, Leora Maksoud, Kaylyn Sahyoun, Dia Rickert, Gabriel Habib, Dean Toumajian, Saleem Joubran, Chloe Gebrail, Yesmeen Feghali, Manuel Nader, Edgar Merhi, Diana Salha, Alissar Youssef, Margarita Saab, Yousif Philip, Peter El Hajj, John Ghousseub, April Nemri, Anthony Hermez, Wael El Fady, MD Daniel, Karl Basbous, Mina Philip, Abriana Nader and Joseph Salha (not pictured) received their First Holy Communion on May 20, 2012, at Our Lady of the Cedars Maronite Church, Houston, Tex. □

## **Los Angeles, California**



**A**nthony Alam, Antoine Edde, Fuad Geagea, Eli Geha, Perla Germani, Claire Ghantous, Franc Joubran, Thomas Joubran, Jasmine Karkafi, Leona Katibah, Mia Maalouf, Charbel Rahme, Alexa Saad, Jacob Saber, Krista Semaan, Anthony Sassine and Anna-Maria Sassine received their First Holy Communion on May 19, 2012, at Our Lady of Mt Lebanon Cathedral, Los Angeles, Calif. □

## **Cleveland, Ohio**



**A**ngela Chahda, Tina Chahda, Meeray Rabatt, Marcus Saadeh, Marianna Salloum, Sarah Saad, Cassandra Sweis, Natalie Rains, Eli Boulos and Elias Afram received their First Holy Communion on May 6, 2012, at St. Maron Church, Cleveland, Ohio. □

# *First Holy Communion in the Maronite Eparchies in the U.S.A.*

## **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**



**K**atie Akkari, Julia Capali, Jessica Haddad, Christina Kouyoumdji, Matthew Leighton, Miriam Mgrdichian, Thomas Mikhael, Elissa Mowad, Robert Mowad and John Marc Salloum received their First Holy Communion on May 20, 2012, at St. Maron Church, Philadelphia, Penn. □

## **Tampa, Florida**



**A**lan and Daniel Morcus, Alex Kawasm, Diana Khalife, Giuliano and Miriam Toukan, Maya Eid and Georges Sfeir received their First Holy Communion on May 5, 2012, at Sts. Peter and Paul Maronite Church, Tampa, Fla. □

## **Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania**



**D**ynastie Thomas, William Andrews, Krystal Haertter, Jordan Tucker and Ashley Decker received their First Holy Communion on May 6, 2012, at St. Anthony/St. George Maronite Church, Wilkes-Barre, Penn. □

## **Springfield, Massachusetts**



**B**randon Hannouche, Peter Preston, Frank Gentile, Karl Mzerbe and Peter Kuselias received their First Holy Communion on May 20, 2012, at St. Anthony Maronite Church, Springfield, Mass. □

## First Holy Communion in the Maronite Eparchies in the U.S.A.

### Glen Allen, Virginia



**B**rianna Cassidy, Susan Danial, Patrick Davis, Jessica Flammia, Jill Flammia, Stephanie Garcia-Hidalgo, Cooper Gray, Anthony Greco, Jacob Maust, Raphael Rustom, Charbel Saad, Clarke Sawyer, Harry Shaia, Samuel Shaia, Danielle Shibley, Katherine Paige Shibley, and Stephen Yago received their First Holy Communion on May 13, 2012, at St. Anthony Maronite Church, Glen Allen, Va. □

### Pleasantville, New Jersey



**J**asmin Haddad, Joseph Nammour and Raneen Rehani received their First Holy Communion on May 20, 2012, at Our Lady Star of the East Mission, Pleasantville, N.J. □

### Itinerary for Pope's September Lebanon Trip

### Fort Lauderdale, Florida



**B**randon Poulin, Zachary Poulin and Vanessa Lahoud received their First Holy Communion on May 6, 2012, at Sacred Heart of Jesus Maronite Mission, Fort Lauderdale, Fla. □

**T**he Vatican announced [on July 3, 2012] the itinerary for Pope Benedict XVI's September 14 -16, 2012, trip to Lebanon, where he will sign the Postsynodal Apostolic Exhortation following up from the 2010 Synod on the Middle East.

The Pope will leave Rome on the morning of Friday, September 14. After the welcome ceremony he will travel to *Harissa* where he will visit the Basilica of St. Paul and sign the Postsynodal Apostolic Exhortation. The next day, the Holy Father will pay a courtesy visit to the Lebanese President, Prime Minister and Speaker of the Parliament. He will then meet with the heads of Muslim communities before going on to pronounce an address before representatives from government, state institutions, the diplomatic corps, religious leaders and the world of culture.

On the same day the Pope will have lunch at the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate of *Bzommar* with Patriarchs and Bishops of Lebanon, members of the Special Council for the Middle East of the Synod of Bishops. At 6 p.m. he is scheduled to deliver an address to young people gathered on the square in front of the Maronite Patriarchate at *Bkerke*.

At 10 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 16, the Holy Father will celebrate Mass at Beirut City Center Waterfront and consign the Postsynodal Apostolic Exhortation. He will then travel by car to the Apostolic Nunciature at *Harissa* where he will have lunch. At 5.15 p.m. he is due to preside at an ecumenical gathering in the Syro-Catholic Patriarchate of *Charfet*. From there he will travel directly to the airport of Beirut whence his return flight to Rome is due to depart at 7 p.m. □ (*Zenit.org, July 3, 2012*)

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## Fort Lauderdale, Florida *Patronal Feast Day*



Sacred Heart stained-glass.

by Deacon John Jarvis

On Friday evening, June 15, 2012, a large crowd gathered at the Heart of Jesus Maronite Mission in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, to celebrate the first Patronal feast of the new church, the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It was a joyful evening as Chorbishop Michael G. Thomas celebrated the Divine Liturgy with Frs. Elie Mikhael and Jorge Perales. Assisting were Deacons John Jarvis, Ian Taylor, and Subdeacon Dennis Somerville. During the



Chorbishop Michael Thomas leads a Eucharistic procession on the occasion of the Sacred Heart feast day.

liturgy, Chorbishop Thomas blessed the newly renovated sacristy, the new statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the beautiful newly-installed stained glass window of the Sacred Heart. Liturgy was followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and a Eucharistic procession. The evening ended with everyone is gathering in the parish hall for a dinner of Lebanese food prepared and served by the parishioners. □

## *Prayer For Syria*

Continued from page 15

In closing Pope Benedict XVI called on the members of ROACO to be "eloquent signs of the charity that pours from Christ's heart" and to "present the Church to the world in her most authentic identity and mission." He concluded by expressing the hope that the Virgin would give them hope and watch over his own forthcoming trip to Lebanon. □