



The Maronite Voice



A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA

Volume XIV

Issue No. V

May 2017

Our Lady of Fatima

This May marks the 100th anniversary of the apparition of the Holy Virgin at Fatima in Portugal. On May 13, 1917, three Portuguese children saw a vision of a woman. These three little children were Lucia Santos and her cousins Jacinta and Francisco Marto. In the words of Lucia, the woman was "brighter than the sun, shedding rays of light clearer and stronger than a crystal goblet filled with the most sparkling water and pierced by the burning rays of the sun." The children were not from rich or important families, nor were they highly educated or sophisticated. By all accounts they were ordinary village children in an obscure part of the world. However, they were rich in faith. Their families were pious and taught the children their faith and ensured that they were faithful in their religious duties.

The children would experience the vision of Our Lady for a total of six months – on the 13th of each month until October 13, 1917. The Blessed Mother made these apparitions for a purpose. It was not to focus attention on herself but to deliver a message to the world, that was, at the time, engaged in a great and brutal world war that would ultimately cause the death of almost twenty million men, women and children and the wounding of more than that. Her apparition was for a reason; she was to remind all humanity of God, the Lord of all, and our responsibility to respond to His call. In the Gospel of St. Mark, the first spoken words of Jesus proclaim this message: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (Mark 2:15).

Our Lady, who appeared at Fatima, reminds us of these perhaps forgotten Christian virtues and reminds us that our future is only found in God. Further, we must be active as responsible collaborators with Him in creating that future.



Devotion to the Holy Virgin is firmly rooted in our Maronite tradition. It is sometimes said that Maronites always exhibit two characteristics: Devotion to the Eucharist and Veneration of the Holy Mother of God. Our private and public prayers manifest this veneration of the Holy Virgin. Our hymns and canticles call upon her intercession and sing of her splendor. The hymns under the Arabic names of *Ya Om Allah* ("O Mother of God") and *Salatookee ma'ana* ("Your Prayer is with us") are just two well-known examples. In every Divine Liturgy we mention her a couple of times. The Rosary is a common form of prayer familiar to us all. Devotion to praying the Rosary is one of the most notable features of popular Catholic spirituality. The Virgin Mary is ever-present in our prayer-life and in our everyday speech. We exalt her position as the Holy Mother of God as well as her response – freely given - to do God's will throughout her life.

(Continues on page 20)

Schedule of Bishop Elias Zaidan

May 2, 2017

Ordination of His Excellency Mark Rivituso, the New Auxiliary Bishop of St. Louis, Mo.

May 6 - 7, 2017

Pastoral Visit to Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Flint, Mich.

May 9, 2017

USCCB International Justice and Peace Committee Meetings, Washington, D.C.

May 11, 2017

Confirmation Mass, Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church, San Diego, Calif.

May 12 - 14, 2017

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

May 19 - 21, 2017

Discernment Weekend, Antonine Nuns, North Jackson, Ohio

May 22 - June 2, 2017

Eparchial Pilgrimage to Portugal and Spain

June 3 - 20, 2017

Synod of Maronite Bishops, Bkerke, Lebanon and Family Visit, Lebanon. □

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Maronite Convention 2017

Saint Rafka Maronite Mission

Greenville, South Carolina

June 29 - July 2, 2017

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From Our Tribunal

Effective immediately, no Petitions, Statements of Facts, Petitioner's and Respondent's Questionnaires, Witness Questionnaires and other document forms will be accepted by the Maronite Tribunal unless they are the forms currently found on the Eparchial website under the Tribunal tab.

The Tribunal makes every effort to keep these forms current, and we are constantly updating them in an effort to make them more useful for deciding these cases. Therefore, when preparing an annulment case, please use only the document forms from the website and do not send in older versions which may be printed in your parish. Outdated forms will not be accepted and will result in delays in the processing of an annulment case.

A new Petition (a 5-page form) has been placed on the website, and this is the only Petition form which will be accepted from now on. This applies to all the other Tribunal forms as well. Please help the Tribunal to help you by using the correct forms.

Monsignor Francis J. Marini, JD, JCOD
Judicial Vicar □



Deadline for next month's issue of *The Maronite Voice* is May 22, 2017.

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

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The Maronite Voice

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Brooklyn, New York Holy Week

by Salma Vahdat

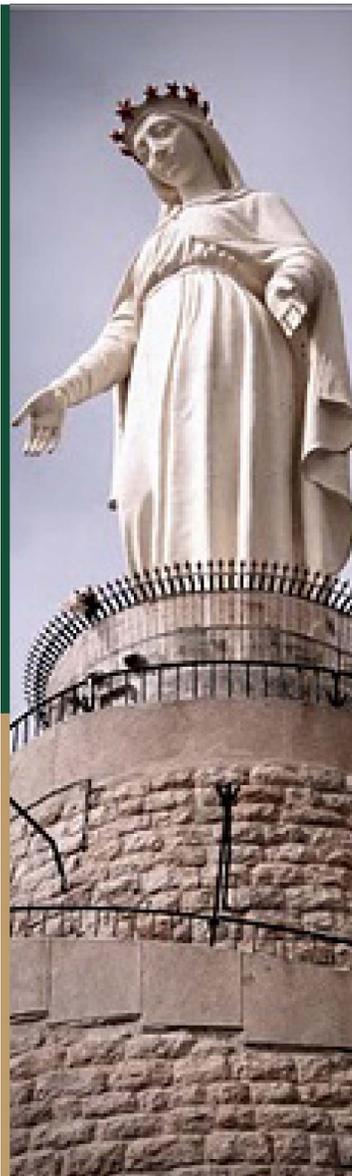
Following the holy season of Lent we have finally arrived at the most solemn celebration in the liturgical calendar, Holy Week. Each Friday of Lent, the Passion of Our Lord was reenacted in the Stations of the Cross at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn, N.Y., preparing our hearts and minds for sharing the most seminal events of the Passion of Christ.

The introduction to Holy Week has always been misleading. Who could have thought that Hosanna Sunday, Palm Sunday, would be so joyful, hailing Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem and then, in the space of a week turn to darkness, death and finally the Light and Rebirth of Salvation in the Resurrection? One week, joy...despair...salvation!

We commemorated these events particularly on Palm Sunday, *Sha'aneenee*, with a joyful Divine Liturgy and procession. The children carried beautifully decorated

candles and dressed in Easter finery. This was the second year where the children assisted in the Divine Liturgy by reading the Epistle, bearing the gifts to the altar, disseminating the gift of peace to the parishioners and reciting the intercessions. Leila Vogl, wife of subdeacon Norbert Vogl, was responsible for instructing the children in Arabic and preparing them to participate in the Divine Liturgy. For the first time, Subdeacon Vogl, from the Cathedral's Adult Arabic Class, proclaimed the Epistle in Arabic. Raimi Hailoo read the Arabic intercession. In all, twenty-two children from the age of five participated, to the delight of all present. The *Sha'aneenee* [Palm Sunday] Procession exited the Cathedral, banners waving, choir singing and families smiling with children in their wake!

