



The Maronite Voice



A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA

Volume X

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May 2014

The Paschal Mystery in Life and in Liturgy

Pope Francis must be a Maronite at heart, because of his particular love for our Lord in His Paschal Mystery and his desire to live it every day! On New Sunday, Mercy Sunday, the Pope spoke of the wounds of Christ, and how Saint Theresa touched them; how the two new saints; and how we touch them today in those suffering.

This past Holy Week and Easter we realized once again the power and meaning of Christ's Paschal Mystery, His passion, death and resurrection, which gives meaning to our own life, death, suffering and future hope. Hopefully our liturgy was also transformed into loving action for the good of others. This is what makes for a fruitful Holy Week.

In the Maronite Evening Prayer for Holy Week we have the courage to touch Christ's wounds as we remember:

O Christ, in recalling your passion we are saddened, but its memory also fills us with joy.
For you and for us, it is both sorrowful and joyful; it kills and gives life; it brings humiliation and glory.
For us it is necessary and there is nothing equal to it. For you, it is both feared and desired.
Because of your passion may we feel the sadness, which brings repentance and the joy, which does not forget you.
Thus, all sadness and joy will be for your glory, now and forever.

Walking the streets of Buenos Aires, accompanying the poor, Pope Francis lived this passion and prayed it. Through the writings of Saint Paul, he was reminded: "I have been crucified with Christ, and the life I live now is not my own; Christ is living in me" (Gal 2:20). He touched the living Christ.

In Eucharistic liturgy we celebrate Christ's death and resurrection. But as Pope Francis reminds us in dramatic ways, like in the foot washing ritual, we must also give ourselves as a gift and receive Christ, crucified and raised from the dead, as a gift under the veil of bread and wine. The Eucharist celebrates the Paschal Mystery in a most fitting way, and is the most meaningful of all liturgical celebrations because it leads us to deeper union with Christ in His Paschal Mystery and to a deeper communion with others through the Church. But liturgy and life must become one and the same mystery translated into a loving service for those who need it

“He is risen; he is not here.”

MARK 16:6

During liturgy, especially during Holy Week, the Church uses everything at Her disposal to convey the meaning and power of the events of Christ and His Church. Liturgy incorporates chant, procession, ritual, and material goods, such as water, oil, incense, bread and wine. Liturgy draws the worshiper more deeply into union with the risen Christ. But most of all, liturgy should draw us into loving service for others, as Saint John reminds us in his account of the Last Supper, which poignantly is devoid of the narrative of bread and wine, and is clear about foot washing!

In liturgy and in loving service, time stands still. Events of the past become present again, and we appropriate their power and meaning for our lives today.

In the Maronite Evening Prayer for Fridays in Easter we pray:

(Continues on page 20)

Schedule of Bishop Elias Zaidan

May 1, 2014

50th Anniversary of Ordination of Bishop Robert Shaheen, Saint Louis, Mo.

May 2 - 4, 2014

Pastoral Visit to Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Chicago, Ill.

May 4, 2014

Visit to the community of Greater Milwaukee, Wis.

May 6 - 8, 2014

Eastern Catholic Bishops Meeting, Saint Louis, Mo.

May 9 - 11, 2014

Pastoral Visit to St. Rafka Church, Lakewood [Denver], Colo.

May 16 - 18, 2014

Pastoral Visit to St. Therese Church, Tulsa, Okla.

May 23 -25, 2014

Pastoral Visit to Our Lady of the Cedars Church, Houston, Tex.

May 31 – June 1, 2014

Pastoral Visit to Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Norman, Okla.

June 3 - 20, 2014

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

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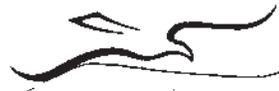
Maronite Convention 2014

Our Lady of Victory Maronite Church

Pittsburgh, Penn.

July 2 - 6, 2014

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



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Brooklyn, New York Chrism Liturgy



Assisted by Chorbishop Michael Thomas (left) and Chorbishop Joseph Kaddo, Bishop Mansour (center) consecrates the Holy Oil.

by Salma Vahdat

The annual Chrism Liturgy was celebrated at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral on Wednesday, April 2, 2014. Led by Bishop Gregory Mansour, the following assisted: Chorbishop Michael Thomas, Vicar General of the Eparchy; Chorbishop Joseph Kaddo, former Vicar General and currently Pastor of St. Anthony of the Desert Church in Fall River, Mass.; and Msgr. James Root, Rector. Eighteen priests from Maine to Florida, four deacons/subdeacons and numerous laity from many parishes were also present.

Before the Anaphora, the ceremony began to bless new Chrism for distribution to the parishes of the Eparchy. Oil from the previous year is kept, as it has been for years, and is used for continuity by pouring some into each of the oils used for baptism, anointing of the sick and the chrism (*myron*). The new blessed oils are then given to the clergy to use in the new liturgical year.

Following the Divine Liturgy, the clergy and laity were invited to a buffet luncheon in the social hall. The gathering offered an opportunity to wish Bishop Mansour a Happy Tenth Anniversary as a bishop. It hardly seems that ten years could have passed so quickly. Needless to say, we are blessed as a community to have the gentle but firm leadership of Bishop Gregory. May he continue to be an inspiration to his flock for many years to come.

Holy Week

by Salma Vahdat

The culmination of Great Lent was in sight with the advent of Holy Week. Palm Sunday and its joyous remembrance of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem was the signal of the somber events to come. Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral,

Brooklyn, N.Y., was filled to capacity as the community came together to worship. Sun and warm temperatures accompanied the parish as it followed Bishop Gregory Mansour, Msgr. Root and other clergy in procession around the Cathedral. Palm Sunday is the acknowledgment by the children and community that Jesus has been received as king.

The prayers on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday are a cycle of readings announcing the death of Jesus Christ as a fulfillment of the prophecies.

Wednesday of Passion Week is also called Wednesday of *Ayoub* (Job). His patience through much suffering represents Christ who is about to willingly endure suffering and death for our sake. On that day, an ancient rite of the Maronite Church, the Rite of the Lamp, is celebrated. Dough is made and seven wicks of candles are inserted into it representing the seven lamps envisioned by the prophet Jeremiah and by John the Apostle in his Revelation. The oil is blessed and all the faithful receive the anointing and may take a sample of the blessed oil.

We had now arrived at Holy Thursday, the first day of the Easter Triduum. The Cathedral was filled to capacity by those who would witness a re-enactment of the Last Supper. It was on that day that Jesus instituted the Sacraments of Priesthood and the Holy Eucharist. He demonstrated His humility by washing the feet of His disciples and commanding them to do the same. Msgr. Root, Rector, washed the feet of twelve men of the parish while Father Geoffrey Abdallah narrated the scene as it unfolded. The Holy Eucharist was exposed until one a.m.

Passion Week continued with Good Friday. The Cathedral could hardly hold the crowd. The chandeliers were dimmed, and a pall of sadness swept through the Cathedral. While the Trisagion (*Kadishat*) was sung, Bishop Mansour prostrated himself before the casket. Msgr. Root's homily reminded us that the Cross represents our Faith and Belief. It is our remembrance of salvation. Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen in his "Life of Christ," summed it up: "It was the thief's last prayer, perhaps even his first. He knocked once, dared everything, and found everything. When even His disciples were doubting and only one was present at the Cross, the thief owned and acknowledged Him as Savior."

The Service continued with a procession held outside the Cathedral. The corpus was removed from the Cross and was placed in a casket. The Choir's hymns resounding throughout the neighborhood as the cathedral emptied of the parishioners joined the procession around the Cathedral and back to the entrance of the Church. Here the Casket was held aloft as the community passed under it on their way back into the Church. The Casket was placed in the tomb at the side of the altar.

Easter Liturgy at midnight was the finale of the Triduum. After all the sadness and solemnity, joy in the Resurrection reverberated throughout the Cathedral. *Al Masih Kam... Hakin Kam* echoed everywhere. Christ is Risen... He is truly risen! Our people were joyous! Bishop Mansour, Msgr. Root, Rev. Geoffrey Abdallah, Deacon, Subdeacon, Seminarian and altar servers processed with the Cross. The Homily was given by Bishop *Emeritus* Stephen Hector Doueihy, who demonstrated his resiliency despite all of the infirmity he has suffered of late.

(Continues on page 20)

Detroit, Michigan Pastoral Visit



From left: Fr. Milad Yaghi, Msgr. Louis Baz, Dr. Daher Rahi, Bishop A. Elias Zaidan and Ambassador Yousif Ghafari.

by Rodolphe Jabbour

His Excellency Bishop A. Elias Zaidan, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, honored the Maronite Community in Detroit, Michigan, with a twelve-day Pastoral visit from April 3 - April 14, 2014. He visited the three Churches in the Detroit metro area. St. Maron Cathedral, the first Maronite Cathedral in the United States, and its two sister Churches, St. Sharbel Church in Warren and St. Rafka Church in Lavonia. The Maronite Community of Detroit hosted several events honoring Bishop Zaidan, where he met the leaders of the community and many parishioners.

