



# The Maronite Voice



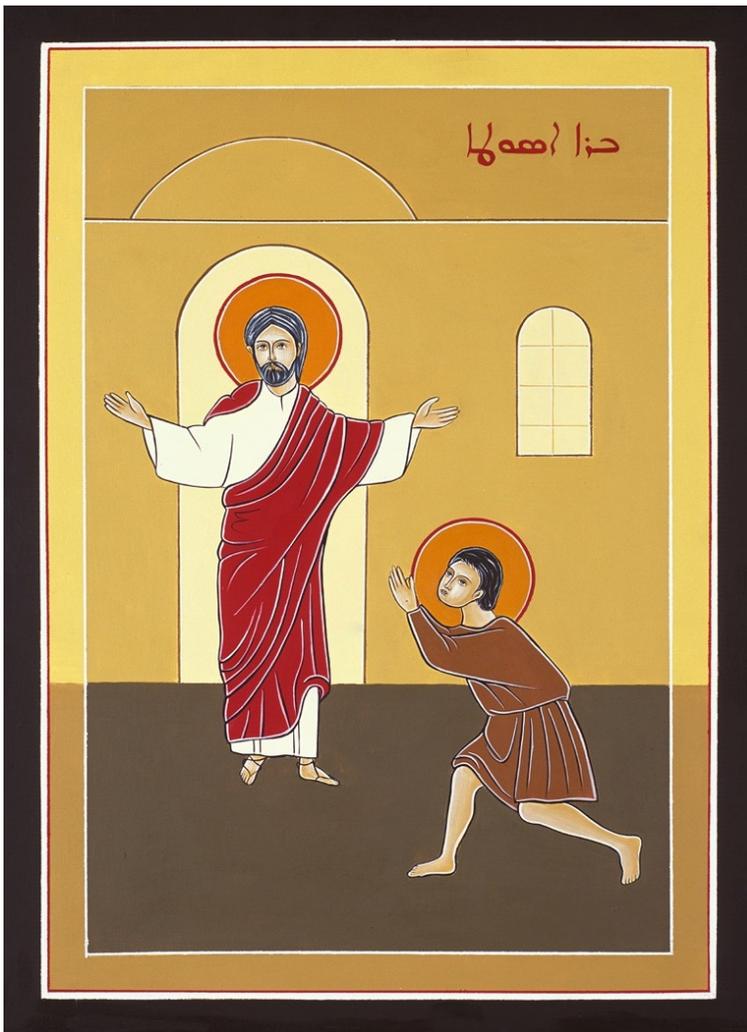
A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA

Volume XI

Issue No. III

March 2015

## Reconciliation



The Prodigal Son by Fr. Abdo Badawi, Holy Spirit University (USEK), Kaslik, Lebanon

During Lent, we often hear about repentance and forgiveness. In fact, the Sunday readings in our Maronite Liturgical Calendar during Lent highlight various stories of physical and spiritual healings. A sure way to achieve spiritual healing and full health is through reconciliation, which is a fitting way to prepare us for the great feast of Easter, the Resurrection of our Lord, the cornerstone of our faith.

In today's world, people often believe and act in a relative perspective: "I do everything right." Sin has lost its meaning. Consequently there is no need to repent and reconcile, but in the Gospel Jesus points and explains it differently: "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her" (John 8:7). This was Jesus' response to the people who wanted to stone the sinful woman. And the Gospel continues by saying that they went away, beginning with the elders. Thus, sin is a reality in our life.

Since the "fall of Man" in the Garden of Eden (the original sin of Adam and Eve) as recorded in the book of Genesis, human history has focused on mankind's efforts to reconcile his nature and his actions with himself, with others and ultimately with God. We find throughout the Old Testament the struggles of people "to make things right" in their own lives, with God and with neighbor. Repentance for them had a somewhat materialistic element: offer some agricultural crops and/or some animals for the expiation of sins.

In his life Jesus Christ preached the need to repent and showed the way to forgive others, to bring God's forgiveness to others with the admonition: "Your sins are forgiven. Go in peace and do not sin again." By dying on the cross, Christ reconciled us vertically with God, the Father, and horizontally to our brothers and sisters. He taught us a great lesson on forgiveness: "Forgive them for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

With the coming of Christ we now have access to true reconciliation. Through the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus we have been blessed with true reconciliation and forgiveness. We have been justified before God and offered salvation. There is no need to make sacrificial offerings anymore as Christ offered himself once and for all on our behalf. Now we are encouraged to show our contrition in thoughts, words and deeds. Our loving God is always happy to welcome the sinner back, to welcome us with open hearts and open arms as he extends his hands to us on the cross. Christianity is the religion of second chances; Christ always offers another opportunity to start anew. In fact, we are privileged to have the assurance of God's forgiveness as long as we repent sincerely. *(Continues on page 15)*

## Schedule of Bishop Elias Zaidan

### March 6 - 8, 2015

Pastoral Visit to St. Joseph Church, Phoenix, Ariz.

### March 9 -16, 2015

Extraordinary Synod of Maronite Bishops, Bkerke, Lebanon.

### March 17 - 18, 2015

Meeting of the Eastern Catholic Bishops in the U.S., St. Louis, Mo.

### March 20 - 29, 2015

Pastoral Visit to the three Maronite Parishes in the Detroit area: St. Maron, Detroit, St. Sharbel, Warren, and St. Rafka, Livonia, Mich.

### March 30, 2015

Blessing of the Holy Oils, St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

### March 30 - April 5, 2015

Holy Week and Easter Celebrations, St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

### April 7 - 9, 2015

Our Lady of the Cedars Maronite Church, Houston, Tex.

### April 12, 2015

Pastoral Visit to Saints Peter and Paul, Simi Valley, Calif. □

*The Maronite Voice*  
4611 Sadler Road  
Glen Allen, VA 23060  
Phone: 804/270-7234  
Fax: 804/273-9914

*E-Mail: gmsebaali@aol.com*  
<http://www.stmaron.org>  
<http://www.usamaronite.org>

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- Most Reverend Bishop Gregory John Mansour
- Most Reverend Elias Zaidan, M.L.M.

**Editor** Msgr. George M. Sebaali

**Editing and proofreading**  
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### **Maronite Convention 2015**

Saint Maron Maronite Church

**Cleveland, Ohio**

**July 1 - 5, 2015**

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

## Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Saint Maron Feast Day



On February 7, 2015, Our Lady of Victory Church in Pittsburgh, Penn., celebrated its Annual Feast of St. Maron with a Divine Liturgy followed by a dinner at the Le Mont Restaurant. During the dinner, Fr. Rodolph Wakim, Pastor, presented for the first time the OLOV Family Award to the family of Mr. & Mrs. Nick and Mary Romah. The whole family was recognized for their great example and many years of commitment and dedication to the church. Our Lady of Victory Church has been blessed with many wonderful families, who are keeping the faith alive and giving hope for a promising future. □

## Livonia, Michigan *MYO Regional Retreat*

by Fr. Tony Massad

The Regional MYO Retreat was held at St. Rafka Maronite Church in Livonia, Mich., the weekend of February 13 - 15, 2015. Youth from the parishes of Ohio (Cleveland, Youngstown, Akron, and Cincinnati), Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh and Aliquippa), and all the Maronite parishes of Michigan (Detroit, Warren, Livonia, and Flint) attended. The theme of the weekend was *The Gifts of the Spirit* and it was evident that the Holy Spirit was working amongst the 140 youth and over forty advisors in attendance. Fr. Gary George directed the weekend retreat that was spiritually uplifting in an atmosphere that was fun and inviting for the youth to deepen their faith while making new friends. All were honored to have Bishop A. Elias Zaidan present the sessions on Friday and preside at the Divine Liturgy on Saturday. Activities and meals were at the parish, and the St. Rafka Community was happy to host the Regional Youth Retreat for the first time. The youth went home reinvigorated for their faith, and Fr. Gary challenged the youth to take the fruits of the Spirit that they have received and to make them real and use them in their lives for the glory of God within their families, amongst their friends, and in the world around them. □



Bishop A. Elias Zaidan with Maronite youth at their regional retreat.

## Austin, Texas *Central Texas Retreat*



Fr. Gary George with youth attending the retreat.

by Rania Kattura

On the weekend of January 30 - February 1, 2015, Our Lady's Maronite Parish in Austin, Tex., hosted a weekend retreat in the hill country at the famous Well Spring Center for the youth and adults of its parish and for

those of St. George Parish in San Antonio. The 2,000 acre hill top ranch was the setting for over thirty-five youth led by Father Gary George, Youth Minister for the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, and over forty adults led by Father Daniel Forsythe of St. Basil Byzantine Parish in Dallas, Tex.