Thursday of the Mysteries, the Washing of the Feet found Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral full of our community, preparing for the ritual which reminds us of the sacrifice to come and the institution of the priesthood. Monsignor Root and Subdeacon Vogl, joined by twelve young men, reenacted the evening depicted in the Last Supper. Monsignor washed the feet of the twelve, arriving to St. Peter, aka Patrick AbouChrouch, who protested Jesus' washing of his feet. The



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Houston, Texas *Holy Week Celebration*



Bishop Gregory Mansour, Msgr. James Root, Subdeacon Norbert Vogl and his wife Laila who instructed the children in Arabic and prepared them to participate in the Divine Liturgy.



Our Lady of the Cedars Maronite Church in Houston, Tex., had an especially blessed Holy Week with the presence of Bishop A. Elias Zaidan, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, serving as Holy Week Retreat Master.

Although Bishop Zaidan did not arrive until Tuesday night, both Palm Sunday services were packed as usual, and Father Edward Hanna grabbed the parish kids' attention when he invited them to come up to the Altar for the Eucharistic preparation.

On Wednesday night, The Bishop blessed the oil and dough during the Divine Liturgy, and those present were blessed by the Holy Oil after Communion. The ushers packaged pieces of dough and oil into small plastic containers for the faithful to take home.

The Rite of Washing of the Feet was part of the Holy Thursday Divine Liturgy, followed by adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Bishop Zaidan washed the feet of twelve parishioners who were seated around the Altar, then heard confessions throughout the evening along with Father Milad Yaghi, Father Edward Hanna, and Father Elie Madi, who was visiting from Lebanon.

For the first year ever, the parish held two services on Good Friday. As usual, the Signing of the Chalice Liturgy was celebrated at 8 o'clock in the morning, then at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. The Bishop presided over the first of two Great Friday of the Crucifixion services to a packed Church. Then at 7 o'clock in the evening, the same service was repeated with a standing-room-only crowd.

The Bishop left on Saturday to celebrate Easter at St. Raymond Co-Cathedral in Saint Louis, Mo. Fathers Madi, Hanna, and Yaghi celebrated the Easter services at midnight, 9:30 a.m., and 11 o'clock. After each service, parishioners enjoyed egg-cracking and an Easter egg hunt for the little ones. □



Detroit, Michigan *Palm Sunday*



by Antoine Obeid

Palm Sunday in Detroit, Michigan, this year was a gorgeous day. The temperature reached 70 degrees Fahrenheit, the sun was shining, and the spring flowers were blooming. The parishioners were excited to bring their children, carrying their decorated candles and palms, to church.

His Excellency Bishop A. Elias Zaidan, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, presided over the liturgy concelebrated by Chorbishop Louis Baz, Pastor; Fr. Milad Yaghi, Secretary to the Bishop; and Fr. Francois Akl from the Order of the Blessed Mary in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The procession started with the solemn entrance of the altar servers, the Knights of Columbus, the members of the Order of Saint Sharbel, the clergy and the Bishop. The church was full, and the voices of the children filled the air.

The procession took place inside and outside of the church with the chanting of the dedicated choir. The very young, 12-year-old organist, Rita Shemmai, received a special blessing from the Bishop.

In his sermon, His Excellency Bishop Zaidan delivered a strong message to all of us: Do people see Christ in each one of us in the way we live and act every day? Each one of us should be a representative and an example of Christ to others.

Following the liturgy, the parishioners and guests gathered at the beautifully decorated St. Maron Hall for a luncheon. The food was prepared by Ike.

His Excellency Bishop Zaidan had the occasion to visit with his flock, spreading the feeling of love, pride and unity and giving guidance and blessings. The parishioners were very thankful and appreciative of His Excellency's visit on Palm Sunday to the Church which was designated as the first Maronite Cathedral in the United States of America. □



Danbury, Connecticut *Lessons Learned from Passion Play*



by Zelfa Harb, member of the Passion Play cast

The passion play at St. Anthony Maronite Church in Danbury, Conn., has been a tradition for more than thirty years. Not only do the young members who participate get to perform a play in front of an audience, but they are able to deeply understand and recreate the events leading up to Jesus's death.

Although it has been a tough year because of the shortage of MYO members, we were still able to pull through and put on an amazing re-enactment. Our MYO "alumni" are always eager to come back and help make this performance possible. Not only is it a learning experience for the audience, but also for the members to appreciate and understand the suffering and crucifixion of Our Lord. This is our faith. It is not just a performance, but a recreation and expression to show the love of Jesus and how he died on the cross for our sins. By participating in this play, every member is able to say they learn something new every year. This play has the ability to bring everyone closer together and appreciate everything we have.

There are difficulties in every role; from Judas who must betray his Lord, Pilot who must sentence Him to death, and Jesus who must go through the sufferings and emotions of having no one by his side and being yelled at by his accusers. Every reaction, gesture, word and expression has its importance, and we hope that this play continues to go on for many years because of the closeness it brings us with God and the knowledge it provides for all who participate and watch. □

Flint, Michigan *Easter Party*

by Subdeacon Joe Pavlovich

On Saturday, April 8, 2017, Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Flint, Mich., had its annual Easter party for the children. The event was organized by Religious



Education Instructor Marleine McLeod and parishioner Freda Hearsch. The children and parents enjoyed many fun activities such as assembling cutouts of Our Lord's crucifixion and Easter egg holders, coloring Easter posters, and more. The highlight of the activities was the "balloon lady" who inflated balloons created in the shapes of Easter bunnies, pokey men, ninja turtles, and more. Following lunch, the children went outside for an Easter egg hunt on the church grounds. The plastic Easter eggs were filled with candy donated by Shouky Zerka, a parishioner.