On Friday, April 4, 2014, Bishop A. Elias Zaidan and Msgr. Louis Baz, Pastor of St. Maron Cathedral, prayed the Stations of the Cross along with the parish. A Lenten dinner was served afterwards at St. Maron's Banquet Center. The parishioners had a chance to chat with the Bishop and ask questions. Bishop Zaidan emphasized the importance of St. Maron Church as the first Maronite Cathedral and the Seat of the late Bishop Francis M. Zayek, the first Maronite Bishop in the United States.

On Sunday, April 13, 2014, Bishop Zaidan celebrated the Palm Sunday Divine Liturgy with the parishioners of St. Maron, and he promised that St. Maron Cathedral is here to stay. He said that he would make it a yearly tradition to celebrate the Palm Sunday Divine Liturgy at St. Maron Cathedral.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, Bishop Zaidan bestowed upon Ambassador Yousif Ghafari and Dr. Daher Rahi the honor of becoming members of The Order of St. Gregory the Great, one of the five Orders of Knighthood of the Holy See. This special honor is bestowed upon Catholics in recognition of their personal service to the Holy See and to the Catholic Church through their unusual labors, their

support of the Holy See, and their excellent examples set forth in their communities and their countries.

Following the Divine Liturgy, a reception was held in honor of Bishop Zaidan at St. Maron Banquet Center. Parishioners enjoyed their dinner and had a chance to take souvenir pictures with the Bishop. Afterwards everyone wished him farewell with hopes to see him again in the near future. □

Birmingham, Alabama Bishop Elias Visits St. Elias



Front row: Deacon Samuel Wehby, Joe Wehby, Ben Ferris, Anthony Wehby. Back row: Rev. Tom Kelly, Subdeacon James Wehby, Bishop A. Elias Zaidan, Subdeacon Mark Ferris, Chorbishop Richard D. Saad and Rev. Milad Yaghi.

His Excellency A. Elias Zaidan, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, made his first visit as bishop to St. Elias Maronite Church in Birmingham, Alabama, during the weekend of March 28 - 30, 2014. The weekend's events included meeting with parish leadership, spending time with the youth of the parish, visiting St. Paul's Cathedral and having lunch with Birmingham Diocesan clergy, including Bishop Robert Baker and Bishop Emeritus David A. Foley of the Diocese of Birmingham. A Saturday night banquet and Sunday luncheon were held in the parish hall. A highlight of the weekend was the ordination of two Subdeacons, Mark Ferris and James Wehby, at the Saturday evening Liturgy. At Sunday morning Liturgy, six new members of the Order of Saint Sharbel were installed.

Chorbishop Richard D. Saad, Pastor of St. Elias, and parishioners enjoyed welcoming Bishop A. Elias Zaidan to Birmingham and look forward to his next visit. □

Food For Thought

"Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams.
Think not about your frustrations, but about your
unfulfilled potential.

Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but
with what it is still possible for you to do."

Saint John XXIII

San Diego, California Southwest Regional NAM Convention



From left: Fr. Albert Constantine, Dr. Elias Ayoub, President of NAM, Fr. Toufic Nasr, Pastor, and Bishop A. Elias Zaidan.

by Mary Ghosn

St. Ephrem Maronite Catholic Church was pleased to host the Southwest Regional NAM Convention over the weekend of March 14 – 16, 2014. In conjunction with the event, Bishop A. Elias Zaidan, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, made his first pastoral visit to San Diego. Other honored guests included Congressman Darrell Issa, Chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, The Honorable Johnny Ibrahim, Consul General of Lebanon in Los Angeles and Mr. Sam Abed, Mayor of the City of Escondido, California. Over 350 individuals attended the three-day event from seven Southwestern states. Additionally we hosted one hundred fifty members of the MYO, as well as their advisors.

The weekend featured an opportunity for prayer, spiritual renewal and a celebration of rich traditions. Highlights included a Lenten Friday Benediction with the Holy Cross led by Bishop Zaidan, a Saturday evening Grand Banquet at the Mission Valley Marriott Hotel, and a Sunday Divine Liturgy featuring a children's choir and Order of Saint Sharbel Honor Guard. During the Sunday Divine Liturgy, Bishop Zaidan presented the Silver Massabki Award to Michel and Sherry Fattouh and the Faith of the Mountain award to their daughter, Emily Fattouh. Three parishioners were also inducted into the Order of Saint Sharbel: Michel Fattouh, Eva Bsaibes and Mima Habchi. Everyone is looking forward to the National NAM convention this summer in Pittsburgh, Penn., as well as next year's Regional NAM convention in San Francisco, California.

Father Toufic Nasr, Pastor of St. Ephrem Church, would like to thank all of the attendees (especially the clergy), volunteers and donors who made the event such a successful expression of our Faith and our community. Special thanks goes to the Convention Committee and to Mrs. Ellen Saad, SW Regional Convention Chair and Southwest Regional NAM Vice President. □

Houston, Texas Family Retreat



Alberto Tohme (left), Retreat Director, with the Catholic Charities Retreat Team.

by Tommy L. Cordova

The 2014 Family Retreat was held the weekend of March 14 - 16, 2014, at Circle Lake Retreat Center in Pinehurst, Texas. Those families staying overnight began arriving late Friday afternoon. That evening Fr. Pierre El-Khoury led the outdoor Stations of the Cross which go around the lake. Once the Stations were complete, families gathered in the main conference room for an orientation meeting, and then moved to the fire pit area for an evening bonfire.

On Saturday the morning began with the arrival of the Saturday-only participants, followed by a brief welcome and review of the rules of the center. After Fr. Pierre led the Morning Prayer, the retreat team from Catholic Charities was introduced. The team then took the children and youth to their program area, while the adults stayed in the main conference building.

The program that was prepared by Catholic Charities for the children and youth was age based. The younger children discussed topics such as following rules, respecting parents, and getting along with others, while the youth covered topics such as the appropriate use of social media, dealing with friends, and getting along with parents. The day concluded with a music program for the adults, while the youth and children played games and watched movies.

Sunday was the last day of the retreat. Divine Liturgy was held in the Circle Lake Retreat Center Chapel. Following the Liturgy families packed up their belongings and checked out of their cabins. Overall the 2014 Family Retreat was a great success, and parish members are looking forward to the 2015 Family Retreat, which will be held February 6 – 8, 2015. □



Brooklyn Cathedral Hosts *MYA/MYO Lenten Retreat*

by Jules Nohra and Layla Yazbeck,
MYA, Our Lady of the Cedars,
Boston, Mass.

The annual Lenten (MYA) Maronite Young Adults and Maronite Youth Organization (MYO) retreat, organized by Msgr. Jim Root and the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, was held from March 21 - 23, 2014, at the Graymoor Spiritual Life Center in Garrison, New York. Participants traveled from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey to join Bishop Gregory Mansour and a number of priests in meditation and prayer over the course of the three days.



The retreat center is located on a hill with breathtaking views of the surrounding forests and towns. We spent a significant amount of time outside enjoying the beautiful campus, including an outdoor Stations of the Cross, the shrine of Saint Anthony, and the Labyrinth and Peace Pole.

The retreat started on Friday night with a play presented by the parish youth of Saint Anthony, Danbury, Conn., about the life and death of Jesus. The play was followed by a question and answer session and meditation. Throughout the weekend we were given an opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Unlike retreats conducted in years past, the second day was focused on a new form of prayer called *Prayer In Motion*. The founder of Prayer In Motion, Dr. Anne Borik, engaged our minds in prayer by using movements of the body to connect spiritually with God, especially praying and singing the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

We spent time with Bishop Gregory Mansour in an intimate setting and discussed a number of topics that young Maronite adults ponder on a daily basis. The time with Bishop Gregory was a great way to begin the Lenten season. It is always a treat and a blessing to be in his presence.

The retreat ended on Sunday with the Divine Liturgy celebrated by Bishop Gregory. A choir organized by the Brooklyn parish performed beautiful renditions of hymns and religious songs to conclude the retreat. Overall it was a weekend filled with prayer, meditation and togetherness. We are all looking forward to next year's retreat! □



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the Deadline is... **Deadline** for next month's issue of *The Maronite Voice* is May 25, 2014.

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

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

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Digital pictures must be in "JPG" format and in high resolution (300dpi). *The Maronite Voice* is also available online, in PDF format, at www.stmaron.org. □

To make a donation, please send to Aquinas Institute, 23 S. Spring Ave., St Louis, MO 63108 or www.ai.edu.