The theme of the youth retreat was *The Fruits of the Holy Spirit*, while the theme of the adult retreat was the role of three Old Testament women, Miriam, Rahab and Ruth, in preparing Israel for the Messiah as seen through the eyes of the Jewish Midrash. Next year's retreat is set for the weekend of January 31 - February 2, 2016. □

*the Deadline is...* **Deadline for next month's issue of *The Maronite Voice* is March 25, 2015.**

*The Maronite Voice* is the official newsletter of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon and of the Eparchy of Saint Maron.

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

*The Maronite Voice*

4611 Sadler Road

Glen Allen, Virginia 23060

Phone: (804) 270-7234; Fax: (804) 273-9914

Email: Gmsebaali@aol.com

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). □



# You are Invited ... to Support



**Each year during Lent**, the two Maronite Eparchies in the United States, the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, and the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles, invite all members of the faithful to support the Annual Appeal taking place in each Eparchy. The proceeds of the Annual Appeal are used by the Eparchies to support the following:

- **Education of Seminarians.** Both Eparchies have been blessed with an increasing number of seminarians in recent years, but this is also a financial burden, as the average cost of preparing a seminarian is about \$40,000 per year. Your support helps pay for the seminarians' tuition, lodging, food, books, health insurance and other costs.



- **Ministries to Serve the People.** The Eparchies have several offices dedicated to serving the faithful in good times and in times of need. These offices include Religious Education, Youth Ministry, Family and Sanctity of Life, Liturgical Music and others. These ministries reach out to people all across the country. Their goal is to help each person grow closer in their relationship to Jesus Christ.



- **Opening New Parishes.** There are several states which contain no Maronite parish, and in some other states people must drive several hours to get to the nearest Maronite parish. The Eparchies are opening new parishes – called missions – to bring the Church closer to people and help them not stay close to the Church of their forefathers. These new parishes often need financial assistance with their basic costs until they can support themselves and, one day, support other new parishes.
- **Care for Retired Priests.** There are several retired priests in each Eparchy, men who served our faithful parishioners for so many years. Many of these holy men depend heavily on financial assistance from the Eparchies to live their retirement in dignity.
- **Modern Communications to Serve the Faithful.** The Eparchies strive to use the latest technology to spread the Good News and minister to people. In addition to the *Maronite Voice* publication, the Eparchies feature blogs, apps for the iPhone and Android, redesigned websites and other communications vehicles. While many volunteers help in these areas, there are still expenses to be paid.



- **Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary and the National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon.** Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary in Washington, DC, and the National



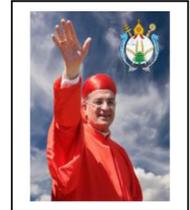


# the Annual Eparchial Appeal



Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in North Jackson Ohio, belong to every Maronite in America. The Seminary and Shrine need help to maintain their facilities, form future priests and continue to reach out to all people.

- **The Suffering Church and Faithful in Lebanon and the Middle East.** Both Eparchies help the Church overseas in so many ways: by introducing their Church leaders to American benefactors, publicizing their needs in the media, helping them apply for grants, and providing direct financial assistance. Part of the proceeds of the Annual Appeal are allocated for this effort every year.



**HOW DO YOU MAKE A GIFT?** You may make a gift by check or by credit card. You may also make a pledge and make your contribution in ten installments (March through December).

## TO MAKE YOUR DONATION IN YOUR PARISH:

Please bring your gift to your Maronite parish on any Sunday in Lent in a special envelope marked “Annual Appeal”.

## TO MAKE YOUR DONATION ONLINE, GO TO:

**Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn**  
[www.stmaron.org/donate.html](http://www.stmaron.org/donate.html)

**Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon**  
[www.eparchy.org](http://www.eparchy.org)

## TO MAKE A DONATION BY US MAIL, SEND YOUR DONATION TO:



Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn  
109 Remsen Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201



Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon  
1021 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
St. Louis, MO 63104

**Your generosity** empowers the Maronite Church to carry forth the Gospel message in today’s world. Gifts in any amount are appreciated, and all gifts will be used wisely. May God bless you for your sacrificial gift this Lent!

*For more information, please contact Stewardship Director John F. Kurey, Esq., MBA, at 718-237-9913 or 314-231-1021; or by e-mail at [saintmaron@yahoo.com](mailto:saintmaron@yahoo.com) or [maroniteswest@yahoo.com](mailto:maroniteswest@yahoo.com).*

## North Jackson, Ohio *Antonine Sisters' Open House*



Antonine Village open house.

On Sunday, January 18, 2015, more than five hundred people attended an Open House for the new Antonine Village in North Jackson, Ohio. A ministry of the Maronite Antonine Sisters of Youngstown, Antonine Village provides assisted living and memory care for the elderly, especially those with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia.

After being greeted by the Sisters, guests received tours of the new 58,000 square foot facility. Antonine Village features twenty-four assisted living units, twenty-one memory care units, and ten suites. The assisted living units will provide an alternative to nursing homes for older adults who need some support with the activities of daily living, but who still want to retain a high degree of independence. The memory care units will provide round-the-clock specialized care for individuals with dementia. Religious and pastoral care will be available to all residents.

Featuring large windows, natural woodwork, and stone fireplaces, the facility reflects its bucolic setting in the peaceful Ohio countryside. Common areas include living rooms, dining rooms, and activity rooms, as well as a computer room, chapel, and secure courtyard.

Guests also toured the onsite therapy facility and beauty shop as well as the Antonine Sisters Adult Day Care next door before enjoying refreshments.

The Sisters are grateful for the support they received from Maronite parishioners across the country in building the Antonine Village and plan to honor donations of \$1,000 or more on a memorial wall. Sr. Marie Madeleine Iskandar, Executive Director of the Antonine Village and the Antonine Sisters Adult Day Care, says, "There is a great need to provide care and compassion for the elderly. The Maronite faithful in America were instrumental in helping us to build the Day Care facility twenty years ago and we thank them for their continued generosity in supporting the Antonine Village."

Photos of the Antonine Village Open House can be seen at [facebook.com/antoninevillage](http://facebook.com/antoninevillage). □

## Boston, Massachusetts *Sunday School Activities*



by Mary Nader

On Sunday, February 8, 2015, the Sunday School Children of Our Lady of the Cedars of Lebanon Church in Jamaica Plain [Boston], Massachusetts, met with Miriam Ortiz Clooney, a representative of the Italian Home for Children. The Sunday School Students learned about the services the Home provides and the needs of the children who are placed there. As the students watched the presentation, they asked many questions and showed compassion for the children who are less fortunate than they are. After the presentation, the students put together forty goody bags filled with snacks and school supplies and tied with snuggly teddy bears that they donated to the Italian Home for Children, that were then given to the residents of the Italian Home in time for Saint Valentine's Day. As the students prepared for Lent, they took this opportunity to learn the importance of reaching out into the community and helping others. □

### *Appeal From Caritas Lebanon*

Christians in Lebanon are suffering! If you are able to relieve some of the suffering, please visit <http://www.caritas.org.lb>. Thank you for your consideration. □

### *Annual Maronite Youth Conference*

The Annual Maronite Youth Conference is scheduled for July 6 - 11, 2015, at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, Penn. More information will be available in the near future. We hope to see you there. □

## THE ORDER OF SAINT SHARBEL



### Perpetual Members

★ **Joanne Carter**  
(From Annual to Perpetual)  
*Our Lady of the Cedars Church*  
*Jamaica Plain, Mass.*

### Annual Members

★ **Valerie Faris**  
*St. George Maronite Church,*  
*Uniontown, Penn.*

\*\*\*\*\*

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

\*\*\*\*\*

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

Eparchy of Saint Maron  
109 Remsen Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

or

Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon  
1021 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
St. Louis, MO 63104

## Brooklyn, New York St. Maron's Feast Day



Bishop Mansour presents Laurice Matney with the Cathedral Lifetime Award.

by *Salma Vahdat*

In spite of the coldest temperatures in two decades, the Great Lakes ninety percent covered in ice, Boston digging out from an accumulation of eight feet of snow, the intrepid community of faith of Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn, N.Y., came together on Sunday, February 8, 2015, to celebrate the feast day of our patron, St. Maron! This year we were gratified that our shepherd, Bishop Gregory Mansour, would celebrate the Divine Liturgy with our rector, Msgr. James Root, subdeacons Norbert Vogl and Peter Frangie and seminarian Deangelo Aboutanos. The choir was, as usual, in fine voice.

Here, at the seat of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, we always look forward to the presence of Bishop Gregory. In his homilies he speaks to each one of us, humbly... but to the point! He referred to several of our Church Fathers and their remarks concerning Lebanon and the Maronites. To paraphrase some thoughts from a Pastoral of His Beatitude Nasrallah Peter Cardinal Sfeir, he wrote, "Our Church was not built after a name of a See or Apostle but rather took its identity from the radiance of a man and a monastery: the Maronite Church, a Church of asceticism and adoration attached from the beginning to a solitary man, not a man of rank or a Church leader. The faith lived out by the hermit Maron became the inner strength of a people's history."