On Sunday, April 9, 2017, we celebrated the beautiful Hosanna Sunday liturgy. The liturgy began with a procession of the children into the church in their beautiful dresses and suits. The children all carried candles decorated with flowers made by Freda Hearsch. It was a blessing to see many families at the Liturgy together. Those who attend Our Lady of Lebanon are not visitors or spectators, but are part of our "family." Thanks to the entire parish community for making our Palm Sunday celebration a very special and memorable occasion. □

Dallas, Texas *Lenten Journey*

by Mattye Lee Thompson

This Lent at Our Lady of Lebanon in Dallas, Tex., Fr. Assaad ElBasha, Pastor, led the parish through a beautiful forty-day journey. On Ash Monday we shared in a morning of reflection led by Fr. Robert Maguire on the "Nature of Penance." It was an inspiring message on the eleven Passions of the soul and prayer. More than seventy people attended the daily Liturgies in the Chapel of St. Thecla each morning. Also every Wednesday night, Father Assaad offered a Lenten workshop series on "Evil, Sin and Reconciliation," by Dr. Eric Hendry, Ph.D. Every Friday evening, the Parish prayed the Stations of the Cross. Every Sunday night, Fr. ElBasha made in-home Rosary visitations all around the metroplex. This experience brought the parishioners closer together and allowed them to get to know one another better. The forty-day journey concluded with a Holy Week Mission. On Wednesday of Holy Week, the Rite of the Lamp was celebrated. Fr. Mitch Pacwa, S.J., joined us to concelebrate beginning on Holy Thursday for the Washing of the Feet and all night



Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. On Good Friday, following the Burial of the Lord, three priests offered confessions until one o'clock in the morning. Both of Easter Sunday Liturgies were followed by receptions in the Parish Hall and Easter egg hunts for the children. It was truly a blessed Lenten Season and Holy Week at Our Lady of Lebanon Church. □

Waterville, Maine *Lenten Retreat*



by Fr. Larry Jensen

The parishioners of St. Joseph Maronite Catholic Church in Waterville, Me., were treated to an inspiring Lenten Retreat by Fr. Bill Clark, a Jesuit priest whose roots are in Maine. He grew up in Fairfield, just a few miles down the road from Waterville.

Not only did he share his thought-provoking wisdom on the two sons and their loving father, but he also shared his rich, strong voice, singing a few songs he had written that

perfectly complemented the Gospel Story. The primary focus was that each son had to come to understand how much he was loved, through the choices that he had made in his life. Sometimes the faithful one can have just as hard a struggle in truly knowing how much he is already blessed and loved. We were fortunate that Fr. Bill was able to give this retreat considering that less than a year ago he had a heart transplant. Many prayers were offered here at St. Joseph Church and at the two neighboring parishes for his speedy recovery. ☐

Orlando, Florida Silver Massabki Award



Gail Bell, recipient, with her daughter and Fr, Bassam Saade.

St. Jude Maronite Church in Orlando, Fla., is blessed with its faith community members. This fact is easily recognized by the Silver Massabki Brothers annual award recipients. This year is no exception. The St. Jude parish award was recently given to Gail Bell. For the past eight years, Gail has dedicated her time, talent, and treasure to the parish. She is a member of the Parish Council; Chair of the Golf Tournament for three years; Chair of the annual Festival of Baskets committee; Chair for the St. Jude annual children's Christmas party; an active choir member; and organizer and volunteer for the monthly Blessed Sacrament Adoration/St. Charbel day of prayer. She also serves as usher and made several of Deacon Jack's vestments. ☐

Baton Rouge, Louisiana Bishop's Visit



From left: Fr. Alex Harb, Bishop A. Elias Zaidan and Fr. Freiha Akiki.

by Jeanette Abi Assaf, Mission Secretary

On Saturday, March 4, 2017, His Excellency Bishop A. Elias Zaidan, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, visited St. Sharbel Maronite Catholic Mission in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. A reception dinner prepared and attended by the families and friends of the Mission, was held at Our Lady of Mercy Parish Hall in celebration of His Excellency's presence.

During the event, a special Hymn for St. Sharbel, composed by a Mission member, was performed by the Mission's choir for the first time.

On Sunday March 5, Bishop Zaidan celebrated the Divine Liturgy at St. Patrick Church. Father Freiha Akiki and Fr. Alex Harb concelebrated. The Liturgy was followed by lunch and a meeting with the Finance Council and the Pastoral Council. Bishop Zaidan focused on everyone's efforts in working together to achieve one goal: Building a strong Community and having a physical Church as a place of worship for St. Sharbel Mission in Baton Rouge. He ended his visit on Monday, promising and offering the Eparchy's helping hand to the Mission when needed, hoping his next visit will be to celebrate the dedication of the new Church. ☐



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If you would like more information about Charitable Gift Annuities, please contact Mr. Kurey or Catholic Extension Society's expert on Charitable Gift Annuities, Bobbi Hannigan, at bhannigan@catholicextension.org or 312-795-6047.

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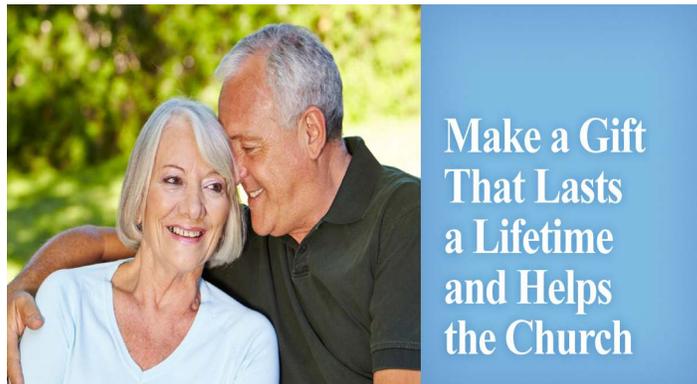
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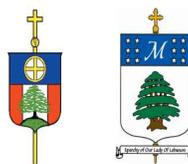
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Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

May 7 - 8, 2017

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

May 8 - 9, 2017

Catholic Relief Services Meetings, Baltimore, Md.

May 13, 2017

Ordination to Diaconate of Brian Dunn, Fall River, Mass.

May 14, 2017

St. Anthony of the Desert Church, Fall River, Mass.

May 20, 2017

Ordination to Diaconate of Peter Frangie, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

May 21, 2017

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

May 24, 2017

Path to Peace Dinner, Holy See Mission to the U.N., Manhattan, N.Y.

May 26 - 28, 2017

Family Wedding

May 30, 2017

Natural Family Planning Seminar, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

June 1 - 21, 2017

Annual Maronite Bishops' Synod, Bkerke, Lebanon

June 17, 2017

Ordination of Jebrayel Moussalem to Priesthood, Lebanon. ☐

Please save this date

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Details to follow

Euthanasia: The Next Battleground of Human Dignity

by
Rev. David A. Fisher

"Thou shalt not kill" - Exodus 20:13

"You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment" - Matthew 5:21.

It has become a common strategy to overturn the fundamental values of human dignity and respect for life, from conception to natural death, by circumventing the ponderous legislative process for direct appeal to the judicial branch of government. We have witnessed the loss of constitutional rights for the unborn, the reinterpretation of marriage as having been exclusively between a man and a woman, and now the right to have the medical profession assist in one's suicide, which is moving from particular states to a national battleground. Already, euthanasia is legal in California, Colorado, Oregon, Vermont, Washington, Montana, and the District of Columbia. Outside of the United States, it is legal in the Netherlands, Belgium, Colombia, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Germany, Japan, and Canada.