Orange County, California *Man of the Year*



From left: Dr. Elias Ayoub, NAM President, Mrs. Ellen Saad, Fr. Albert Constantine, Mr. Edward Salem, Dr. Ray Hachem and Tommy Tedros.

The highest lay papal award, "*Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice*" (For Church and Pope) was bestowed on Edward M. Salem of Cypress, California, by His Excellency Bishop A. Elias Zaidan, Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, on Sunday, January 26, 2014. The papal award was presented in conjunction with the conferring of the Lifetime Achievement Award of the National Apostolate of Maronites of the United States. The award was presented by Dr. Elias Ayoub, President of NAM, and members of the board, Dr. Ray Hachem of Houston, Texas, Mrs. Ellen Saad, Regional Coordinator, Father Albert Constantine, Western Regional Coordinator, and Mr. Tommy Tedros, former President. The ceremony followed a Divine Liturgy at St. John Maron Maronite Catholic Church in Orange, California. The ceremony was attended by church officials, local dignitaries and over 400 people who traveled from across the country and the world to attend.

Mr. Salem was cited for his contributions to the local, national and international church, his profession, his country and his family. He currently serves as Chairman of the International Maronite Foundation and serves as Chair of the Capital Fund and the Parish's Stewardship Committee. He is also on the board of several other non-profit organizations ranging from the religious to the humanitarian and educational.

He has served many churches in his lifetime, both Roman and Maronite, in Iowa and California. His peers and superiors at the Air Force have remarked on his distinct ability to balance work, family and church with the best results possible. He achieved the respect of his fellow workers and especially is admired by the youth in his work, church and family for his mentorship and guidance. The Mayor of Orange, Ms. Tita Smith, and Downey City Councilman Alex Saab presented Mr. Salem with citations.

Mr. Salem has also been awarded three civilian medals from the Air Force, and multiple awards and recognition from the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, the State of California, the Assembly and the U.S. Congress. He earned the Meritorious Achievement Medal, The Exemplary Civilian Medal, and the Distinguished Service Medal from the Air Force, and the Ellis Island Medal of Honor for community service. He is an Honorary Admiral in the State of Nebraska, and a Tennessee Squire. Mr. Salem's career spans employment with the Small Business Administration, the U.S. Army, the U.S. Air Force, and Salient Federal Solutions, where he serves as a Senior Consultant. Mr. Salem lives in Cypress with his wife, Samia. He has two children, Christopher and Nicole. □

Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

May 4, 2014

11:00 a.m., Liturgy at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

5:00 p.m., Liturgy at the Manhattan Mission, N.Y.

May 7, 2014

Ecumenical Conference at 11:00 a.m., to bring attention to the state of Christians in the Middle East, Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C.

May 10 - 11, 2014

Pastoral Visit and Mother's Day, St. Theresa Church, Brockton, Mass.

May 18, 2014

Ordination to Priesthood of Brother Youssef Mariam, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

May 25, 2014

Parish Visit, Westchester, N.Y.

May 28, 2014

Catholic Relief Service Meeting, Baltimore, Md.

May 29, 2014

Feast of the Ascension, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

May 30, 2014

Catholic University of America (CUA) Benefit Dinner, Manhattan, N.Y.

May 31 - June 2, 2014

Parish Visitation, Our Lady of the Cedars Church, Boston, Mass.

June 5 - 24, 2014

Maronite Bishops Synod, *Bkerke*, Lebanon. □

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

For more information about the Order ask your Pastor, or visit www.orderstsharbel.org.

Cincinnati, Ohio *Easter Blessings for Family*

by Heidi Abdallah

The family of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, was blessed by newly ordained Father Wissam Akiki and his family this Easter. Beginning with Palm Sunday, Father Wissam celebrated his first Holy Week in Cincinnati. He shared the beautiful rites of Holy Week, which are our heritage as Maronites: The Coming to the Harbor, The Rite of the Lamp, The Washing of the Feet, The Signing of the Chalice, The Adoration of the Cross, and the Prayer of Forgiveness. In addition to his conscientious preparation, he made himself readily available for Confessions and spiritual direction. On Tuesday of Holy Week, he and his family visited the sick and



homebound in the parish. He brought the healing grace of Christ to us, and we return grateful hearts. The Akiki family even made time to lead in an Easter cookie-baking event on Saturday morning, while the parish hall was filled with the music of teenagers practicing the *Dabke*!

Father Wissam Akiki invites the children of St. Anthony of Padua Church to come sit at the feet of Jesus during the Easter Liturgy.

homebound in the parish. He brought the healing grace of Christ to us, and we return grateful hearts. The Akiki family even made time to lead in an Easter cookie-baking event on Saturday morning, while the parish hall was filled with the music of teenagers practicing the *Dabke*!

The Feast of the Glorious Resurrection was a day filled with joy. Even little children understood Father Wissam's message, shown to them more through his inclusive actions, than by his words. During the Easter Liturgy, he invited all the children to the altar where he welcomed them to gather and pray. At the conclusion of the Liturgy, one child exclaimed, "Jesus is Alive. That's amazing!" Those around her knew she had understood the mystery of the Resurrection.

Father Wissam visited for ten days, but his positive influence on children, youth and the parish family of St. Anthony of Padua did not depart with him. His priestly family was loved by all. We are grateful to Father Wissam and his family for their selfless love, energy, and outreach, which brought healing and happiness to our parish family. □

2014 National Maronite Youth Retreat

June 28 - July 3, 2014
LaRoche College
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

\$400 per person (double occupancy)
\$550 (single occupancy, adults only)

Please watch our website for all registration material,
www.maronite-youth.com. □

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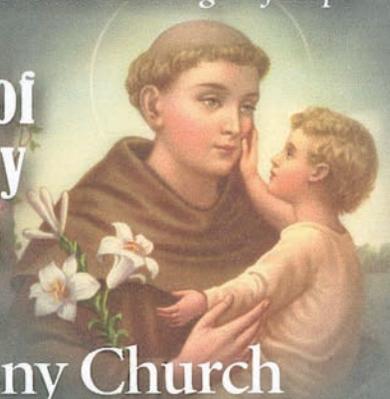
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St. Anthony Church

September 6-14, 2014 *A rare opportunity!*

A highly unprecedented tour of the bones of St. Anthony of Padua will journey to Springfield, MA for 9 consecutive days, before returning to their resting place and shrine in Italy.

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by Deacon Enzo Di Giacomo

In a highly unprecedented tour, the bones of St. Anthony of Padua will journey to America and visit with the Maronites of Springfield, Mass., for nine consecutive days from September 5 - 14, 2014, before returning to their resting place and shrine in Italy. During these nine days the Maronites of Springfield, who dedicated their church and parish to St. Anthony, will conduct a very special novena in thanksgiving for two separate miracles that represent over a hundred years of his patronage and protection.

In 1907, Msgr. Paul Saab, who had only arrived two years earlier from Lebanon to gather all the Maronite families of Western Massachusetts into a parish, suddenly became deathly ill. If he died, the fledgling Maronite Mission would die with him, and their unique Catholic heritage would be lost. So the people turned to the miracle-worker from Padua for help praying their first Novena to St. Anthony. By the end of the novena, Msgr. Paul had recovered, and his nephew, the future Msgr. Michael Saab, arrived from Lebanon to study in the seminary of Montreal, securing the future of their parish. In thanksgiving to St. Anthony, the people named their church after him and placed it under his protection. Fast forward one hundred years after the ordination of Fr. Michael Saab. As the sun set on June 1, 2011, a horrendous tornado ripped through Springfield, killing a mother sheltering her child in a tub and injuring 300 others. It leveled the homes south of St. Anthony Church and

was headed directly for the Parish Hall, where parishioners already were gathering for their monthly supper. At the last moment in what may have been another miracle, it veered around the hall, mowing down the forest of trees behind, breaking a few windows but leaving the people inside generally unharmed.

The present Pastor of St. Anthony Maronite Church, Fr. George Zina, wanted to hold another Novena to give thanks to the saint for his protection. He went to Italy, and it was decided that they bring the holy relics of St. Anthony exclusively to the Maronite Church in Springfield for the full nine days of the Novena.

In response to so great an honor, the parishioners of St. Anthony Church would like to share their great blessing by inviting all the Maronites in America, as well as eleven other Catholic Dioceses, to make their own pilgrimage to the sacred relics of St. Anthony while they are in Springfield, Mass. A pilgrimage is a spiritual journey where the difficulty or inconvenience of traveling to a holy site becomes a prayer and offering for the intercession and protection of heaven. You may have seen devoted people walking barefoot, or on their knees to a shrine to intensify their prayers.