The early followers of Maron found that freedom in the isolated mountains of Lebanon. "This can also be said of the migration of Maronites throughout the world. They left everything worldly, as the late Archbishop Francis Zayek would always tell us, to possess one thing, the freedom to live, to worship and to raise their families in the faith which they inherited and to pass on that faith to others. His Holiness Pope [Saint] John Paul II described the historical calling of Lebanon when he said that "Lebanon is more than a country, it is a mission." The Bishop offered us all much to reflect on, particularly in these trying times of political and religious fanaticism. We must not lose sight of our faith and culture and be earnest in propagating life and the respect it deserves. Our Maronite heritage demands it!

*(Continued on page 20)*

## Houston, Texas *Family Retreat*



Fr. Pierre El-Khoury celebrates the Divine Liturgy at the Family Retreat in Houston, Tex.

by Alberto G. Tohmé

For the seventh consecutive year, the Annual Family Retreat at Our Lady of the Cedars Church in Houston, Texas, was a big success. This retreat continues to be one of the most popular events at the Houston parish, drawing parishioners of all ages into a three-day gathering replete with fellowship, spirituality and fun. The main goals of the retreat are to promote bonding within and between families in the parish and spiritual renewal and growth for parents and children alike.

The retreat took place on February 6 - 8, 2015, at a retreat center owned and managed by the local Roman Catholic Archdiocese, approximately forty-five miles northwest of Houston. The retreat program offered a good mix of spiritual, family, and fun activities. On the spiritual front, adults participated in two-hour morning and afternoon workshops centered around the main theme of the retreat: *The Creed*. In the morning workshop, adults learned about the historical context and evolution of the Niceo-Constantinopolitan Creed, which we profess today, and reflected on its meaning and value in their lives. In the afternoon session, Fr. Pierre El-Khoury, Assistant Pastor, gave a riveting presentation about the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), and the Church, within the overall context of what we believe as Christians and why we believe what we say we believe. Children participated in their own interactive workshops in four separate age groups. All workshops for children covered the topic of the Creed and discussed questions within age-specific context.

Besides workshops, families bonded together at the many attractions of the center, including canoeing and fishing, and during meals catered by a fellow parishioner and evening entertainment by our own church choir members, and at nightly bonfires where s'mores, roasted potatoes and corn, music and reminiscing of older days abounded. On Sunday morning, Fr. Pierre celebrated the Liturgy for the feast of St. Maron. He helped us reflect on St. Maron's life of asceticism, monasticism, and self sacrifice, and challenged us to find ways to get closer to God in our everyday lives.

Once again this year, the family retreat proved to be very valuable to the parishioners. Many participants expressed an interest in extending the retreat to four, instead of three, days next year. These expressions of interest represent a genuine need for a deeper understanding of our faith and closeness to God. The family retreat provides a forum for enriching and renewing our spirituality and for highlighting the importance of our mission of evangelization. □



### Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

#### March 6 - 8, 2015

Pastoral Visit to St. Maron Church, Torrington, Conn.

#### March 8 - 16, 2015

Extraordinary Synod of Maronite Bishops, *Bkerke*, Lebanon.

#### March 17 - 18, 2015

Annual Eastern Catholic Bishops Meeting, Saint Louis, Mo.

#### March 21 - 22, 2015

Pastoral Visit to St. Anthony Church, Danbury, Conn.

#### March 25, 2015

Chrism Liturgy at noon at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

#### March 29, 2015

Palm Sunday, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y. at 11:00 a.m.; and Manhattan Mission, Manhattan, N.Y. at 5:00 p.m.

#### March 30, 2015

Holy Monday Service at St. Sharbel Church, Somerset, N.J.

#### March 31, 2015

Chrism Mass, Diocese of Brooklyn, Brooklyn, N.Y.

#### April 2, 2015

Holy Thursday Service of the Washing of the Feet, St. John Paul II Church, Sleepy Hollow, N.Y.

#### April 3 - 5, 2015

Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday Services, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn, N.Y.

#### April 11 - 12, 2015

Pastoral Visit to St. Sharbel Church, Newtown Square, Penn. □

## Eparchial Condolences

**Bishop Francis Baissari**, Bishop *Emeritus* of the Patriarchal Vicariate of *Jibbee*, North Lebanon, passed away on February 24, 2015. Born in *Qnat*, North Lebanon, in 1933, he was ordained a priest in 1962 and a bishop in 1991. He is survived by his two brothers, Mikhael Nehme Baissari and his children and their families; Shulleeta Nehme Baissari and his children and their families; his two sisters, Mary, wife of Mikhael Roumanos Hanna; and the family of the late Sadie and their families.



Patriarch Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai presided at the funeral service on Thursday, February 26, 2015 at the Patriarchal Chapel in *Bkerke*, Lebanon. Burial was in the Patriarchal cemetery.

Bishop Gregory Mansour along with the clergy and faithful of the Eparchy of Saint Maron extend their heartfelt sympathy and the promise of our prayers to His Beatitude Patriarch Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai; to the Maronite Synod of Bishops; to Bishop Maroun Amar, Bishop of the Patriarchal Vicariate of *Jibbee*; and to Bishop Baissari's family and relatives.

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

**Mr. Youssef Gebraiel Hoyek**, the father of Father Gaby Hoyek, Administrator of Our Lady of Mercy Church, Worcester, Mass., passed away on February 9, 2015, at his home in Lebanon. He is survived by his wife, May Akel Hoyek, and his four children: Father Gaby; Rita Hoyek Moubayed; Rima Hoyek Hannoun; and Sharbel Hoyek; and one sister Nadia Hoyek Kattar. He was preceded in death by his brother, Massoud Hoyek, and his sisters: Marie Hoyek Hawat, Souad Hoyek Salloum, and Jeanette Hoyek Antoun. Fr. Gaby was able to travel to Lebanon to be with his family for the funeral.

The Funeral Liturgy took place on February 12, 2015, at the Transfiguration of the Lord Maronite Church in *Aoura - Batroun*, Lebanon.

Condolences may be sent to Father Gaby Hoyek, c/o Our Lady of Mercy Church, 341 June Street, Worcester, MA 01602.

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

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

**Mr. Fred J. Mazloom**, age 86, the father of Deacon Paul Salamy of Utica, New York, passed away on February 14,

2015. Fred is also survived by his devoted wife, Mary; his son and daughter-in-law, James and Paulette Salamy of New Hartford, and his daughters and sons-in-law, JoAnne and Michael Hajec of Whitesboro, and Teresa and Scott Wojnas of Utica. Always treasured in his heart was the memory of his daughter-in-law, Mary Susan Salamy, who passed away in 2000.

His legacy will continue through the lives of his grandchildren, Michele and Christopher Anderson, Michael Salamy; James P. Salamy, Joseph P. Salamy, John Paul Salamy; M. J. Hajec, Marissa Hajec; Rachel Wojnas, and Brian Wojnas; and the blessing of his great-granddaughter, Grace Margaret Anderson; and his brothers and sisters-in-law, Paul S. and Gina Mazloom, and Albert S. and Elinor Mazloom.

The Funeral Liturgy was celebrated at St. Louis Gonzaga Church on February 18 by Chorbishop John D. Faris, Pastor.

Condolences may be sent to Deacon Paul Salamy at 1606 Gibson Road, Utica, NY 13501.

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

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

**Mrs. Nawal Constantine**, the mother of Father Albert Constantine, passed away on February 17, 2015. In addition to Fr. Albert, she is survived by her husband Elias, her children, Habib, Georgina, and Lina Constantine Kashami, and her grandchildren, Andrew and Nicholas Kachami.

The Funeral Liturgy was celebrated on February 23 at Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon-St. Peter Cathedral in Los Angeles, Calif.

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to: The Constantine Family 9016 Rathburn Ave., Northridge, CA 91325.

Bishop A. Elias Zaidan 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 Fr. Albert and his family.

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

## Eparchial Appointment

His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, appointed Fr. Michel Lahoud as Parochial Vicar at St. Anthony Maronite Catholic Church in Glen Allen [Richmond], Va., effective February 1, 2015. ☐

## Food For Thought

May our only treasure be God, may our heart belong totally to God, everything in God, everything for God... for Him alone."

*Blessed Charles de Foucauld*

# Homily of His Beatitude Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai At the Funeral of Bishop Stephen Hector Doueihi in Lebanon

*"The Good Shepherd Goes Ahead of His Sheep, and Leads them to Pastures Green" (John 10:2 - 4)*

On Saturday, December 27, 2014, His Beatitude Patriarch Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai presided at the funeral service of the late Bishop Stephen Hector Doueihi, Bishop Emeritus of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, at St. John Cathedral in Zghorta, Lebanon.