The philosophical argument for euthanasia began in the Stoic school of philosophical thought in ancient Greece. The founder of Stoicism, Zeno of Citium (c.336-365 B.C.), is thought to have committed suicide after suffering an injury from which he did not feel he would recover. Stoicism and its understanding of the Natural Law as the reign of Universal Reason, (and the wise person being the one who with emotional detachment seeks to follow the Natural Law,) became a major model for living in the Greco-Roman world, and it was only the rise of Christianity which eventually put the practice of euthanasia out of vogue.

Inheriting the Jewish Scriptures, and with them the Decalogue (Ten-Commandments), the early Church understood euthanasia as a violation of the Fifth Commandment in particular and all the Commandments in general in their teaching of Ethical Monotheism, the foundation of God-given human dignity. Unlike the purely reason-based ethics of the Greco-Roman world into which the Church was born, the Church, while not totally dismissing the philosophical world around it, understood that divine revelation must be the foundation of ethical/moral behavior.

Furthermore, in the light of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the idea of willfully ending one's life was understood to be a denial of faith in the Lord, who became like us in all things but sin, and who experienced the pain and isolation of human suffering and destroyed the power of death by his own death, making it no longer our final destination.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church within its teachings on the Ten Commandments, writes this concerning euthanasia:

- Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect. Sick or handicapped persons should be

helped to lead lives as normal as possible (Paragraph 2276).

- Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable. Thus an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator. The error of judgment into which one can fall in good faith does not change the nature of this murderous act, which must always be forbidden and excluded (Paragraph 2277).
- Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate; it is the refusal of "over-zealous" treatment. Here one does not will to cause death; one's inability to impede it is merely accepted. The decisions should be made by the patient if he is competent and able or, if not, by those legally entitled to act for the patient, whose reasonable will and legitimate interests must always be respected (Paragraph 2278).
- Even if death is thought imminent, the ordinary care owed to a sick person cannot be legitimately interrupted. The use of painkillers to alleviate the sufferings of the dying, even at the risk of shortening their days, can be morally in conformity with human dignity if death is not willed as either an end or a means, but only foreseen and tolerated as inevitable. Palliative care is a special form of disinterested charity. As such it should be encouraged (Paragraph 2279).

The Catechism reaffirms the Church's traditional understanding of the right to life, as being fundamental to the dignity of the human person, and that while extraordinary means of life support are not necessary, the direct taking of life or withdrawal of ordinary means of life support such as ceasing hydration and nourishment is immoral and violation of human dignity.

As recently as March 1, 2017, the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a study on the assisted suicide laws in Oregon and Washington concerning what safeguards are in force. Two of the most surprising facts were the number of physicians in those states that are members of the activist pro-euthanasia Hemlock Society, and the frequent lack of proper safeguards for suicidal patients who seek euthanasia and are not given extensive psychiatric care.

(Continues on page 17)

St. Patrick, St. Joseph, and the Conversion that Makes All the Difference

by
Bishop Robert Barron

I am always pleased when the feasts of St. Patrick and St. Joseph roll around every year, the first on March 17th and the second on March 19th. Joseph is especially dear to the Italian people, who celebrate him with festive meals, and Patrick, of course, is specially revered by my own people, the Irish, who celebrate him with parades, parties, and (often) too much drinking. Though separated by four centuries and though hailing from extremely different cultures, Patrick and Joseph have a great deal in common, spiritually speaking. For both stubbornly situated their lives in the context, not of the ego-drama, but the theo-drama, and therein lies their importance for the universal church.

Let's consider Patrick first. A Roman Briton, born in the early fifth century, Patrick, while still a young man, was kidnapped by raiders and brought to Ireland, where he lived the brutal life of a slave. One can only imagine the darkness of these years: torn away from family, friends, and home, compelled to learn an unfamiliar language, treated with disdain, forced to do the most disagreeable work. How often he must have wept. How often he must have cried out to God, wondering how he could have been so thoroughly abandoned. After six years in Ireland, Patrick finally managed to escape and return home. Some accounts have it that he then sojourned in France, doing his theological studies there and becoming ordained as a priest.

Looking at this life from a purely natural or psychological perspective, one would readily conclude that still youthful Fr. Patrick would never want to journey again to the place where his life had hit rock bottom. Or perhaps, he would want to return there as chaplain to an invading army! Instead, he decided to go back to Ireland in order to carry the Gospel to those who had enslaved and persecuted him. How can we explain this? We have to move beyond a merely natural and psychological framework and understand his life theologically. Stated differently, we have to appreciate that Patrick, like all of the saints, saw his life as ingredient in a drama that God was directing and producing. He appreciated that the whole awful experience of being a slave was not simply dumb suffering, but was, strangely, a preparation for the work that God had for him. During those terrible years, he learned a great deal about the history, topography, and language of the Irish; he came, perhaps, to love some of their lore and religious customs. Like Moses among the Egyptians, he came to understand the "enemy" culture from the inside and hence was able, with special skill and creativity, to engage it. Now think of the worst moment of your life, the time when you hit bottom. How do you read it? Pointless pain—or a moment of particular grace?

Now let us look at St. Joseph. Every episode of his life recounted in the Bible is a crisis. He discovers, to his dismay, that the woman he loved and to whom he was betrothed to marry, was pregnant. How lost and confused he must have been. The Mosaic law permitted him to hand Mary over to be

stoned to death, but his native decency prevented him from taking that path. Instead, he resolved, undoubtedly with a broken heart, to divorce her quietly. But then the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream and explained the anomalous pregnancy. Placing his own fears and preoccupations to one side, Joseph understood what was happening in the context of God's providence and he took Mary as his wife.

Next, discovering that the child was in mortal danger, Joseph took mother and baby on a perilous journey, across hundreds of miles of trackless desert, to an unknown country, an unknown village, an unknown people. Anyone who has ever been forced into exile, compelled to leave his homeland, or even obliged to move to a new city to take up a job knows the anxiety that Joseph must have felt. Now add to it the keen sense that your baby is being pursued by agents of the government, intent upon murder. But Joseph went because God had commanded him.

Finally, we hear of Joseph desperately seeking his lost twelve-year old son. Speak to any parent who has gone through a similar experience—looking for a child who has wandered away or been taken—and you will hear of a fear beyond measure. And this anxious search went on for three days. Did Mary and Joseph sleep? Did they eat? What did they say to one another? Thus we fully understand Mary's reaction when, having finally discovered Jesus among the doctors in the Temple: "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety?" And they received that devastatingly understated response: "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know I must be in my Father's house?" Quietly taking the child home, Joseph once more put aside his human feelings and trusted in the purposes of God. The little we know about Joseph is that he experienced heartbreak, fear unto death, and a parent's deepest anxiety, but each time, he read what happened to him theo-dramatically and not ego-dramatically.