The Novena of St. Anthony in the presence of his relics will open on Saturday, September 6, 2014, at 11:00 a.m. presided over by Bishop Gregory Mansour of the Eparchy of Saint Maron and Bishop Timothy McDonnell of the Diocese of Springfield, and will be followed by a MYO Retreat and Youth Day. The closing of the Novena on Sunday, September 14, 2014, will be presided over by Bishop Emeritus Robert Shaheen, whose first assignment as a young priest was to St. Anthony in Springfield.

If you would like to participate in the visit of St. Anthony's bones, or you would like to organize a pilgrimage for your parish, please contact Fr. George Zina or Mary Ann at (413) 732-0589. More information is also available with an extended schedule of events at the website: www.saintanthonysrelic.com. □

First Communion Pictures

The Maronite Voice will publish First Communion pictures only in its July issue. Please send a photo, the names of the children, and the date before June 25, 2014. No exception. □

PLEASE SAVE THIS DATE
THURSDAY OCTOBER 23, 2014

**FIFTH ANNUAL
BENEFIT DINNER FOR
THE EPARCHY OF
SAINT MARON**

ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK CATHOLIC CENTER
1011 1ST AVENUE · NEW YORK CITY

Details to follow

What Easter Means

by
Very Reverend 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." Learn more at www.WordonFire.org.

In first century Judaism, there were many views concerning what happened to people after they died. Following a very venerable tradition, some said that death was the end, that the dead simply returned to the dust of the earth from which they came. Others maintained that the righteous dead would rise at the close of the age. Still others thought that the souls of the just went to live with God after the demise of their bodies. There were even some who believed in a kind of reincarnation.

What is particularly fascinating about the accounts of Jesus' resurrection is that none of these familiar frameworks of understanding is invoked. The first witnesses maintain that the same Jesus who had been brutally and unmistakably put to death and buried was, through the power of God, alive again. He was not vaguely "with God," nor had his soul escaped from his body; nor had he risen in a purely symbolic or metaphorical sense. He, Jeshoua from Nazareth, the friend whom they knew, was alive again. What was expected for all the righteous dead at the end of time had happened, in time, to this one particular man, to this Jesus. It was the very novelty of the event that gave such energy and verve to the first Christian proclamation. On practically every page of the New Testament, we find a grab-you-by-the-lapels quality, for the early Christians were not trading in bland spiritual abstractions or moral bromides. They were trying to tell the whole world that something so new and astounding had happened that nothing would ever again be the same.

Over the past couple of centuries, many thinkers, both inside and outside of the Christian churches, endeavored to reduce the resurrection message to the level of myth or symbol. Easter, they argued, was one more iteration of the "springtime saga" that can be found, in one form or another, in most cultures, namely, that life triumphs over death in the "resurrection" of nature after the bleak months of winter. Or it was a symbolic way of saying that the cause of Jesus lives on in his followers. But as C.S. Lewis keenly observed, those who think the resurrection story is a myth haven't read many myths. Mythic literature deals in ahistorical archetypes, and thus it tends to speak of things that happened "once upon a time" or "in a galaxy far, far away." But the Gospels don't use that sort of language.

In describing the resurrection, they mention particular places like Judea and Jerusalem, and they specify that the event took place when Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of the region, and they name distinct individuals - Peter, John, Thomas, etc. - who encountered Jesus after he rose from the dead. Moreover, no one dies defending mythic claims. The myths of Greece, Rome, and Egypt are powerful and illuminating indeed, but there are no martyrs to Zeus or Dionysus or Osiris. But practically all of the first heralds of

the resurrection went to their deaths defending the truth of their message.

Yet assuming the resurrection is true, what does it mean? It means, first, that the customary manner in which we understand the relationship between order and violence - from the Epic of Gilgamesh to "Game of Thrones" - has to be rethought. On the standard Realpolitik reading of things, order comes about through the violent imposition of strength. And if that order is lost or compromised, it must be restored through answering violence. In Jesus' time, the great principle of order was the Empire of Rome, which maintained its hold through the exertions of its massive army and through the imposition of harsh punishment on those who opposed its purposes. The most terrible and fearsome of these punishments was, of course, the cross, a particularly brutal mode of torture that was purposely carried out in public so as to have greatest deterrent effect. It was precisely on one of these Roman crosses that Jesus of Nazareth was put to death, having been betrayed and abandoned by his friends and condemned by a corrupt tribunal of collaborators.

When the risen Jesus presented himself alive to his disciples, they were, we are told, afraid. Their fear might not have been simply a function of their seeing something uncanny; it might have been grounded in the assumption that he was back for vengeance. However, after showing his wounds, the risen Jesus said to his friends, "Shalom," Peace. The teacher who had urged his followers to turn the other cheek and to meet violence with forgiveness exemplified his own teaching in the most vivid way possible. And what he showed, thereby, was that the divine manner of establishing order has nothing to do with violence, retribution, or eye-for-an-eye retaliation. Instead, it has to do with a love which swallows up hate, with a forgiveness which triumphs over aggression. It is this great resurrection principle which, explicitly or implicitly, undergirded the liberating work of Martin Luther King, Jr., in America, of Gandhi in India, of Bishop Tutu in South Africa, and of John Paul II in Poland. Those great practitioners of non-violent resistance were able to stand athwart the received wisdom only because they had some sense that in opting for the way of love they were going with the deepest grain of reality, operating in concert with the purposes of God.



Fr. Robert Barron

(Continues on page 20)

The Vocation to Love: Pope John Paul II and Lebanon

One sign of holiness is the desire and ability in a person to love the world as God so loves. This theme is an entire symphony in the life of Pope John Paul II, played out in many of his efforts to reach out to others. I will mention only a few:

- His profound insights given over years of Wednesday Audiences that became the famous "Theology of the Body."
- His fruitful outreach (leading up to the 2000 Jubilee) to all those who have felt they were far from the Church, and the 95 times he led us as Catholics to say "I am sorry,"
- And his love and insight into the role and importance of Lebanon. In all these areas, the Holy Father's love was both prophetic and courageous.

As a Maronite, I would like to reflect on his love for Lebanon, as this theme played out in his wise and prudent desire to convoke the Synod for Lebanon in 1995.

Pope John Paul II, like his predecessor Pope Paul VI, envisioned the Synod of Bishops as a means to continue the springtime renewal of the Church begun with the Second Vatican Council. There have been over twenty-five Synods since 1965, some based on different themes, such as the Family, the Eucharist, and the Word of God, others based on territorial considerations, such as the Synods for Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe and in 2010 the Middle East. But in 1991 Pope John Paul II announced something unique, his desire to convoke a Synod just for Lebanon, unique because it was the only time a Synod focused on all of Eastern Churches, Catholic and Orthodox, and on just one country, Lebanon.

Pope John Paul II developed the extremely popular moral conception that "Lebanon is more than a country, it is a mission." He viewed Lebanese society as a model for religious and cultural plurality, and Islamo-Christian



dialogue at the level of life, culture and even politics. For a man who grew up in mostly Latin Catholic Poland, the Holy Father went beyond his cultural comfort level and developed a great love for the Churches of the East and for the country of Lebanon. This approach showed the Holy Father's great ability to understand and love others, beyond his own usual experience. Some attribute his love for Lebanon to his personal gratitude for Lebanon having accepted so many Polish seminarians and priests who needed shelter during the Nazi and later Communist oppression of the Church in Poland. In fact, the Holy Father knew of them personally and mentioned this during his Lebanon visit. Likewise, after he came back from Lebanon, he told those Lebanese and others who had gathered to welcome him home at the Rome airport that his visit was an attempt to say "thank you".

Likewise, the Pope expressed his respect for Lebanon in many diplomatic and ecclesial interventions since his earliest days after his election in October, 1978. However, the war in Lebanon started in 1975, and enflamed by internal, regional and international interferences, prevented any meaningful intervention. However, as soon as weapons were silenced in the

Fall of 1990, Pope John Paul II was quick to call for a Synod for Lebanon. He did this June 12, 1991, and followed this by a message to all the Lebanese people, as well as a letter to the Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops in Lebanon.

The Synod's objective was simple: spiritual renewal through penance and reconciliation within Lebanese society and for a new solidarity among all the Lebanese. The Synod was addressed directly to the faithful of the Catholic Church - Maronite, Melkite, Armenian, Syriac, Chaldean and Latin - and indirectly to the Orthodox Churches - Antiochene, Armenian and Syriac - as well as to Assyrian and Evangelical Christians. The Synod aimed to establish, with all Christians, a bond of prayer, consultation and cooperation. Also, Muslim communities - Sunni, Shiite and the Druze - were invited to the Synod in order to help both Catholics and Muslims understand the meaning of the Synod and to better cooperate together in overcoming misunderstandings and obstacles.