With deep sorrow and in the hope of Christmas, we bid farewell to the late Bishop Stephen Hector Doueihi, who passed away the morning of the seventeenth of this month, in Brooklyn, New York, at the age of eighty-seven. He passed his years with sincere faith in Christ and the Church. The Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, called him to participate in the leadership of His people as a priest, a bishop, an author and a scholar. Throughout the different stages of his life as a priest and as a bishop he was that "Good Shepherd who goes ahead of his sheep and leads them to green pastures" (John 10:2 - 4).

He is the son of *Ehden-Zghorta*, that Maronite city in the North of Lebanon, rich in its ecclesiastic, patriotic and cultural heritage, the city of patriarchs, bishops, priests, monks and nuns. Two Presidents of the Lebanese Republic came from *Ehden-Zghorta*, along with many ministers, deputies, men of government, politicians, intellectuals as well as men of culture and science. Bishop Stephen Hector Doueihi belongs to the Doueihi family, the family of the great Venerable Patriarch Estephan Doueihi, whose canonization's cause we accompany with our prayers, so that the Lord may reveal his sainthood and the Church may venerate him on its altars. Hector was born to Youssef and Hassibeh Zakhia Doueihi. He had three brothers and a sister who preceded him in death to the House of the Father with the oldest of his brothers, the late Badwi. At that home filled with faith, he was called to priestly life. He answered the call with joy, faithfulness and commitment. These three were his companions for his entire life.

After completing his elementary education at Saint Joseph School in *Zghorta*, he received priestly formation respectively at Saint Maron Seminary, *Ghazir*, and the University of Saint Joseph, Beirut, and at the *Propaganda*

*Fide* University and the Gregorian University, Rome. He received his Doctorate in Theology and Liturgy. He was ordained by the imposition of the hands of the late Patriarch Paul Peter Cardinal Meouchi on August 14, 1955, at the beginning of his Patriarchal Enthronement, and he has granted him his complete trust.

Father Hector started his priestly ministry as a fervent shepherd in the parish of *Zghorta* for ten years, from 1959 to 1969. He enriched his parish, giving out of himself and collaborating with other priests, among them was Father Emile Saade who later became Patriarchal Vicar General of the Patriarchal Vicariate of *Batroun* and *Ehden-Zghorta*, then the Bishop of the Eparchy of *Batroun* after its declaration as an independent eparchy.

There, we got to know Father Hector, whose star was bright like the Christmas Star and who has become the focal point of attention and admiration. We have known him as a fervent priest who consecrated all his efforts to reconcile and unite all of the children of *Zghorta*, that was divided by the bitter incidents of 1958. He gathered the priests of *Zghorta* in one priestly residence, and gathered the youth of *Zghorta* in a committed and dedicated group at the priestly residence, which he turned into a center of spiritual, cultural and social gathering, along



Patriarch Rai presiding at the funeral service of Bishop Doueihi. Bishop Maroun Amar is to his right.

with the Folklore Group and the Festivals of *Ehden-Zghorta*, and the Medical Dispensary which later became Notre Dame Hospital, one of the greatest hospitals in North Lebanon.

On what concerns the Maronite Church he, with other fervent priests like him, took many primordial initiatives inspired by the teaching of the Ecumenical Council Vatican II (1962-1965), which was called by Pope St. John Paul II "the Spring of the Church." He called for a renewal movement within our Church in the spirit of that Council as he published a series of Articles under the name "*Our*

*Church in Questions*"; revitalized the "Priests' League"; the "Fraternity of the Priests of North Lebanon" and the movement "A Church for Our World." At the same time he taught Theology at Saint Anthony of Padua Institute, *Karm Saddeh*, at the University of Saint Joseph, Beirut; the University of the Holy Spirit, *Kaslik*; and at Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary, Washington, D.C. He expressed in all of these institutes his renewing and aspiring ideas that he left for us as a heritage in the Arabic language, namely: *Our Church at the Edge*, *The Church of People and the Church of Stones*, *Saint Sharbel and The Council of Vatican II*.

With this apostolic enthusiasm, Patriarch Paul Peter Cardinal Meouchi sent him in 1969 to serve our Maronite Mission in Mexico, namely in the city of *Puebla* where he spent three years. He moved after that in 1972 to the service of our Maronite Eparchy in the United States of America. He was called to its service by the late Bishop Francis Zayek. He dedicated himself and fully utilized his talents and his spiritual, intellectual and cultural heritage and the seven languages he spoke: Arabic, French, Italian, Spanish, English, Syriac and Latin. He was the Vice-Rector of Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary in Washington, D.C., and served Saint Sharbel Parish in Peoria, Illinois; Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Washington, D.C.; Saint George Church in Wilkes-Barre, Penn.; Saint George Church in San Antonio, Tex.; and Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn, N.Y.

In all of these, he was the good shepherd who led the souls entrusted to him to the fountain of salvation - the Word of the Gospel, the teaching of the Church and the grace of the Sacraments. He was loved and respected by all. He acquired the trust of the Eparchial Bishop who granted him the Order of Periodeut and the trust of His Beatitude and Eminence Nasrallah Peter Cardinal Sfeir who granted him the Order of Chorbishop. He was well-respected and loved among the priests, and he was entrusted with many positions at the eparchial level and in the Maronite Church: Director of the Eparchial Commission for Liturgy; Director of the Eparchial Commission for the Synod for Lebanon; member of the Patriarchal

Commission for Liturgy; and member of the Presbyteral Council and Eparchial College of Consultants.

The most noble and dignified task Chorbishop Hector accomplished with great effort and attention was the translation of the liturgical books into English, after the latest liturgical reform and the responsibility of editing the English texts of the Liturgy and of the Sacraments published by the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn. He left us several books on the liturgy in English, namely the Liturgical Year, the Mystery of Crowning, the Mystery of Christian Initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, the Book of Funerals, the Book of Prayers and Blessings and the Pontifical.

He regarded the Liturgy as "The authentic connection between all the Maronites throughout the whole world" and he considered it "the second nation for all Maronites." He said: "Lebanon, the nation and the land, is no longer able to assemble all Maronites throughout the world, and is no longer capable of containing them. However, the Liturgy brings them together and contains all of them, and it is enriched by their particularities."

When the late Bishop Francis Zayek attained the canonical age and resigned from the administration of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, the Synod of the Bishops of our Maronite Church elected Chorbishop Hector Doueihy as his successor, and Pope John Paul II appointed him as the Bishop of the Eparchy on November 23, 1996, and he took the name of Stephen Hector. He served the Eparchy with his attentiveness, vigilance and future perspective. He served at the time of the immediate preparation for the Maronite Patriarchal Synod and its sessions (2003-2006). He greatly contributed to this Synod, especially in what it concerns the world of expansion, of which he was an expert. He considered Lebanon the "Spiritual Nation" of Maronites regardless of their citizenship and belonging. They are connected through it and through the person of the Patriarch. He said: "We, Maronites, have no life in the countries of the world unless we are rooted in Lebanon - the land, with all what it represents as spiritual patrimony: it is the cradle of our faith, the land of our

holy places and the tombs of our Saints, and the union to the very person of the Patriarch and the Patriarchal institution in *Bkerke* and *Dimane*."

He was very eager to unite the Church in the countries of expansion to the Church in Lebanon, which he called the *Mother Church*, and the other the *Daughter Church*, which is fed the milk of the *Mother Church*; she grows and develops in the cultural background in which she lives. According to him, the Maronite Church in the countries of expansion is not a photocopy of the Maronite Church in Lebanon, it will be Maronite in the full meaning of the word, will preserve its originality and faithfulness, will always be united to Lebanon, "the Spiritual Nation," by the bond of spirit, rite, theology and roots, under the complete leadership of the Patriarch.

He explained that the Maronite Church in the countries of expansion lives the universal characteristic of Catholicity in the One, Catholic, Holy and Apostolic Church, according to the unique flavor of "*Beit Maroun*" and the Antiochene Maronite Patriarchal See (or Chair). With this characteristic she preaches the Gospel for every individual and nation in every place, nation and land. She is originally from the East, and namely from Lebanon, but as a Maronite Church she goes beyond Lebanon and its history and its language. She is not only a national Church at the service of the Maronite immigrants from Lebanon and other countries. In the light of this vision, Bishop Stephen Hector asked to deal with the Maronite Expansion, and to get to know its facts, principles and perspectives, so that it will be contained within the Maronite Church, and the Church will always be One, Catholic, Holy, Apostolic and Ecumenical.

When he attained the canonical age, he resigned from the administration of the Eparchy. Bishop Gregory Mansour, here present, succeeded him, receiving the trust in 2004. He took good care of him, and consulted with him in eparchial affairs, especially the Liturgy, and invited him to participate in different occasions.