This shift in attitude, this re-orientation of the heart, this conversion is what made Patrick the patron of the Irish and Joseph the patron of the universal Church. □

Bishop Robert Barron is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministry.



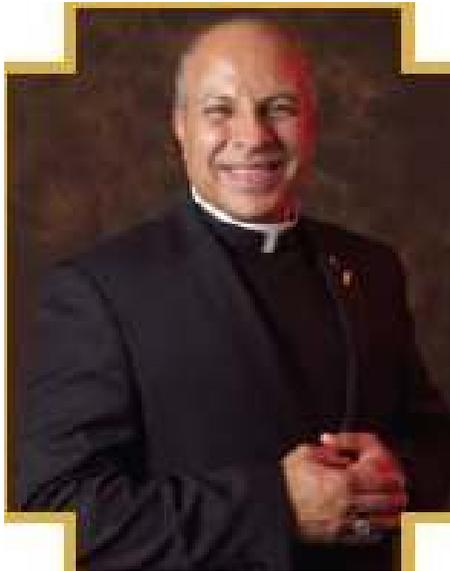
The Call to the Priesthood

by

Fr. Bassam Saade

"In every family you usually have a priest. My dad wanted to be a priest but ended up working for the government. He was very faithful, never missed Mass or a holy day of obligation. He memorized the Mass, he knew it all by heart in Syriac. My parents were married in 1952. Since their marriage they never missed a Mass and brought us up, all six children, in the church and in the love of God." " My mom prays the rosary every day, sometimes three times a day."

Born in Lebanon in Father Bassam Saade was sixteen years old when the Lebanese civil war broke out. During that time his family lost their home in Beirut and their summer home in *Bhamdown* in the mountains. God



He graduated with M.Div and M.A. degrees and he was ordained a priest on October 17, 1992, in Pittsburgh, Penn. while Msgr. James Root was the pastor. While in the seminary, he served every summer in different parishes around the country: Washington, D.C.; Miami, Fla.; Flint, Mich.; and Uniontown, Penn., where he was ordained a Deacon in March 1992 and where our Bishop Gregory Mansour was the Pastor. His first assignment was to Detroit, Mich., and he served at St. Sharbel and St. Maron Parishes and St. Rafka Mission. He was then sent to the Cathedral in Brooklyn, N.Y., to help then Chorbishop Hector Doueichi for six months while he went through surgery and recovery.

In August 1993 he was sent to Utica, N.Y., to take care of St. Louis Gonzaga Parish in an area where there were many parishes closing. "You make it or you break it," he was told by Bishop Francis Zayek. Father Saade went to work depending on God. He spent sixteen years in Utica, recruiting parishioners for the church's ministry programs and getting to know his community. In the meantime he did his doctorate degree at the Catholic University of America on revitalizing the parish, bringing it to life. "It is now one of the leading parishes in our Eparchy, my pride and joy. We became a family, and it is my home away from home" he said.

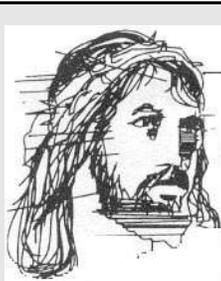
After sixteen years, he was sent to Orlando, Fla., and he is now part of that community for eight years. "I have been involved in the Latin diocese and felt very welcomed by Bishop Noonan and the clergy of the Diocese. They are very loving and supportive." In the Maronite Eparchy Fr. Saade is a member of Bishop Gregory Mansour's Presbyteral council and a member of the board of Protection of Children and Young People.

(Continues on page 20)

saved him many times from being killed! "I saw a shell in front of me and behind me. I saw my friends killed and a lot of tragedy, but God spared me and he led me all the way through. He protected me."

He studied pre-medicine in the morning and business in the afternoon, and finished his MBA. He worked in international banking. Father Saade was at the head office, working as a loan officer. In 1986, after five years of working in the bank, he came to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to visit his brothers. While there, Fr. Bill Bartoul, the new priest at the parish asked him to help out. Father Saade was helping with the youth group at a conference in Springfield, Mass., where the Maronite Patriarch, Nasrallah Peter Cardinal Sfeir, who was visiting from Lebanon, asked him if he had ever considered a vocation to the priesthood. Father Saade said he was "waiting for the call." "I am calling you," the visiting Patriarch said.

Father Saade joined the seminary in Washington, D.C., two weeks later, in August 1988. The journey took four years. The rector of our seminary, Chorbishop Seely Beggiani always said "Many are called but few are chosen."



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Needs
You!***

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Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon
Office of Vocations
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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



Mary, Courage and Humility

by
Vivian Akel

Major feast days throughout the liturgical year are set aside to honor our Most Blessed Mother: the Annunciation, the Assumption, and the Immaculate Conception, to name a few. In addition, Mary is honored in a special way during certain months of the year, including the entire month of May, two weeks before the Assumption in August, when there is a special fast, and the month of October, when we honor the Holy Rosary. We use this time to reflect upon both the attributes of our Beloved Mother as well as the role she plays not only in our Maronite tradition but throughout the world.

Mary was a willing servant whose "Yes" to God began the sometimes sorrowful but ultimately glorious journey to redemption for all who believe and are willing to echo her "Yes."

Mary was a woman of courage and character, supporting and protecting Jesus. She was an integral part of Jesus' life in the way a loving mother is always available to her children. By gently suggesting he intervene at the Wedding Feast of Cana, she showed her sensitivity to the bride and groom as well as her acceptance that her son's public life and ministry were about to unfold.

Mary was devoted to witness to the mission of Jesus. She was able to fulfill that devotion because of her many graces. Mary's attributes include humility, generosity, loyalty, devotion, courage, and selflessness. Her "Yes, let it be" paved the way for our salvation.

Mary bravely accompanied Jesus in Jerusalem and witnessed his Crucifixion. Scripture tells us she was present with the Apostles in the fifty days prior to Pentecost. Despite the overwhelming pain she must have experienced as a mother, Mary remained in a state of gratitude for God's many blessings. What an amazing role model! It is no wonder that we see in so many aspects of early and contemporary art and culture ongoing references and depictions of Mary. Artistic paintings, etchings and sculptures of the Madonna and Child can be traced as far back as the catacombs. During the Renaissance we have Michelangelo's *Pieta*, Giotto's *Mother and Child Enthroned* and Van Eyck's *Annunciation*. Any fan of American football knows what a "Hail Mary Pass" means to a football game. Recall the 1970 soulful rendition of Paul

McCartney's "Let it Be," whose lyrics are most likely a reference to Our Blessed Mother, traced back to Paul's Irish Catholic roots in Liverpool: "When I find myself in times of trouble Mother Mary comes to me speaking words of wisdom, let it be."