The Pope's visit to Lebanon May 10 and 11, 1997 to celebrate the closure of the Synod for Lebanon, and to deliver the Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, had a tremendous effect on unifying and promoting Lebanon, the country, as a message and an ideal for East and the West. The Holy Father's love was palpable on that historic visit. Muslims and Christians rallied to greet him. The youth stayed up all night to visit with him at Harissa, the largest Marian shrine. The outdoor Mass was an unforgettable experience. On the ecclesial level, a renewal of Christians had already begun by their working together in better harmony. Lebanese citizens became more aware of their spiritual, social, cultural and political role in Lebanon and throughout the Middle East. The beatification of Pope John Paul II on May 1, 2011 attracted thousands of Lebanese, as did the canonization which was attended by Lebanon's President and First Lady as well as by the Maronite Patriarch.

The Synod for the Middle East, held in October 2010, was an attempt to bring hope to Christians of the Middle East. The Synod was greatly helped by the Synod for Lebanon held fifteen years earlier, along with another effort of the pope John Paul II, namely the follow-up Special Assembly held in Lebanon for all the Eastern Churches in 1999. The solidarity, cooperation and friendships, which Pope John Paul II helped form, before, during, and after the Synod for Lebanon, assisted the 2010 Synod, convoked by Pope Benedict, with the special graces needed to deepen communion among Catholics and make better our witness.

Another grace, which may be attributable to the loving intervention of Pope John Paul II in Lebanon was celebrated on March 25, 2011: the enthronement of the new Maronite Patriarch Bechara Peter Rai. On this day, the Feast of the Annunciation, which is the only officially established Christian-Muslim holiday in the world, provided the background for the enthronement of Patriarch Rai. With his brother bishops surrounding him, with representatives of Muslim and Christian communities present, and with all the diverse political parties of Lebanon's leaders likewise present, the day was a great source of "communion and love", as was Patriarch Rai's motto. This day may be attributable to Pope John Paul II because twenty-five years previously the Pope had personally chosen Rai, a young bishop at that time, to coordinate the beginning steps of the Synod for Lebanon!

These and many more graces were the result of the prophetic and courageous vision of one holy man who followed his vocation to love, who recognized in the Eastern Churches a treasure, and who had not only the conviction and courage to call us to a greater Catholic-Orthodox unity, but also to better witness our beautiful faith to non Christians. In this way, for him, and for all of us who follow our own vocations to love, Lebanon is so much more than a country, it is a message for both East and West. □

+ Gregory John Mansour
Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

Dartmouth, Massachusetts *My Vocation Journey*



From left: Rebecca Chedid, Sister Teresa Touma, Mother Marla Marie and Natalie Salamah.

by *Rebecca Chedid*

"Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid" (Matthew 14: 27). This was meant to be my big year. As a Ph.D. candidate, I was going to present my research study at the largest occupational therapy conference in the world in Baltimore, Maryland! Little did I know that God had other plans for me, too. While planning my trip to the U.S. from Sydney, Australia, where I live, I felt the Holy Spirit giving me continuous signs to visit the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light.

I had been in touch with Mother Marla Marie for a few months prior and I thought this would be a great opportunity. Many questions came to mind. What should I expect? What do I bring with me? Is God calling me to religious life? I arrived a few days before Hosanna Sunday and spent Holy Week and Easter with the Sisters.

Before I arrived to the convent, I prayed, "I am ready, Lord, for whatever you want from me. I am ready." Since the first dinner with the Sisters, I felt Jesus in the midst. It felt like home. In the twelve days I spent with the Sisters, I was moved by their great love for Our Lord and the Maronite parishes that

they serve. I saw how authentic they were in preserving the Maronite traditions and liturgies and in living their vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty. I also joined them at recreation playing *yahtzee*, *pictionary*, going on walks, singing, and watching *The Sound of Music*.

The Sisters lead a balanced life of prayer, service, study and recreation. So I joined the Sisters in their prayers and fast, especially during Holy Week. This allowed me to delve deeper into my spiritual journey and to share in the Lord's passion and resurrection. God showered me with an abundance of blessings during the time I spent there. I felt his immense love for me in every moment.

I encourage young women to "come and see," to be open to God's will in their lives.

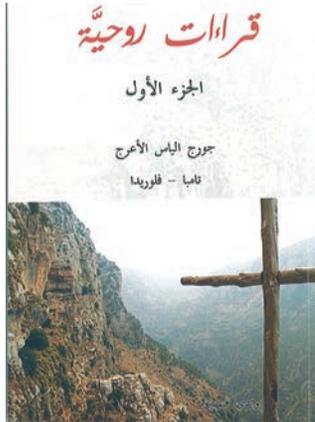
As Mother Marla Marie explained to me, God speaks through the silence of our hearts and through prayer. Even if you do not think that religious life is your calling, still come and visit the Sisters. You will discover how much God loves you. You will be able to go deeper in your spiritual journey.

I continue to pray for more vocations to religious life and especially to the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light. □

Tampa, Florida Book Available

“Spiritual Readings” a 122-page book in Arabic by George Araj, is available from Sts. Peter and Paul Mission in Tampa, Florida, for \$20 plus shipping. Donations are also accepted.

You may order your copy(ies) from Sts. Peter and Paul Mission, 6201 Sheldon Road, Tampa, FL 33615-3115, or by telephone at (813) 886-7413. Checks should be made payable to the Mission. □



Fr. Alaa Issa (center) with a group of volunteers.

successful. Visitors enjoyed the traditional Lebanese food and pastries. Children also had their share of fun with jump houses, slides, and even some football.

On Saturday night, singer Wassim Katan provided us with live music, and of course dancing *dabke* was a must. The festival proceeded on Sunday after the Divine liturgy. Mary Mother of the Light parishioners would like to thank all sponsors, donors, and volunteers, who made this event a success. □

West Palm Beach Annual Festival

by Eliane Rizkallah Jouni

Mary Mother of the Light Maronite Church started the Lent season by celebrating its annual food festival for two days, March 1- 2, 2014. This was the first festival with our new priest, Father Alaa Issa, at our new location in Tequesta, Florida. Families devoted their time and energy, organizing and volunteering to make this event



Effective Ways You Can Help Your Eparchy!

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

Planned Giving: Consider Your Legacy

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

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

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

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

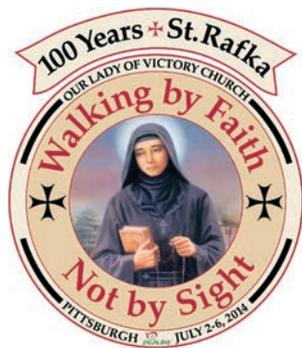
“I give and bequeath to the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, located in St. Louis, Missouri, _____% of the residue of my estate [or: the sum of \$_____].”

Tax-Smart Giving of Appreciated Stock or other Assets

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

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

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Prepares for the 51st Maronite Convention



With the convention a short two months away, the committees are hard at work preparing for their guests. This year's convention starts on July 2, 2014, and everyone has been working on a full schedule of informative, inspiring workshops, colorful excursions and fun events for the evenings' entertainment.

Workshops

The annual convention is noted for many activities, not the least of which is its workshops. NAM's mission is to preserve our religious heritage. These workshops offer a way in which we can accomplish this goal.

Leadership

Thursday, July 3, 2014: 10:30 a.m. – noon,
Mr. Tony Charaf, Senior Vice President and Chief Cargo Officer Delta Air Lines, Non-Profit Board Member – St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, the Carter Center and Red Cross Atlanta, GA Chapter

An inspirational speaker and devout Maronite, Mr. Charaf will share with the attendees his life experiences as an executive of a Fortune 500 company and discuss the many leadership challenges facing all spiritual groups. Despite his high profile position as an executive, Mr. Charaf maintains focus on his faith and devotion. Find out how you can develop and utilize crucial leadership skills in your own career and within your community of faith.

Music And The Maronite Liturgy

Thursday, July 3, 2014: 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.
Fr. Geoffrey Abdallah, Rector – Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary

From his truly unique perspective as Rector of the Seminary and Eparchial Music Director, Fr. Abdallah shares his enthusiasm for the beauty and richness of the Maronite Liturgy. Our liturgical music is an incredible testament to the richness of our culture. Come and experience the beauty that is the Maronite Liturgy. Let the poetry that is our music fill your senses and soothe your soul.

Homecoming – A Personal Journey

Friday, July 4, 2014: 10:30 a.m. – noon

Fr. Tony Khawli, O.L.M.

From the beginning of his entertainment career on the Lebanese show "Studio Elfan" and his performances in front of audiences throughout the world, to the decision to dedicate his life to Christ, Fr. Khawli tells us of his own very intimate journey toward his spiritual home. Do not miss the presentation of this wonderful story.