*(Continues on page 20)*

## *How I Came to Study for the Diaconate*

by

*Subdeacon Joseph Pavlovich, Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Flint, Michigan*

I was a high school chemistry teacher for thirty-five years from 1972 - 2007. I had already developed hobbies that I enjoyed very much, including golf and woodworking. When I retired, my hobbies became my life. I golfed almost every day, and when I wasn't golfing I was in my wood shop building furniture. My wife, Lily, and I also had plans to travel and see the parts of the world that we had not seen.

Even though this seemed like an ideal life, my heart was empty and I felt a

longing to be closer to God. I think God plants this longing for Him in all peoples' hearts, some more strongly than others. There was an emptiness in my relationships with others and I felt like a stranger in the world, even among my friends. Then God did something to let me know of his plans for me.

I was cutting down a large pine tree in my backyard that had grown too close to my workshop and when it was cut, it leaned against the building. I climbed up on the roof to push it away, and I went with it. I fell fifteen feet. Since I weighed 220 pounds and landed on my feet, they both were broken.

I learned later that my left heel was crushed into more than fifteen pieces, and I broke all of the metatarsal bones on top of my right foot. I was about thirty yards from the house when this happened and I had to scoot on my rear to the house in order to crawl in. My two dogs were licking my face all the time. I managed to call my wife at work, and when she got home she took me to a local hospital.

My injuries were so severe that the hospital sent me to Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Mich., because they had a surgeon who could handle my kind of trauma. After numerous tests, the surgeon, Dr. Wiater, met with my wife and me and said I would never walk again, except with difficulty, and I would never golf again. My wife immediately broke into tears.

Dr. Wiater is a brilliant surgeon. After putting the pieces of my left heel back together like a jigsaw puzzle and replacing some of the shattered bones in my right foot with cadaver bones, the surgery was complete. I had thirteen screws in my left heel and five screws in my right foot. Then came six months in bed with no walking. Then I had another surgery to remove all the



Subdeacon Pavlovich

screws and several more months in bed.

Finally, my feet were healed, but my legs were so atrophied that I could not stand. I began physical therapy, being wheeled in in a wheelchair. My physical therapists were wonderful and after six months of extremely hard work, I was walking unassisted, and I was soon able to golf.

My wife was my lifesaver during all this, helping me to get to the bathroom by scooting up the stairs while she pulled me up with a belt. She bathed me in the shower, and she made sure I did not get any infections in my incisions. Without her love and care and the constant love and companionship of my two little white dogs, and without the grace of God I would never have made it.

I knew that because of this remarkable recovery, God had plans for me. I knew that he wanted me to serve his church in some meaningful way, and I knew that this is what I wanted to do, too. I started attending daily Mass at church. Shortly after this, Deacon Martin Rachid at Our Lady of Lebanon Church, where my wife and I attended, approached me at Fr. Tony Massad's ordination and asked if I had ever thought of studying for the diaconate. I said no, but I would consider it. After



***If the Lord  
is Calling  
You,  
The  
Church  
Needs  
You!***

If you feel that you have a vocation to the Priesthood or religious life, please contact your Pastor or write to:

Fr. Gary George, Director  
Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon  
Office of Vocations  
1021 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
St. Louis, MO 63104

Or

Fr. Dominique Hanna, Director  
Eparchy of Saint Maron  
Office of Vocations  
c/o St. Joseph Church  
502 Seminole Ave. NE  
Atlanta, GA 30307

Or

Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary  
7164 Alaska Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20012

much agonizing over the decision (because I was not sure I would be accepted as a deacon because I was not of Middle Eastern descent), I applied to be a subdeacon and was accepted into the program, as unworthy as I was.

I started participating in the Divine Liturgy on the altar as an adult altar server at the invitation of Father Joseph Khalil even though I was not yet ordained. I completed the two years of study and then my wife and I went on a trip to Lebanon with the group headed by Father sharbel Maroun. We visited all the religious sites in Lebanon, which was one of the most meaningful experiences in my life.

When I returned from Lebanon, Father Paul Tarabay, who is our pastor, told me I was to be ordained November 11, 2012. It was one of the most beautiful days of my life. I could now serve God and his people in a very special way.

I knew I wanted to continue studying and become a deacon if that was God's will, so I applied with the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon and was accepted into the program at Siena Heights College through the Latin Diocese of Lansing. I have been attending school and college all my life, so taking more classes was just taken in stride. The Lansing Latin Diocese also was kind enough to let me attend the Deacon Candidates Program once a month in Lansing, and I have been doing that for two years now. So far I have completed six theology classes (eighteen hours) in the Siena Heights program of study. Whether God wants me to be a deacon or not, I know that I am in a beautiful place in my life with Him and I know that what is important is that I should decrease and that God should increase always. ☐

## *My Vocation Story*



Natalie Salameh (left) and Petra Nakhoul.

*by Petra Nakhoul*

"All I have ever sought is the truth," are the words of Saint Therese and the words of my own heart. This truth I have found in the gift of my faith. It hasn't been easy but it has been my greatest joy. It was this particular joy that only came from knowing Christ from the foot of the Cross and standing by Our Holy Mother gazing at the very image of love incarnate. I knew that my life was to be only His. One question remained, "Lord, where do you wish for me to serve?" I prayed to be guided to the place He and His Mother wished for me to be.

As I sat in the library at the university during the holidays, a good friend asked if I knew the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light in America. She encouraged me to inquire about their way of life. I was hesitant, though I remained open to the suggestion. Some time later I decided to read up about the Maronite Servants of Christ The Light, and I emailed Mother Marla. I must say it was possibly the quickest response I have ever received. We followed with a Skype session and an application to come and see.

As I continued praying and asking the Holy Family to lead me, I sent an email to Bishop Antoine Charbel Tarabay of the Eparchy of Australia and New Zealand, who responded with his blessing and reminded me to repeat the words of Samuel, 'Speak Lord, your servant is listening.' In the following weeks I was to quiet myself down in order to hear the voice of my Lord speaking. I was accepted to visit the convent of the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light in the U.S., and only Providence pursued in the following months in which I had the opportunity to spend ten weeks over two visits in the winter and the summer of 2014. I saw the hand of the Lord in everything and also the blessing of the heart of the Mother that loves ever so mercifully.

I encountered the God I love and His Mother who guided and nurtured me through my life. I was free and filled with Peace. The truth was present and never changed. It was visible to all who wanted to come and see.

The charism and apostolic works of the Maronite Servants attracted me. I love my Maronite Church in its entirety and the opportunity to learn more and grow in its understanding gave new meaning to my life, a life I hope to live to the full through the joy of the Gospel with the Maronite Servants, eternally radiating the Light of Christ.

Now I gladly lay my life down before His Majesty in awe, aspiration and admiration. My hope as I approach June 1, (the 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light) that I may be worthy to receive my Lord and give myself to Him totally consumed in the divine fire of His unfathomable love and mercy. ☐

## **Prayer for Vocations**

Lord of the Harvest,  
Bless young people with the gift of courage to respond to your call.

Open their hearts to great ideals, to great things.  
Inspire all of your disciples to mutual love and giving - for vocations blossom in the good soil of faithful people.

Instill those in religious life, parish ministries, and families with the confidence and grace to invite others to embrace the bold and noble path of a life consecrated to you.

Unite us to Jesus through prayer and sacrament, so that we may cooperate with you in building your reign of mercy and truth, of justice and peace. Amen. ☐

Pope Francis

# Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

## *Mid-Atlantic East Regional NAM Convention*

by Amal Kouyoumdji

On the weekend of January 30 - February 1, 2015, Rev. Vincent Farhat, Pastor of Saint Maron Church, Philadelphia, Penn., along with his parishioners, took great joy in hosting the Mid-Atlantic East Regional NAM Convention. Once again, the National Apostolate of Maronites set out to create an event intended to strengthen bonds among Maronite clergy and laity in the U.S., while promoting the preservation of the rich Maronite Catholic heritage. And we, at Saint Maron, were elated to be part of it with the blessing of His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour, who graced everyone with his strong yet humble presence. Many priests and deacons were in attendance as well, providing a profound sense of unity and solidarity among Maronite parishes. The result, a jam-packed weekend of worship, workshops, great food, great music, and all-around fun, for the purpose of spiritual renewal, education, and fellowship.

The Convention began on Friday evening with the Divine Liturgy followed by a warm welcome party held at Msgr. Sharbel Lischaa Community Center. More than 150 people got to experience the hospitality that is typical of the community of St. Maron. Saturday was a busy day at the convention. As I hurried from one workshop to the other, hoping to catch the essence of each individual talk, it became clear to me that a common thread tied all these talks together. Bishop Mansour spoke to the MYO of the radical ways that Jesus changes people. He offered these words as an example: "If someone strikes you on the cheek, offer him the other one as well" (Luke 6:29). Simultaneously, Father Tony Massad, Pastor of St. Rafka Maronite Catholic Mission in Livonia, Mich., offered the MYA these words to reflect upon: "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth. I have not come to bring peace but a sword" (Matthew 10:34). Dr. Mark Doorley went on a search for ways that the Church today attempts to remedy economic inequality, and works for environmental justice.