For Maronites, "As we pray the *Qurbano* (Divine Liturgy) we encounter the Virgin Mary at each and every liturgical juncture accompanying the faithful step by step until they leave the church." (*The Virgin Mary in the Maronite Church*, Archbishop Boutros Gemayel).

During this month of May, when we honor Mary in a special way, it is especially important to remember that it takes affirmation on our part to accept God's love in our lives by saying "Yes" in the way Mary did. In this way we honor her by aspiring to live our lives with the same attributes of courage and humility that she possessed. □



The Annunciation by Van Eyck.

Saint Louis, Missouri *Trivia Night*



Jason and Gina Oesterlei with Fr. John Nahal.

by Shelly Vitale

On Saturday, March 25, 2017, more than a hundred people attended the Saint Raymond Trivia Night held at the Maronite Heritage Center in Saint Louis, Mo. The proceeds will go towards the Saint Raymond Scholarship Fund and the Men's and Ladies' Societies. The evening started with a big welcome from Co-Chairs Jason and Gina Oesterlei. Father John Nahal, Rector of Saint Raymond Cathedral, thanked everyone for attending. Doctor Daniel Abodeely, Treasurer of the Scholarship Committee, gave details about the Scholarship Fund and the recipients who have benefitted from the fund in the past. Radio personality Trish Gazall, was the Emcee. The first and second place winners generously donated back their prize winnings which added to the charitable event. A Silent Auction chaired by Diana Deeba and Diana Slay was held along with the Trivia Night. An array of items was displayed for auction, thanks to many generous donations. The Saint Raymond community appreciates Jason and Gina's hard work and dedication. Thanks, also, to all the volunteers that made the event such a great success. □

Cincinnati, Ohio *Lenten Retreat*

by Rose Abiradi, NAM Chapter President

The NAM Chapter at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, sponsored the annual Lenten retreat on Saturday, March 18, 2017. This Lenten Retreat has been an annual event, sponsored by the Cincinnati NAM Chapter, for many years. The Most Reverend Father Benedict O'Cinnsealaigh, President and Rector of the Athenaeum of Ohio, Mount St. Mary's Seminary, was the Retreat Master. The theme for the retreat was "The Purpose of Fasting and Lent." Father Benedict gave a thorough explanation of the origin of Lent. A discussion followed which included various church rites and their fasting rules.



Father Benedict shared his personal experiences as a child, describing the love of family and forgiveness. Twenty-five people attended the retreat. Miss Hana Chemaly stated, "I grew up with the belief that Lent is about fasting, and giving up something you enjoy for forty days. Little did I know that it is much more than that. After learning about the origin of the season of Lent and how it has evolved since the Council of Nicea, I've come to understand it to be a time of spiritual renewal, social justice, charity, forgiveness and prayer." Lent is a renewal for our faith and the love of the Lord. Following the retreat, Fr. George Hajj, Pastor, celebrated the Divine Liturgy. □

North Jackson, Ohio *Feast of Saint Joseph*

On March 19, 2017, many gathered at the Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in North Jackson, Ohio, for the Feast of Saint Joseph. As always, there was a sizeable gathering for the Divine Liturgy and procession into the Cedars Hall for the blessing of Saint Joseph's Table. Many brought delicacies to be blessed and shared with all who came to honor the Spouse of the Virgin Mary.

According to tradition, the home of the Holy Family was open to all, especially the poor who would come to share meager meals with Jesus, Mary and Joseph. This pious example of charity and hospitality continues in the homes and churches of those who follow the example of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

Visitation of the Holy Relics

The Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon was honored to host an incredible exhibit of over 150 holy relics on Sunday, April 2, 2017. The relics are the ministry of the Companions of the Cross. Father Carlos Martins travels the entire world bringing these very special sacramentals of our Catholic faith to thousands.

The exhibit began with a beautiful conference on relics and their importance in strengthening our faith and



People venerating the many relics on display.

confidence in God. Father Martins focused upon the lives of Saint Maria Goretti and Saint Bernadette of Lourdes.

Following the conference all were invited into the Cedars Hall to see and venerate the many relics on display. It was incredible that as the many visitors flowed into the hall, there was silence, reverence and a prayerful atmosphere. No one spoke; everyone prayed. There were even visitors who came from as far as Wisconsin to venerate the relics, especially the relic of Saint Sharbel. □

Clinton Township, Michigan *Pastoral Visit*



Bishop Zaidan blesses the Palms. Chorbishop Alread Badawi and Subdeacon Michael Magyar assist.

The community of St. Sharbel Maronite Church in Clinton Township, Mich., was honored to receive Bishop A. Elias Zaidan, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our

Lady of Lebanon, for a pastoral visit. Inspired and blessed by his visit, all committee chairpersons updated the Bishop with the progress on their efforts to move forward in the building of our new spiritual home!

On Friday, April 7, 2017, Bishop Zaidan celebrated the Divine Liturgy and led the parishioners in praying the Stations of the Cross. Members of the Ladies Altar Society read aloud the meditations for each Station of the Lord's Passion, alternating in English and Arabic. A true spirit of humbleness and meekness was experienced by all! A "Meet and Greet" with refreshments followed, allowing parishioners the opportunity to express their gratitude and love to the Bishop!

On Saturday [Lazarus Saturday], Bishop Zaidan met with all the members of the Religious Education Program, Men's Club, Ladies Altar Society, and the Knights of Columbus to inform him about their spiritual and corporal works of mercy! A great discussion took place providing insight, wisdom and guidance from the Bishop, Chorbishop Alfred Badawi, Pastor of St. Sharbel Church, and Rev. Milad Yaghi, Pastor of Our Lady of the Cedars in Houston, Tex., and secretary to the Bishop. Highlights of topics included the importance of total family catechesis and involvement in the spiritual well-being of our children.

The Bishop met with the youth and young adults from St. Sharbel Catholic Church at Eclipse Burger for a Luncheon. During this event the youth and young adults engaged in a discussion with the Bishop on how to bring God into our everyday lives. He answered all of our questions and told us how two minutes of prayer in the morning and three in the evening can greatly help to bring us closer to God.

The weekend concluded with the celebration of the Divine Liturgies with Chorbishop Alfred Badawi, Rev. Milad Yaghi and Subdeacon Michael Magyar on Hosanna Sunday with the Blessing of Palms. "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" □

Jacksonville, Florida *Parish Retreat*

by Meriam Bahri

The final weekend of March [March 24 -26, 2017] in Jacksonville, Florida, was a beautiful and enlightening weekend blessed with the presence of the Sisters of the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light. The whole program began with a covered-dish feast in the hall of St. Maron Church. As the community was eating and enjoying the meal, Mother Marla Marie introduced the three Sisters and began a discussion about a scripture passage, thus commencing the religious retreat.