Prayer In Motion – Eat Healthy, Be Happy, Live Holy

Friday, July 4, 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Dr. Anne Borik

As a medical doctor practicing in Phoenix, Ariz., Dr. Borik will share her personal prayer ministry and the importance of uniting 'Health with Holiness.' Recently, Pope Francis recommended Prayer as Medicine. He said, "I would like to prescribe a medicine to all of you. It is the Rosary, it is the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and it is Prayer." In her practice, Dr. Borik takes care of many sick patients who are suffering from cancer, strokes, depression, anxiety, heart disease and many other ailments. By using slow sign gestures to pray the words along with music and movement, our prayer comes alive in motion and can improve the healing process. 'Prayer in Motion' is a very powerful way to pray that opens one fully to the movement of the Holy Spirit. From a healthcare perspective, 'Prayer in Motion' is like Miracle-Gro for the brain.

Catechesis And Religious Education

Friday, July 4, 10:30 a.m. - noon and 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Deacon Lou Peters and Cathy George

This is a two-session workshop, one morning and one afternoon. Catechesis and the religious education of both adults and children are among the primary missions and tasks of the Church. Topics will include the following:

- The Trinity, the Holy Mysteries, our Church family, the Commandments, Maronite Liturgy, First Penance and Eucharist, the Bible, the Creed, Church History, and the world's religions;
- Foundational principals of religious education;
- The basic tenets of the Catholic Faith;
- An overview of basic concepts of Christian education;
- The documents of the recent Maronite Patriarchal Synod on Christian education;
- An overview of the revised Maronite religious education series *Faith of the Mountain*; and using the Liturgy and liturgical calendar in catechesis.

Life of St. Rafka and History of Her Religious Order

Saturday, July 5, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Mother Marta Basil and Sister Lea

This presentation, delivered by presentday messengers from St. Rafka's own religious order, will review the faith-filled story of St. Rafka's journey. Declared a 'Saint for the Whole Church' on June 10, 2001, by Pope John Paul II, St. Rafka

was blind and paralyzed, but she kept smiling and thanking God for His grace of letting her participate in His Passion. Her face reflected peace and tenderness until the end of her days.

Developments in the Middle East and Their Impact on Lebanon and Syria

Saturday, July 5: 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Chorbishop Seely Beggiani, Bishop A. Elias Zaidan; Dr. Sam Nader; and Dr. Mounser Fatfat

This panel discussion will focus on how Middle Eastern Christians are coping amidst daily turmoil and unrest all over the region. The development of what is often referred to as 'Arab Spring' is a phenomenon that continues to sweep through several countries of the Middle East. Attendees will receive information on the current state of affairs from well-informed 'hands-on' panelists regarding the status of social, economic and political relationships in the region. □



Nuncio Reports Starvation in Damascus

The apostolic nuncio in Syria, Archbishop Mario Zenari, told Vatican Radio this Easter

Monday, that in the *Yarmouk* district of Damascus, where the nunciature is located, there are many people starving and the number of those starving is increasing.

"This is something we cannot accept," the nuncio said. "This is something the international community cannot accept." There are roughly 18,000 inhabitants in that district.

"Aid is ready," he said. "[It is] there at the gates of these villages and neighbourhoods, and because of a lack of security, humanitarian agencies are unable to enter."

Pope Francis has frequently called for an end to the country's violence and prayed for negotiations.

In his *Urbi et Orbi* address Easter Sunday, Pope Francis appealed that "all those suffering the effects of the conflict can receive needed humanitarian aid." He also prayed "that neither side will again use deadly force, especially against the defenseless civil population, but instead boldly negotiate the peace long awaited and long overdue." (D.C.L.) □

April 23, 2014 (Zenit.org)



July 2-6²⁰¹⁴
Pittsburgh, PA

51st Annual Maronite CONVENTION



EXCURSIONS

Three Rivers Regatta
St. Anthony's Chapel
Just Ducky Tour
National Aviary



WORKSHOPS

Leadership
Music and the Maronite Liturgy
Father Tony Khawil's personal journey, "A Homecoming"
Prayer in Motion - "Eat Healthy, Be Happy, Live Holy"
Life of St. Rafka
Developments in Middle East: The Impact on Lebanon & Syria
Catechesis and Religious Education

EVENING ENTERTAINMENT

Welcome to Pittsburgh Jazz Night
Soiree Band

Evangelical and Classical Concert
Gina Morgano, Nicolas El-Osta,
accompanied by pianist Fadi Abi-Hashim

"Touch of Lebanon"
Singer Samir Edmond and band

Grand Banquet - Entertainment by the
Famous Lebanese Singer
Nicolas El-Osta,
accompanied by Fadi Abi-Hashim and band

CONVENTION HOTEL

Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh Downtown \$125.00/night for single/double/triple/quad room
Rate valid until June 09, 2014 For reservation call: 412-391-4600
One night deposit is required for all reservations



Hosted by Our Lady of Victory Maronite Church, Pittsburgh, PA
www.olov.info / www.nam2014pittsburgh.org

Sponsored by NAM
www.namnews.org

Pope to Seminarians: We Have Too Many 'Half Priests' Who Fail to Imitate Jesus

Pope Francis met on April 14, 2014, in the Vatican with seminarians from regions around Rome, warning them that the Church has "many half priests" who fail to reach their potential because they are not "pastors in the image of Jesus."

The seminarians are members of the Pontifical Leonine College of Anagni, a regional seminary for several of the dioceses around the city of Rome.

"We have so many, so many half way priests," the Pope told the young men. "It is a sorrow that they do not succeed in reaching the fullness.

"They have something about them of employees, a bureaucratic dimension and this does no good to the Church. I advise you, be careful that you do not fall into this!"

He continued, "You are becoming pastors in the image of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, to be like Him and in His person in the midst of his flock, to feed his sheep."

Acknowledging the hesitation common in men contemplating the priesthood, Francis noted: "We can answer as Mary did to the angel: 'How is this possible?'"

"To become 'good pastors' in the image of Jesus is something too great, and we are so small It's true! ... We are among the smallest of men. It's true, it is too great, but it's not our work! It is the work of the Holy Spirit, with our collaboration," he said.

Encouraging them to not be overwhelmed, Pope Francis explained the process involves sacrifice: "It is about offering oneself humbly, as clay to be molded, so that the potter, who

is God, can shape it with water and fire, with the Word and the Spirit."

Escape

Pope Francis affirmed that the seminary is not an escape. It's "not a refuge for the many limitations we might have," he said, "a refuge from psychological lacks or a refuge because I don't have the courage to go forward in life and I seek there a place that defends me. No, it's not this.

"If your seminary was this, it would become a mortgage for the Church! No, the seminary is precisely to go forward."

The Holy Father discussed that prayer, study, fraternity, and apostolic life interact and are the "four pillars, four dimensions on which a seminary must live."

The Pontiff focused on necessary attributes of the role of the priest, including not being frightened, going to confession, and daily conversion. Following this path of becoming a priest "means to meditate every day on the Gospel, to transmit it with your life and your preaching."

He closed by calling upon Mary. He said, "Never forget her! The Russian mystics said that in the moment of spiritual turbulence it is necessary to seek refuge under the mantle of the Holy Mother of God." (D.C.L.) □

(Zenit.org, April 15, 2013)

Heard John Paul II Say to Me, 'Get Up and Don't Be Afraid' Floribet Mora Tells of Her Healing

by H. Sergio Mora

Costa Rican woman, Floribet Mora, who was cured miraculously of a cerebral aneurism through the intercession of John Paul II, has come to Rome for the canonization of the Polish Pope.

The shock she had when she was told that she had one month to live, her fear, the doctors' astonishment on seeing the examinations after the moment of the miracle, the voice she heard and her certainty that it was John Paul II are things she shared with ZENIT.

ZENIT: What happened when you were told that you had a mortal aneurism and there was no cure?

Mora: When I was given the diagnosis I was shocked because I didn't expect it and believed I was a healthy person. I had been many times to the hospital to have my five children. The worst came days later when I was told I had one month to live; that was the worst moment.

ZENIT: Then the doctors told you to go home?

Mora: Yes, it was incredible; I never expected such strong news. However, I held God's hand tightly, praying for the intercession of John Paul II. And as the time drew near, I prayed to God to

give me the strength, as I was afraid, but that God's will be done and not mine, because His will must prevail over all.

ZENIT: Was there a particular moment in which you asked the Pope for his intercession?

Mora: He had not been beatified yet, although I always thought John Paul II was a Saint – not just now that he is going to be canonized. While he was alive I considered him a Saint, always, he was such a special person.

ZENIT: How did you realize a miracle had taken place?

Mora: When I heard a voice in my room that said to me: "Get up," and a second time, "Get up and don't be afraid." There was a magazine there which had a photo of John Paul II on the cover and I saw the Pope's hands jut out. Then I got out of bed, without fear, without agony, with an incredible peace, knowing that I was cured. And since that day I am standing for the glory of God.

ZENIT: How many examinations had you undergone before? Were there consultations in other countries?