I went to these workshops looking



Fr. Farhat and visiting clergy celebrate the Divine Liturgy at the Mid-Atlantic East Regional Convention.

for answers on ethics and social issues. Instead, I came away with questions that I will forever ask myself, as would each person who attended these lectures, for in these questions lies our ability to examine the *status quo* as a prelude for change. These are difficult yet necessary questions that are meant to shock complacencies and challenge oneself to forgo the indifference of the convenient, the blindness of the comfortable, the passiveness of the politically correct, for our faith is not for the faint of heart, as Bishop Gregory often reminds us.

However, I am not at all implying that these questions remained unanswered. It was revealed that the answers are within us, as is the choice. "A person is a person, no matter how small," said Father Massad quoting Dr. Seuss' Horton. "And unlike Cain," he continued, "we are our brothers and sisters' keepers." Why? Because each and every one of us is created in the image and likeness of God. "Between God and evil, there is us," declared Bishop Mansour, while Dr. Doorley pointed out that "nothing is necessary about our lives, and it is all a gift from God," in a call for solidarity among all human beings and stewardship. Father Tony announced in his homily on

Saturday evening that the call for sainthood is out. Each of us, body and soul, is invited to respond to this call as each of us is invited to defend and promote human dignity which has been entrusted to us by God. It is with these inspiring words that attendees of the convention prepared to celebrate together the Sunday of the Righteous and the Just.

Saturday evening's party was an opportunity to solidify old friendships and cultivate emerging ones. The following Sunday, St. Maron's community hosted a farewell brunch to crown a wonderful weekend of prayers and hospitality. I expected to see signs of fatigue on the faces of the organizers after several weeks of diligent preparation for this gathering. What I saw instead were peaceful smiles of gratefulness for all the blessings that God bestowed upon our community and our guests, gratefulness that comes from the firm belief that "where two or three are gathered in My name, here I am among them" (Matthew 18:20). □



## Detroit, Michigan *St. Maron Feast Day*



Parishioners of St. Maron Church in Detroit, Mich., marked the Feast Day of St. Maron on Saturday, February 7, 2015, with a special Liturgy followed by dinner and a dance.

Maronite priests from the Detroit area including: Msgr. Chorbishop Badawi from St. Sharbel Church in Warren; Fr. Tony Massad from St. Rafka Church in Livonia; and Fr. Paul Tarabay and Fr. Francois Akel from the Maronite Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Ann Arbor, joined Msgr. Louis Baz, Pastor, for the Divine Liturgy. Parishioner Ed O'Brien served as the lector.

In his homily Msgr. Baz emphasized how St. Maron became a saint and the importance of his life to Maronite Catholics throughout the world. Following the Divine Liturgy, a dinner and a dance, catered by Ike's Restaurant of Sterling Heights, Mich., took place in the Church Hall. The banquet was organized by Committee Chairperson Rudy Jabbour. □

## Tulsa, Oklahoma *Donations to Lebanon*

The Director of Caritas Lebanon USA, Father Elias Abi Sarkis, recently wired \$45,000 to Father Paul Karam, the President of Caritas Lebanon in Beirut, for use in serving the poor in Lebanon. This included a \$13,000 donation from the Diocese of Tulsa. Those interested in supporting the work of Caritas Lebanon, which serves the poor and refugees without discrimination, may contact: Father Elias Abi Sarkis, Saint Therese Catholic Church, 8315 South 107th East Avenue, Tulsa, OK 74133. Office: (918) 872-7400. Rectory (918) 286-0899.

Checks should be made payable to "Caritas Lebanon USA" which is a recognized charitable organization for tax purposes. 100% of all contributions go to Caritas Lebanon, which has only 7% overhead. Thus, an unusually high percentage of donations reach the end user, the poor. □

## Saint Louis, Missouri *Massabki Award*



by Shelly Vitale

On Sunday, February 15, 2015, Chorbishop Moussa Joseph, Rector of Saint Raymond Cathedral in Saint Louis, Missouri, presented the NAM Silver Massabki award to Mrs. Marie Kallial. She is a very deserving recipient of this award because of her many years of commitment, dedication and service to the Saint Raymond community. Congratulations and thank you to Marie for her devotion. □

## *Reconciliation*

*Continued from page 1*

For its part, the Church reminds us of the importance and need of repentance with its two essential elements: "on the one hand, the acts of the man who undergoes conversion through the action of the Holy Spirit, namely, contrition, confession and satisfaction; on the other, God's action through the intervention of the Church" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Para. 1448).

In this blessed act of Reconciliation we experience God's unconditional forgiveness. Reconciliation helps us to enjoy inner peace at the personal level, to regain the state of grace (reconciliation with God) and live in communion and love with our brothers and sisters.

During this time of the year, let us all follow the example of His Holiness Pope Francis, who keeps repeating, "I am a sinner, pray for me." Let us follow the example of the saints, sinners who keep trying, who frequently benefitted from the graces of the sacrament of reconciliation. Let us all seek to recognize our sinfulness and reconcile with the Lord and with our brothers and sisters with humility and sincerity. May we all reap the benefits of the Sacrament of Reconciliation so that we can free ourselves from the burden of sins and get a taste of true happiness.

Bishop A. Elias Zaidan  
Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles □

## San Antonio, Texas St. Maron Celebration



From left: Wendy El-Bayeh, Sandy Nasif, Deacon Chris Fabre, Fr. Charles Khachan, MLM, Michele Chebib and George Chebib.

St. George Church in San Antonio, Tex., celebrated a festive weekend in honor of St. Maron's Feast Day with the annual *Hafli* on Saturday, February 7, 2015, and the presentation of the annual awards at the morning Divine Liturgy on Sunday, February 8.

Music for the *Hafli* was provided by Danny Achkar and the Paul El Bayeh Band. The parish youth provided traditional Lebanese folk dancing, and all enjoyed traditional Lebanese food.

At Sunday's liturgy, Father Charles Khachan, MLM, presented the Silver Massabki Award to Michele and George Chebib; the Faith of the Mountain Award to Wendy El Bayeh; the Bishop's Award to Reggie and Larry Raba; and the St. George Appreciation Award to Sandy Nasif, honoring these individuals for their selfless and continuous giving of their time and talents to support the parish. □

### *A Vice President Is Needed*

The World Patriarchal Maronite Foundation for Integral Development is seeking an experienced Vice President for Development and Fund Raising to expand its development, social, economic and educational programs. Established in 2014 in order to promote its objectives in Lebanon and the Middle East, the Foundation has a committed Board ready to work with a new vice president in raising funds internationally. The position will be based in the United States, Canada or Lebanon depending on the successful candidate. The VP will be responsible for major gift fundraising from high net worth individuals, work closely with the Board to cultivate relationships, close and steward gifts and move to expand the donor base. He/she will have at least seven years of successful experience in major gift work, be accustomed to working independently, be highly motivated and a self-starter, be an excellent communicator and be sympathetic to and well-versed in the mission and goals of the Foundation. A Bachelor's Degree is required. The successful candidate will report to a CEO based in Lebanon. This is an excellent opportunity for

someone who wants to build a fundraising program from its infancy. The salary and benefits are competitive with U.S. higher education standards. A cover letter expressing interest in the position and a current resume may be sent to WPMFIDVP@gmail.com and will be accepted until April 15, 2015. □



### *Spring Raffle*

The National Apostolate of Maronites [NAM] Presents its 23rd Annual Spring Raffle - 2015. Only four hundred tickets are printed. Donation is \$100 per ticket. The Raffle consists of the following cash prizes:

- \$10,000 for First Prize
- \$3,000 for Second Prize
- \$2,000 for Third Prize
- \$1,500 for Fourth Prize
- \$1,000 for the Fifth Prize.

This year's drawing will be held at St. Sharbel Maronite Mission in Raleigh, N.C., on April 19, 2015.

The Spring Raffle is an important part of the NAM annual budget. To purchase a personal ticket(s) or to help NAM in selling tickets please contact:

Mike J. Naber, Executive Director  
NAM, P.O. Box 717, Yonkers, NY 10702  
914-964-3070 (phone), 914-964-3071 (fax)  
nam@namnews.org, www.namnews.org

All requests and payments must be received by April 7, 2015. You can purchase your tickets online using a credit card, or request that it to be mailed to you. □

## *From the Book Shelf*

**Book of Offering:** The new translation of our beautiful Maronite Divine Liturgy in English, Arabic and Syriac has been promulgated by the Maronite Patriarch for use in all of the English-speaking eparchies throughout the world.