On the sunny Saturday morning, the MYO of St. Maron Church gathered for a day with the Sisters. It began with an opening prayer and a few ice-breakers (friendship and teamwork activities) to get the youths comfortable and enthusiastic. The Sisters were truly honest and sincere; they allowed the participants to feel involved and stimulated their drive to participate. The youth really enjoyed the spiritual discussion. Through fascinating videos, enticing workshops and a few competitive games, the Sisters taught many lessons and important concepts to the youth. As Saturday continued, the Sisters began to express the importance of Reconciliation.



At first many of the retreat-goers seemed wary of this idea: "Confession! Face to face with the priest?" seemed intimidating. Confronting the fears of Confession was a big part of the day as the Sisters comforted the youth and catechized them on the blessings of this Mystery. Sure enough, one by one, most of the youth reconciled and it was a lovely end to an amazing day.

On Sunday morning the young children, under the age of 13, were invited to their own discussion before the Liturgy. The Sisters seemed to touch the soul of every person at the church, and they got glowing reviews from everyone including the children! After the Liturgy and lunch the Sisters, Fr. Elie Abi-Chedid, Pastor, a handful of young adults, and adults headed out to the St. Augustine area to enjoy some religious landmarks and attractions for a great ending to the awesome weekend.

Overall it was a very spiritual and holy time. The Sisters made everyone excited to participate in church events and they really brought a lot of joy, love, and spirit to the community. □

Glen Allen, Virginia Regional MYO Retreat

by Cathy George

Our favorite phrase from the youth about the 2017 Youth Regional Retreat that took place at St. Anthony Maronite Church in Glen Allen, Va., was "sharing the same faith." The theme for the retreat that took place on March 31, April 1 and 2, 2017, was "Discover Jesus." Monsignor Peter Azar, Rector of the Maronite Seminary in Washington, D.C., and Sister Therese Maria Touma, Maronite Servants of Christ the Light, were the guest speakers for the event. Almost one hundred youth and chaperones from St. Anthony of Glen Allen, Our Lady of Lebanon of Washington, D.C., St. Elias Church of Roanoke, Va., and St. Michael the Archangel of Fayetteville, N.C., were in attendance. Allison Shaia said, "The youth retreat is

a great place to meet new people that share the same faith as you. Also there are a lot of fun and different ways to learn about our Maronite faith."

St. Anthony Church retreat team began with several clips from author Matthew Kelly's *Decision Point*. On Friday evening, the youth played games that assisted them in understanding how Jesus' teachings are lived out in everyday life. Deacon Michael Touma led the evening prayer.

On Saturday after liturgy, the participants discussed Matthew Kelly's view on how we can live a radical life like Jesus and how he gives us second chances. Young adult leaders and chaperones led small groups in discussions on these topics throughout the day. These groups played Kahoot competitions to see who actually knew what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount and his other important sayings.

During free time the participants volunteered to complete toiletry bags for homeless families at the Salvation Army in the city of Richmond and also assisted with creating Easter projects for parish children. Monsignor Azar and Sister Therese Maria spoke about their vocations, and the youth had many questions about priesthood and religious life. In the evening Sister prepared the youth for confession and adoration. The youth spent several hours in the church in prayer and meditation. They ended the evening with games and dancing in the social hall.

Sunday morning began with liturgy concelebrated by Monsignor George Sebaali and Monsignor Peter Azar. The homily on vocations was given by Deacon Robert Farah. The youth prepared the readings and participated in the liturgy. The retreat ended with breakfast in the hall. Evelyn Mazloom said, "The Youth Retreat allows young people from different churches to meet other Maronites. It's nice because you're given the opportunity to get to know and grow with others who share your beliefs. The people you meet here help you live out your faith even when the world around you makes it difficult. Those bonds last beyond just one weekend, and I, at least, have found that some of the friends I've made at youth retreats have remained positive influences in my life for years." □



MARONITES CONSECRATED TO THE HEARTS OF MARY & JESUS

54TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
ST. RAFKA ♦ GREENVILLE SC
JUNE 29 - JULY 2 ♦ 2017



Sponsored by National Apostolate of Maronites

Children's Program at the NAM Convention

Superheroes abound in the children's program! A superhero implies a person who has something that is beyond human, a super power! Youth are encouraged to learn all about the resources we have, as Catholics, to live out our faith and to use these things to be true Catholic Superheroes! After all, each of us is a child of God and called to be a saint. In each session, we will explore some of the tools and powers that God has given us to be super heroes while crafting, learning, playing, and taking an adventure in the city of Greenville, S.C.!

Thursday, June 29, 2017

Morning: Be a superhero today as we learn about the super power of the Rosary. We will play games and sing songs all while learning about some important heroes of the Maronite faith, like St. Rafka, St. Sharbel, and others.

Afternoon: Fly away for an afternoon of super fun at The Children's Museum of the Upstate, a Smithsonian affiliate museum that sparks a lifelong passion for curiosity and learning through play.

Friday, June 30, 2017

Morning: Our Catholic superheroes will learn through crafts, discussion, and games that their super powers (the Rosary and their Maronite faith) can help them have a pure heart that will lead them to consecration to the Sacred Heart of Mary.

Afternoon: Use your super power of observation to enjoy God's creations at the Greenville Zoo and Cleveland Park.

Saturday, July 1, 2017

Morning: A superhero's pure heart helps him/her to consecrate his/her heart to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Our crafts and discussions will culminate

to help children realize saints are really superheroes working for Jesus, the Ultimate Superhero!

Afternoon: Let's end this fun week with a Superhero movie and snack.



Lauralee Saad, Chair for the Children's program, has earned her degrees in English with an emphasis on secondary education. She has taught in the public and Catholic school systems and is a gifted teacher. She is looking forward to sharing her excitement for the faith, for Greenville, and for learning with the youth at the NAM convention.

Costs and required signed waivers for the children's programs are listed on the registration form that can be found on the www.namnews.org. There are other excursions you may be interested in as well, so take some time and view more of the upcoming events and make your reservations today.

Convention Activities

Is Jesus calling you to get to know him better? How can you deepen your relationship with God, spend time with your family, and have a variety of activities to share together? - Come to the NAM '17 Convention for excursions, workshops, and performers, all in Greenville, S.C. Bring your family and have an enjoyable time.

There are several adventurous activities from zip lining to kayaking, or you can take a tour of the Biltmore Estate in Asheville. It's also fun to find the little sculpted mice figures scattered on Main Street in downtown Greenville. The weather is great and there are a multitude of delicious restaurant options within walking distance of the hotel. The friendliness of the area is one of the great things about Greenville; it makes you feel like you are at home.

This year's presenters bring their passion for the love of God and are excited about sharing their topics with you. Featured speakers include Mother Olga who faced a challenging life from a young age and lived through four wars. She will reveal God's unconditional love in "Contemplating the Heart of Jesus through Mary in the School of Nazareth."