Mora: We couldn't consult in other countries, because we didn't have the financial means for that. Meanwhile, I was seen by several neurologists in Costa Rica. First I had a TAC, then magnetic resonance and afterwards the arteriography.

ZENIT: Could the aneurism be seen in the arteriography and also in the other examinations?

Mora: The aneurism could be seen in all the examinations. For my part, I was sure of my immediate cure, although I didn't have the financial means to confirm what I was saying. It was only seen six months later when I had the magnetic resonance done. I remember, and I have very clearly in mind, the astonishment on the doctor's face, running from one side to another to ensure that they were the correct examinations. He didn't understand the last examinations. He ran to the files because he said that a woman who had the cerebral impact that I had suffered couldn't be well. I said to him: "I know I am cured. I am cured through the intercession of John Paul II." Important for me were the medical examinations, because they were the proof of what I was saying, and not just my words.

ZENIT: And then?

Mora: Afterwards I was seen by several neurologists of Costa Rica, also of the private sector. And they were all astonished. I laughed a lot when they

said, "Woman, who told you that you had an aneurism?" And then I was hospitalized here in Rome in October of 2012 at the Gemelli Clinic, where I was seen by several neurologists who did various examinations: magnetic resonance, arteriography and others.

ZENIT: And do you have a scar or a trace of some sort?

Mora: That's what is most important. There isn't anything in the examinations that indicates that at some point I had an aneurism and not even a consequence in my physical part, which indicated that I suffered damage or a paraplegia on my left side.

ZENIT: Why did you entrust yourself to John Paul II and not to other Saints?

Mora: I always admired Padre Pio and I believe in his intercession; however, it was different with John Paul II. He was the first Pope to come to Costa Rica and he impressed us all. At that time I was a young 19-year-old. I saw him when he passed by the second avenue and then I was able to take part in a Mass that the Pope celebrated in *La Sabana*, where there were many young people. And although I saw him from afar, I didn't need more than that to understand who he was.

ZENIT: When you heard that interior voice, in what language did you hear it?

Mora: In Spanish, his voice was strong; there was no room for doubt. I cannot doubt what I heard, I'm very sure of that. □

April 25, 2014 (Zenit.org)

Melkite Patriarch Decries School Bombing in Syria

"May the world heed the cries, tears and the prayers of the children of Syria." These were the words of the head of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church who has decried the recent bombing of an Armenian Catholic School that killed one child and wounded sixty others.

According to a report by Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), Patriarch Gregory III Laham responded to the tragedy, saying: "What is the point of all this carnage tantamount to a war of extermination?"

The incident occurred April 15, 2014, when the bomb landed in the school playground during a spate of violence in Damascus. The Patriarch said that some of the children suffered injuries that were "life-changing."

He added that another ten children were injured in separate attacks, some outside a Greek Melkite Church in Damascas, and others in the suburb of *Duel'a*.

"These attacks on our schools, children, churches and homes are criminal attacks with the aim of intimidating Christians who find themselves increasingly targeted," he

said. He called on the United Nations and European Union to offer aid. "Do you want to kill this nation?" he asked.

Syria has been ravaged by a three-year-long civil war as rebel forces attempt to overthrow the Bashar al Assad-led government. Millions have fled to other countries to escape the conflict. □

April 23, 2014 (Zenit.org)

Pope Francis: John Paul II to Become World Youth Days' 'Great Patron Saint'

Prior to the recitation of the Angelus at the conclusion of the Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis addressed the faithful and gave special greetings.

The Holy Father first greeted 250 delegates, consisting of bishops, priests, religious and lay people, who participated in the meeting regarding World Youth Days that the Pontifical Council for the Laity had organized.

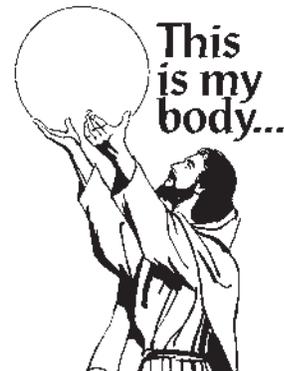
He noted, "In this begins the journey of preparation for the next world gathering, which will take place in June 2016 in Krakow and will have as its theme 'Blessed are the merciful, for they will find mercy' (Matthew 5:7). Pope Francis explained what would happen next: "In a moment the young people of Brazil will hand over the World Youth Day Cross to the young people of Poland. Thirty years ago, Blessed John Paul II handed over the cross to young people. He asked them to carry it throughout the world as a sign of Christ's love for humanity."

Pope Francis continued, "John Paul II started the World Youth Days, and will become their great patron saint. In the communion of saints he will continue to be a father and friend to the young people of the world.

The Pontiff then recommended that all faithful make a request to the Lord: "Let us ask the Lord that the Cross, together with the image of Mary, be a sign of hope for all, revealing to the world the unconquerable love of Christ," he said.

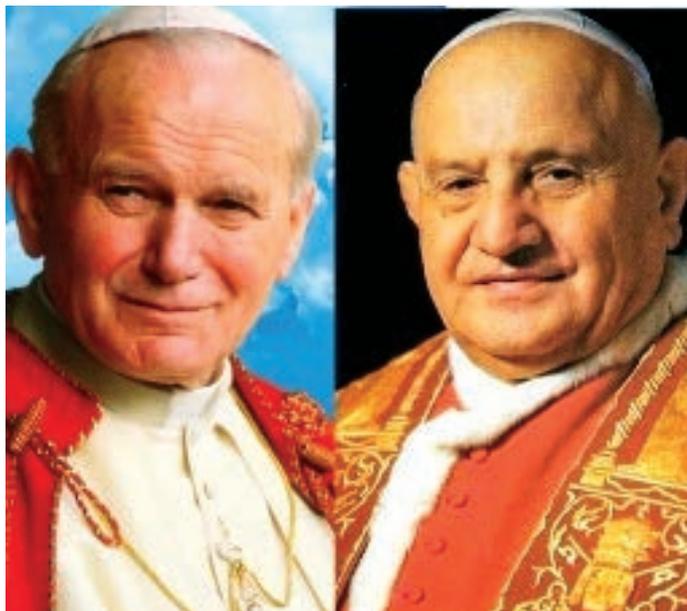
The Holy Father encouraged the faithful to turn to Mary, so that she may "help us to always follow Jesus' example with faith." (D.C.L.) □

April 14, 2014 (Zenit.org)



Two Sainly Popes: How John Paul II and John XXIII Modeled Virtue

by Very Reverend Robert Barron



St. John Paul II (left) and St. John XXIII.

This Sunday (April 27, 2014) Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli (Pope John XXIII) and Karol Jozef Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) will be recognized as saints of the Catholic Church, and may God be praised for it! No one with the slightest amount of historical sensibility would doubt that these men were figures of enormous significance and truly global impact. But being a world historical personage is not the same as being a saint; otherwise neither Therese of Lisieux, nor John Vianney, nor Benedict Joseph Labre would be saints. So what is it that made these two men worthy particularly of canonization, of being "raised to the altars" throughout the Catholic world?

Happily, the Church provides rather clear and objective criteria for answering this question. A saint is someone who lived a life of "heroic virtue" on earth and who is now living the fullness of God's life in heaven. In order to determine the second state of affairs, the Church rigorously tests claims that a miracle was worked through the revered person's intercession. It would be the stuff of another article to examine these processes in regard to the two Popes under consideration: both are, in fact, fascinating. But for now I want to focus on the extraordinary virtues that these two men possessed, moral and spiritual qualities so striking that they are proposed to all for emulation.

When the Church speaks of the virtues, it is referring to the cardinal virtues of justice, prudence, temperance, and courage, as well as the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. It wouldn't be possible, within the brief scope of this article, to examine our two new saints in regard to all seven of the virtues, but let us make at least a beginning. Justice is rendering to someone what is due to him, or in more common parlance, doing the right thing. When he was nuncio to

Turkey and stationed in Istanbul in the early years of the Second World War, Archbishop Angelo Roncalli saved the lives of many Jews who were threatened by the Nazi terror. Taking advantage of Turkey's neutral status and the Vatican's diplomatic connections, Roncalli arranged for transit visas and in some cases forged baptismal certificates in order to facilitate the transit of Jews from Eastern Europe to Palestine. In the process, he rescued around 24,000 people who otherwise would certainly have found their way to the death camps. That this act of extraordinary justice also called, furthermore, for considerable courage goes without saying.