- **The congregation's copy** (5" x 6", 1950 pages, soft leather-like cover) covers the entire Liturgical year.
- **The celebrant's copy** (8.5" x 11" hard cover) is three volumes:

**Volume One:** from the Sundays of the Church up to Ascension Thursday

**Volume Two:** from Pentecost Sunday to the end of the Liturgical year

**Volume Three:** the Book of Anaphoras

The Book of Offering is available through Saint Maron Publications for \$25 (congregation version) and \$200 for the celebrant version. Shipping is extra.

To order your copy (ies) please call or write to:

Saint Maron Publications  
4611 Sadler Road  
Glen Allen, Virginia 23060  
(804) 762 - 4301 □



## Three New Saints; Two of Whom from the Holy Land

The Ordinary Public Consistory for the Creation of New Cardinals, which took place on Saturday, February 14, 2015, in St Peter's Basilica, Rome, Italy, saw also the approval of the canonization of three Blessed of the Church: Jeanne Emilie de Villeneuve; Mary of Jesus Crucified Baouardy; and Marie Alphonsine Danil Ghattas. The Holy Father also announced that the date of the canonizations is May 17, 2015. Below, please find some brief biographical information on two of the soon-to-be canonized saints.

**Blessed Marie Alphonsine Danil Ghattas** was born in Jerusalem in 1843. When she was fifteen years old she entered the Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition. She worked tirelessly to help young people and Christian mothers. She had a special mystic affinity with the Mother of God. She founded the Congregation of Sisters of the Most Holy Rosary of Jerusalem, to which she belonged. She died in 1927 and was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI in 2009.

**Blessed Mary of Jesus Crucified Baouardy** was born Maria Baouardy in *Abellin*, a village in Upper Galilee near Nazareth, in 1846 of Arab parents. She was baptized in the Melkite Greek Catholic Church. From early youth she experienced many sufferings together with extraordinary mystic phenomena. In France, she entered the Carmel of Pau. She was sent to India to found new Carmels, and then to Bethlehem, where she died in 1878. She was beatified by St John Paul II in 1983. □

(Vatican Radio, February 24, 2015)

## Islamic State Burns Down Four Syrian Churches

While kidnaping residents from Christian villages in northeastern Syria, militants from the Islamic State burned down at least four Christian churches, according to the Assyrian International News Agency.

The number of hostages taken from the Christian villages may be as high as 150, rather than the 90-100 originally reported, the AsiaNews service says. There are numerous unconfirmed reports that some hostages have been killed, some rapes committed, and "blood everywhere."

"A number of churches have been destroyed, including the church in *Tel Hurmiz*, one of the oldest churches in Syria, the *Mar Bisho* Church in *Tel Shamiran*, the church in *Qabr Shamiy* and the church in *Tel Baloua*," the agency reported.

Archimandrite Emanuel Youkhana, who heads an aid program for Christians in Iraq, told Aid to the Church in Need that roughly 100 Christians who had been abducted from the captured villages have been taken to another village. "They are alive so far," he said, "but the men are separated from women and children."

Bishop Georges Abou Khazen, the vicar of the Latin-rite Diocese of *Aleppo*, told the AsiaNews service: "This will not be solved with bombs; cutting financial and military supplies will. What we ask is for others to stop supporting these

people, to stop selling them weapons. We have been saying this for some time but no one has been listening to us." □

(Catholic World News - February 25, 2015)

## Pope Prays For Christians in Syria

During the Spiritual Exercises at *Ariccia*, Pope Francis is praying intensely for Syria, in particular, for Christians in the country," Archbishop Mario Zenari, Apostolic Nuncio at Damascus, said. In an interview on Vatican Radio said that the Holy Father "is continually informed and his prayer always accompanies the suffering of the people and of Christians in particular."

According to the Nuncio, "Christians are the weakest link of the chain" in the Syrian conflict, where fear reigns, used by the jihadists to hold in check the majority of the population, regardless of religious affiliation.

Christians in Syria feel abandoned by the international community, in as much as they "do not see tangible results": this makes their complaint understandable, stressed Archbishop Zenari, noting however that "some measures have been adopted, such as that of cutting the supplies that arrive for these people, bank accounts, petrol, and stopping those who have been taken in by this ideology and, perhaps, come to these areas from Europe."

Therefore, it will be necessary "to continue on this path, with the united efforts and measures of the international community," to "put a stop to this situation."

The war in Syria is "one of the gravest humanitarian disasters since World War II. Hence, it is urgent "to resolve the situation of civil conflict but, at the same time, also to stop the advance of this *Caliphate*," added The Apostolic Nuncio said.

In three weeks, Syria will enter the fifth year of its civil war, which has left "more than 200,000 dead, over one million wounded, more than seven million displaced internally and four million refugees," not counting "the damages and deaths that happen every day, the displaced and refugees caused by the civil war," said the prelate.

Added to this front are the "areas under the control of the *Caliphate*," stained daily by "atrocious and terrible" events, two fronts "one worse than the other," concluded Archbishop Zenari. □

(Zenit.org, February 27, 2015)

## Syrian Christians Feel Abandoned

Syrian Christians feel abandoned by the world, the Apostolic Nuncio in Damascus has told Vatican Radio. Archbishop Mario Zenari said that fearful Syrian Christians have seen no improvement in the conditions in their country, and many are preparing to leave - joining the tens of thousands who have already left.

Archbishop Zenari said that Syrians face two separate disasters: "The civil war front which has been going on for almost five years, a conflict which has killed over 200,000 people, has injured more than a million and displaced eleven million; and then there are all the terrible things that are happening in the areas under the control of the so-called Islamic State." Together, they amount to one of the world's greatest humanitarian tragedies since World War II, he said. □

(Catholic World News - February 26, 2015)

# A Message in Blood: ISIS and the Meaning of the Cross

by  
*Very Rev. Robert Barron*

*Father Robert Barron is the founder of the global ministry, Word on Fire, and the Rector/President of Mundelein Seminary. He is the creator of the award-winning documentary series, "Catholicism" and "Catholicism: The New Evangelization."*

Last week, the attention of the world was riveted to a deserted beach in northern Libya, where a group of twenty one Coptic Christians were brutally beheaded by masked operatives of the ISIS movement. In the wake of the executions, ISIS released a gruesome video entitled "A Message in Blood to the Nation of the Cross." I suppose that for the ISIS murderers the reference to "the Nation of the Cross" had little sense beyond a generic designation for Christianity. Sadly for most Christians, too, the Cross has become little more than an anodyne, a harmless symbol, a pious decoration. I would like to take the awful event on that Libyan beach, as well as the ISIS message concerning it, as an occasion to reflect on the still-startling distinctiveness of the Cross.

In the time of Jesus, the cross was a brutal and very effective sign of Roman power. Imperial authorities effectively said, "If you cross us (pun intended), we will affix you to a dreadful instrument of torture and leave you to writhe in agonizing, literally excruciating (*ex cruce*, from the cross) pain until you die. Then we will make sure that your body hangs on that gibbet until it is eaten away by scavenging animals." The cross was, basically, state-sponsored terrorism, and it did indeed terrify people. The great Roman statesman and philosopher Cicero once described a crucifixion but only through a convoluted circumlocution, for he couldn't bring himself to characterize it directly. After putting down the great slave uprising of Spartacus, the Roman government lined the Appian Way with hundreds of crosses so as to dissuade any other would-be revolutionaries. Pontius Pilate had much the same intention when he nailed dozens of Jewish rebels to the walls of Jerusalem. That same Pilate arranged for Jesus to be crucified on Calvary Hill, a promontory situated close to one of the gates of ancient Jerusalem, guaranteeing that his horrific death would not be missed by the large Passover crowds moving in and out of

the city.

From the crucified Jesus, all of the disciples, save John, fled, precisely because they wanted with all their hearts to avoid his dreadful fate. After Good Friday, the friends of Jesus huddled in terror in the Upper Room, petrified that they might be nailed up on Calvary as well. The disciples on the road to Emmaus were, understandably, heading out of Jerusalem, away from danger, and they were utterly convinced that Jesus' movement had come to naught. In a word, the Cross meant the victory of the world, and the annihilation of Jesus and what he stood for.

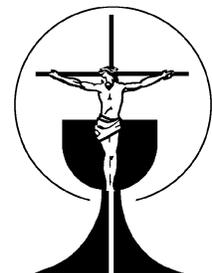
And this is why it is surpassing strange that one of the earliest Apostles and missionaries of the Christian religion could write, "I preach one thing, Christ and him crucified!" How could Paul - the passage is taken from his first letter to the Corinthians - possibly present the dreadful cross as the centerpiece of his proclamation? He could do so only because he knew that God had raised the crucified Jesus from the dead, proving thereby that God's love and forgiveness are greater than anything in the world. This is why his exaltation of the Cross is a sort of taunt to Rome and all of its brutal descendants down through the ages: "You think that scares us? God has conquered that!" And this is why, to this day, Christians boldly hold up an image of the humiliated, tortured Jesus to the world. What they are saying is, "We are not afraid."