Carl Anderson, Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus, a champion for the forgotten and marginalized, and an advocate for humanitarian relief for Christians in the Middle East, will present "The Church's Call to Build a Civilization of Love in the Middle East."

These are just two of the ten speakers planned whose workshops include Catechesis, Music, Spirituality, Marriage, Sacred Art and will bring you a new awareness of God's love and help your calling to be closer to God. The 54th Convention will begin June 28 through July 2, 2017.

Our entertainers celebrate the gift of being able to come together and grow close to God. The performers that are planned include a live inspirational spiritual concert by Abeer Nehme from Lebanon. Amin Sultan and his band will bring their exhilarating music to our Friday Middle Eastern banquet and Saturday's Grand Banquet will be highlighted with one of Lebanon's hottest musical superstars, Michel Azzi.

As first-time attendees you will enjoy hospitality from St. Rafka Parish and authentic Lebanese food, experience workshops, attend daily Divine Liturgy, and celebrate with evening concerts, singing, banquets, a silent auction, and a raffle with cash prizes and special travel destinations.

During this convention, there will be daily children's programs so all of the family can participate. We are excited that Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, and Bishop A. Elias Zaidan, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, will be available to the young adults. Customized special events for the middle school and high school youth are also planned.

To register for the convention workshops or to read more about the activities and speakers planned, and to book your reservation today, please go to the Namnews.org or saintrafka.org websites.

To book a hotel room, call the Hyatt Regency at (888) 421-1442 and mention NAM CONVENTION to secure the discounted room rate. It will be a lot of fun for everyone and we look forward to seeing you there!

Euthanasia

Continued from page 10

St. John Paul II during his Pontificate prayed for and preached against the "culture of death" that was casting its dark shadow over what was once the Christian Western World. As he witnessed the decline of ethics and morals in general in Western Society, he looked towards those parts of the world who were new in their embrace of the Christian faith, as possibly someday becoming the agents of a new revitalization of the faith in Europe and North America. □



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**The program starts Friday May 19 @ 6:30 PM
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For more information, call Sr Jinane at: 330-388-8891/330-538-9822
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Please RSVP before Friday, May 4th 2017

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54TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

ST. RAFHA ♦ GREENVILLE SC

JUNE 28—JULY 2 ♦ 2017

PERFORMERS



ABEER NEHME
Lebanese Angelic Voice
Thursday Concert



AMIN SULTAN
Middle Eastern Performer
Friday Middle Eastern Banquet



MICHEL AZZI
Lebanese Superstar
Saturday Grand Banquet

PRESENTERS



DR. WILLIAM E. RABIL, MD
The Shroud of Turin
Thursday, 10:30–11:30am



CHORBISHOP MICHAEL G. THOMAS
Marriage: A Vocation Blessed by God
Thursday, 3:30–4:30pm



REV. VINCENT FARHAT & REV. GEORGE HAJJ
Catechesis: Practical Resources & Challenges
Friday, 10:30–11:30am



SR. LINA KHAWAND & SR. CYNTHIA KASSIS
Workshop for Sacred Art
Friday, 10:30–11:30am



REV. DOMINIQUE HANNA
Going Deeper in the Spiritual Life
Friday, 3:15–4:15pm



REV. AARON SANDBOTHE
Maronite Music for Choir Directors & Members
Friday, 4:15–5:15pm



MOTHER OLGA
Featured Speaker
Contemplating the Heart of Jesus
Through Mary in the School of Nazareth
Saturday, 10:30am



CARL ANDERSON, SUPREME KNIGHT
Featured Speaker
The Church's Call to Build a Civilization
of Love in the Middle East
Saturday, 3:30pm

EXCURSIONS



THE BILTMORE & WINERY
Wednesday, 9:30am–7:00pm



THE GORGE ZIP-LINING
Wednesday, 9:30am–5:15pm



GREEN RIVER KAYAKING
Wednesday, 9:45am–5:15pm

YOUTH

LAURALEE SAAD
Children's Program

MICHELE HOUMIS
Maronite Youth

BISHOP GREGORY MANSOUR, BISHOP ELIAS ZAIDAN, AND SISTER THERESE
Maronite Young Adults

MARONITE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS
Social Mixers

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- 3RD Cash winning of \$1,000
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Our Lady of Fatima

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The language we use to describe her is filled with beautiful images and descriptions. In our Maronite calendar we dedicate Wednesdays to her honor. In the Wednesday text for the Season of Pentecost, a day dedicated to her honor, the Maronite Church proclaims:

"O holy Virgin Mary, O Beautiful Lily and Fragrant Rose, the fragrance of your holiness has filled the whole universe. Pray for us that we may become the sweet fragrance of Christ that spreads throughout the world."

In this prayer we are asking that we might become more like her, to be more like her in our thoughts and words and deeds. Our first response to God, as always, is prayer. Our Lady at Fatima emphasized the importance of prayer. She further called on all people to repent, to sacrifice and called us to devotion to her Immaculate Heart.

While many physical healings have been seen through the intervention of Our Lady of Fatima, devotion to the Blessed Mother under this title has been a source of spiritual renewal and growth in faith for many over the past one hundred years. During these years there have been healings of both soul and body.

During this centennial celebration of Our Lady of Fatima let us take the message of the Holy Mother of God into our hearts; let us resolve to repent and to believe. ☐

+ Bishop A. Elias Zaidan
Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon

Call to Priesthood

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St. Jude Church in Orlando was designated a pilgrimage Church in February 2010, on the occasion of St. Maron's 1600 year anniversary Jubilee, and in 2016, the Year of Mercy, as well. Many Latin parishes, schools and laity visited our church and now they come on the 22nd of every month for the veneration of the Relic of St. Sharbel. Our parish is open for all, "where everyone is welcome." We have parishioners from all nationalities, race and faiths. We are a true Christian family. It is home for everyone who seeks the Lord and needs his love and mercy. They find a compassionate home in our loving Parish family.

"It is a blessing. I can't imagine myself in business. My vocation is the best thing that ever happened in my life," Father Saade said. Among the many moments and highlights that stand out to Father Saade is celebrating Mass with St. John Paul II in his private chapel in November 1992. "I was a newly-ordained priest not even a month old. It was the 100 year anniversary of the American College. I celebrated Mass with the Holy Father and all the Cardinals visiting from the U.S." For his 25th anniversary, twenty people accompanied Father Saade in a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Highlights of his trip included the Church of the Nativity, the Church of the Transfiguration, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Way of the Cross and the Church of the Resurrection. "It seems God is guiding me by the hand and always watching over me." "Being a priest is a great blessing." ☐

Let us meditate with wonder and gratitude on the great mystery of the Lord's Resurrection.

Pope Francis, April 19, 2017