Roncalli became nuncio to France at an extremely delicate and dangerous period of French history. Charles de Gaulle and his Free French forces had just liberated their country from the Nazis and had begun to settle scores with the collaborationist Petain government and its sympathizers, some of whom were churchmen in high positions. At the time of Roncalli's arrival in Paris, de Gaulle and Pope Pius XII were in sharp disagreement as how best to resolve the situation, since the General and the Pope were not entirely on the same page regarding the relative guilt and innocence of certain bishops. All of this is to suggest that the new papal nuncio was stepping into a situation sticky and complicated in the extreme. By all accounts, Roncalli handled it with remarkable grace and deftness of touch. Keeping all parties more or less satisfied, and resolving the difficulties with a minimum of pain, he honored the demands of both the French state and the Church. In performing this impressive high-wire act, Roncalli was demonstrating, with extraordinary clarity, the virtue of prudence, which is knowing how best to apply moral norms in concrete situations. Prudence is a feel for the right thing to do in the present circumstance, and nuncio Roncalli clearly had it.

Turning to the theological virtues, let me say just a word about Roncalli's faith and his hope. Anyone who reads John XXIII's spiritual diary called *Journal of a Soul* is struck by the late Pope's simple and profound faith. Prayer structured his day, from the time he was a young seminarian to the end of his life. Rosary, benediction, novenas, frequent retreats, confession, prayers to favorite saints, Eucharistic adoration, and, of course, the Mass were absolutely fundamental. His episcopal motto - *Obedientia et Pax* (Obedience and Peace) - signaled his abiding faith that the Holy Spirit spoke unambiguously through his religious superiors. He consistently read his life through the lens of revelation, and that is the virtue of faith.

Pope John XXIII also exhibited the virtue of hope to a heroic degree, and the best evidence for this is the greatest of his public acts, namely, his summoning of the Second Vatican Council. Roncalli was a church historian by training, and it was precisely his acquaintance with the roiled ecclesiastical story - involving much stupidity, sin, and deep corruption - that convinced him of the Holy Spirit's guidance of the Church across the centuries. He knew in his bones that,

despite all human attempts to destroy it, the Church had prevailed and would prevail, because the Spirit was present to it. And this gave him hope. Upon becoming Pope in 1958, John XXIII resolved to make the Church that he loved a more apt vehicle for the proclamation of Christ to modernity. Hence he called a council of the all the bishops of the Catholic world. He said that he wanted this great gathering to be "a new Pentecost," an occasion for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Many pundits and experts, both inside and outside the Church, strongly urged him not to undertake such a daunting project, but he pressed ahead, precisely because of his radiant hope.

And now to John Paul II. As all of his biographers remind us, Karol Wojtyla came of age at one of the darkest moments of the twentieth century. When he was 19 years old and just commencing his university career, the Nazis rolled through his native Poland and instigated a reign of terror over the country. Almost immediately, the conquerors decapitated Polish society, killing the intelligentsia outright or sending them to concentration camps. All distinctive forms of Polish culture were cruelly suppressed, and the church was actively persecuted. Young Wojtyla displayed heroic courage by joining the underground seminary run by the Cardinal of Krakow and by forming a small company of players who kept Polish literature and drama alive. Many of his colleagues in both of these endeavors were killed or arrested in the course of those terrible years of occupation. Sadly, the Nazi tyranny was replaced immediately by the Communist

tyranny, and Fr. Wojtyla was compelled to manifest his courage again. In the face of harassment, unfair criticism, the threat of severe punishment, etc., he did his priestly work, forming young people in the great Catholic spiritual and theological tradition. Even as a bishop, Wojtyla was subject to practically constant surveillance (every phone tapped; every room bugged; his every movement tracked), and he was continually, in small ways and large, obstructed by Communist officialdom. And yet he soldiered on. Of course, as Pope, he ventured into the belly of the beast, standing athwart the Communist establishment and speaking for God, freedom, and human rights. In doing so, he proved himself one of the most courageous figures of the twentieth century.

That Karol Wojtyla was a man who exhibited the virtue of justice to a heroic degree is impossible to contest. Throughout his papal years, John Paul II was the single most eloquent and persistent voice for human rights on the world stage. In the face of a postmodern relativism and indifferentism, John Paul took the best of the Enlightenment political tradition and wedded it to classical Christian anthropology. The result was a sturdy defense of the rights to life, liberty, education, free speech, and above all, the free exercise of religion. More persuasively than any other political figure, east or west, John Paul advocated for justice.

Next, it's worth noting that George Weigel titled his magisterial biography of John Paul II, *Witness to Hope*, by identifying Karol Wojtyla with a theological virtue. In October of 1978, the newly elected Pope John Paul II gave his inaugural speech to a packed St. Peter's Square. This man, who had witnessed at first hand the very worst of the twentieth century, who had intimate experience of how twisted and wicked human beings can be, spoke over and over again this exhortation: "Be not afraid." There was, of course, absolutely no political or cultural warrant for that exhortation, no purely natural justification for it. It could come only from a man whose heart was filled with the supernatural sense that the Holy Spirit is the Lord of history.

Finally, was Karol Wojtyla in possession of love, the greatest of the theological virtues? The best evidence I can bring forward is the still breathtaking encounter that took place in a grimy Roman jail cell in December of 1983. John Paul II sat down with Mehmet Ali Agca, the man who had, only a year and a half before, fired several bullets into the Pope. John Paul spoke to him, embraced him, listened to him, and finally forgave him. Love is not a feeling or a sentiment. It is, Thomas Aquinas reminds us, an act of the will, more precisely, willing the good of the other. This is why the love of one's enemies—those who are not disposed to wish us well—is the great test of love. Did John Paul II express love in a heroic way? He forgave the man who tried to kill him; no further argument need be made.

Saints exist, not for themselves, but for the Church. They are models and intercessors for the rest of us here below. We can only give thanks to God who has provided the world with these two new heavenly friends. Sts. John XXIII and John Paul II, pray for us! ☐

The Legacy Of Saint John Paul II Witness to Hope

by Brother John Samaha

- He participated in all four sessions of the Second Vatican Council, and worked on the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World
- He was the most traveled pope in history. He covered 748,568 miles to visit his flock and engage the world
- He made five pastoral visits to the U.S.A.
- His apostolic visits to 130 countries made him the most well-known person of the late 20th century
- During his reign, eighty-seven countries established diplomatic relations with the Holy See for the first time
- He was influential in the collapse of communism in his native Poland and in other countries, and in the destruction of the Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall
- He beatified and canonized more persons than his predecessors combined: 482 saints and 1,338 blessed. ☐

The Paschal Mystery

Continued from page 1

O Christ,
may we understand the meaning of your resurrection
so that we may not see in it a purely historical event
or only a foundation of our faith,
but a life which we must realize in ourselves every day,
a hope which we must draw each moment from our faith,
so that our souls may become just by your life,
and our hope may be united to your hope,
and in your kingdom we shall glorify you face to face.
Both here and there we shall praise you with a ceaseless
love, forever.

After the Ascension of our Lord into heaven, we no longer know him in his earthly presence, as the early disciples knew him, but in a sacramental way, a mystical way, a prayerful way, in a communion of love and service, by touching His wounds today! When we “wash the feet” of those we love and those who need us it is no longer “I who live, but Christ Jesus who is living in me,” and the Paschal Mystery is once again lived in both liturgy and loving service.

May we not be afraid to face his sorrowful passion and death and to touch His wounds in our own lives and in the lives of others. May we also have the courage to understand the meaning of the Resurrection, not only as a historical event, but also as a “life we realize in ourselves every day.” May the Paschal Mystery of Christ inspire us to continue to long for him, in the poor and the needy, as does our Holy Father Pope Francis, and as all who seek the One who is Love and who is not to be found in the Tomb, but is Risen as He promised. The Lord is Risen! Truly Risen! ☐

Bishop Gregory Mansour,
Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

Holy Week

Continued from page 3

His theme reminded us that the stone which sealed Jesus' tomb was like a stone which seals our hearts from salvation. Like the Resurrection we must aspire to roll the stone away from our own hearts to bring us to salvation. A worthy goal to aspire to.

Bishop Mansour celebrated the Rite of Peace. An Easter breakfast as held in the Social Hall. ☐

What Easter Means

Continued from page 10

Secondly, the resurrection means that God has not given up on his creation. According to the well-known account in the book of Genesis, God made the whole array of finite things - sun, moon, planets, stars, animals, plants, things that creep and crawl on the earth - and found it all good, even very good. There is not a hint of dualism or Manichaeism in the Biblical vision, no setting of the spiritual over and against the material. All that God has made reflects some aspect of his goodness, and all created things together constitute a beautiful and tightly-woven tapestry. As the Old Testament lays out the story, human sin made a wreck of God's creation, turning the garden into a desert. But the faithful God kept sending rescue operation after rescue operation: Noah's Ark, the prophets, the Law and the Temple, the people Israel itself. Finally, he sent his only Son, the perfect icon or incarnation of his love. In raising that Son from the dead, God definitively saved and ratified his creation, very much including the material dimension of it (which is why it matters that Jesus was raised bodily from death). Over and again, we have said no to what God has made, but God stubbornly says yes. Inspired by this divine yes, we always have a reason to hope. ☐