How wonderful this is, by the way, in light of the Charlie Hebdo tragedy and the controversy over the Dutch cartoonist's mocking depictions of the prophet Muhammad. Christians don't fuss particularly about insults to Jesus, for we reverence a depiction of the insulted Christ as our most sacred icon. We can say, with Paul, "I am certain that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities, neither height nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of

God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39), for we know that the world killed Jesus but God raised him from the dead.

Just before their throats were cut, many of the murdered Coptic Christians could be seen mouthing the words "Jesus Christ" and "Jesus is Lord." The first of those phrases is a rendering of the Aramaic *Ieshouah Maschiach*, which means "Jesus the anointed one" and which harkens back to King David, the paradigmatic anointed figure of the Old Testament. The second phrase is one that can be traced to St. Paul's kerygmatic cry *Iesous Kyrios* (Jesus Lord!), which was intended to trump a watchword of the time, Kaiser Kyrios (Caesar is Lord). In short, both declarations assert the kingship of Jesus, but what a strange kingship! The new David reigns, not from a throne, but from a cross; the one who trumps Caesar doesn't lead an army, but embodies the divine forgiveness.

The ISIS barbarians were actually quite right in entitling their video "A Message Written in Blood." Up and down the centuries, tyrants and their lackeys have thought that they could wipe out the followers of Jesus through acts of violence. But as Tertullian observed long ago, the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. And they were furthermore right in sending their message to "the Nation of the Cross." But they should know that the Cross taunts them. □



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**DEBORAH GHAZOUL-MILLS, MD**  
Assistant Clinical Professor of Pediatrics, Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine



**GEORGE HARIK, PHD**  
One of Google's first 10 employees  
Founder of imo.im, a social networking app



**SONIA NAJJAR, PHD**  
Professor of Physiology & Pharmacology at University of Toledo



**JOHN ZOGBY**  
Founder of the "Zogby Poll" & Zogby companies



**RACHEL MUHA**  
Founder of Run the Race Club, a program for inner-city children

**MYA SPEAKER**

**THU. JULY 2**

10:30am *How America Turned Me from a Lebanese Immigrant into a NASA Rocket Scientist*  
Charles Elachi, PhD

3:30pm *Journey of a First Generation Maronite Professional: Thoughts on Family Health & Wellness in America*  
Deborah Ghazoul-Mills, MD & Sonia Najjar, PhD

**FRI. JULY 3**

10:30am *Our First Global Citizens & Our Path to the Future*  
John Zogby

3:30pm *Securing the Maronite Family Unit in America*

4:00pm *Success Can Be Around the Corner*  
Special MYA workshop George Harik, PhD

**SAT. JULY 4**

10:30am *Forgiving, God's Way: Lessons from a Family Tragedy*  
Rachel Muha

3:30pm *Commission on the Middle East: A Panelist Discussion on Maronite Americans & US Policy & Its Impact on Events in the Middle East*

### WORKSHOPS

## ENTERTAINMENT



**TONY KIWAN**



**JOUMANA MDARWAR**



**TONY MIKHAEL**



**ASHLEY NEME H**



**TONY KOUSSA, JR.**

**WED. JULY 1**  
Rock & Roll Night  
**Tony Koussa Jr. & The Elements**

**THU. JULY 2**  
Evangelical & Classical Concert with entertainment by international artist  
**Joumana Mdarwar** & celebrated national artist  
**Ashley NemeH**

**FRI. JULY 3**  
Middle Eastern Night  
Entertainment by Cleveland's own  
**Tony Mikhael & Band**  
with a performance by The MaronKnights

**SAT. JULY 4**  
Grand Banquet  
entertainment by famous Lebanese singer  
**Tony Kiwan**

## EXCURSIONS

**ADULTS, YOUTH (MYO), CHILDREN**

**THU. JULY 2**  
1:15pm

**Excursion to University Circle**  
Home to the world renowned Cleveland Museum of Art and Cleveland Botanical Garden on the campus of Case Western Reserve University, including Studio Play, where families learn and play together at the Cleveland Museum of Art and Hershey Children's Garden at Cleveland Botanical Garden - enchanting botanical wonderland. Food trucks available.

**FRI. JULY 3**  
1:15pm

**Cleveland Excursion: Lolly the Trolley Tour**  
Enjoy a grand tour of Cleveland with an exciting stop at the historic Westside Market. Adults, youth and children alike will enjoy this cultural haven with over 100 indoor and outdoor food vendors.

**WED. JULY 1 - SAT. JULY 4**

**Bucket List of Fun!**  
Walk or use our free trolley- green line to explore the city with friends and family or venture just outside the city to Edgewater Beach on the beautiful shores of Lake Erie. *Note: Free Trolley available to Rock & Roll Hall of Fame on Saturday ONLY.*

*Movies & crafts will be available for children at the hotel during adult workshops. Children must be monitored by and with a parent(s) at all excursions.*

## SCHEDULE

**YOUNG ADULTS (MYA)**

**WED. JULY 1**

4:00pm MYA opening mass  
5:00pm Meet & Greet at City & East Hookah Bar  
12:00am MYA social gathering at Barley House

**THU. JULY 2**

1:15pm Excursion to University Circle (*Trolley will return to Town Hall for MYA after excursion*)  
6:00pm Theology on Tap at TownHall with Fr. Tony Massad

**FRI. JULY 3**

12:00pm MYA mass  
1:30pm MYA lunch with the Bishops  
4:00pm Workshop with George Harik

**SAT. JULY 4**

1:15pm Cleveland Excursion: Lolly the Trolley Tour  
4:00pm Theology on Tap with the Bishops

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## ***Patriarch Rai's Homily***

*Continued from page 11*

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After he arranged the funeral with local bishops and the priests and the faithful of the Eparchy, he accompanied him to Lebanon, where he wished to be buried in the tomb of Saints Peter and Paul Church in *Ehden*. A big thank you also to Ms. Michelle [Thomas] who took immediate care of him at his residence at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn, N.Y.

We express our deepest sympathy to the Holy Synod of our Church, and to the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn and to the Patriarchal Vicariate of *Ehden-Zghorta*, and to the all clergy of *Ehden-Zghorta* and to his two brothers and their families, and to the families of his late brother and late sister and to the families of his late uncles and aunts and to all his siblings and relatives and to all the beloved children of *Ehden-Zghorta*.

Our prayer to Christ the Lord, the Good Shepherd, and the "Great Chief Shepherd" (1 Peter 5:4) to reward with the beatific vision in heaven the late Bishop Stephen Hector, who knew how to be, following His example, a good shepherd, and who provided to the souls entrusted to him the springs of salvation and life divine. We ask the Lord to send to the Church "good shepherds after his own heart" (Jeremiah 3:15). To the Holy and Glorified Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, all praise and thanksgiving, now and forever, Amen. ☐

*Zghorta* - Church of Saint John the Baptist, December 27, 2014



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## ***Brooklyn, New York St. Maron's Feast Day***

*Continued from page 7*

In years past, as a child, I can recall trudging through the snow to the Hotel St. George to celebrate the feast day. At that time there was no space at the old Hicks Street church nor, subsequently, suitable space at the Cathedral for us to hold a luncheon or dinner. After the St. George ceased catering we sought other venues and some years we had to postpone the celebration into March when the weather wasn't so forbidding. As times and the economy changed we, at the Cathedral, found that families had difficulty managing the expense that a catering venue commanded. It became an "adult" affair. Unacceptable! We are a family and, as such, decided to change the aspect of our feast day festivities to afford the presence of everyone.

The 90<sup>th</sup> Annual St. Maron's Day Celebration was held in our social hall to an overflow crowd of more than three hundred people. Tight, but cozy, families enjoyed coming together as *Beit Maroun*. What could be better? The event was highlighted with the presence of the Consul General of Lebanon to New York, the Honorable Majdi Ramadan. Entertainment was provided by "Nadim," and the Cathedral Junior *Dabke* Troupe, tutored by Denise Abou Chrouch, performed a Lebanese dance recital. Approximately sixty children under the age of ten had their own celebration in the lower hall with music, face painting and balloon making, not to mention abundant yummys.

The event is always the occasion to make the NAM presentation for the year. This year the Silver Massabki Award was given to Salma Besheer Vahdat. The parish Cathedral Lifetime Award was given to Laurice Matney. After the presentations the community enjoyed dancing and camaraderie. It was as it should be...united, together always!