



The Maronite Voice

A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA



Volume IX

Issue No. VIII

September 2013



*Father Abdullah Elias
Zaidan, M.L.M.*

was appointed Bishop

of the

*Eparchy of Our Lady
of Lebanon*

on

July 10, 2013



Schedule of Bishop Robert Shaheen

September 14 - 15, 2013

Saint Raymond Parish Festival, St. Louis, Mo.

September 23 - October 1, 2013

Lebanon

September 28, 2013

Ordination of Bishop A. Elias Zaidan, *Harrissa*, Lebanon.

October 6, 2013

Annual Liturgy and Banquet, Daughters of Saint Paul, St. Louis, Mo.

October 23, 2013

Installation of Bishop A. Elias Zaidan, St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

October 25, 2013

Appreciation Party for Bishop Robert J. Shaheen, St. Louis, Mo.

October 27, 2013

First Mass of Bishop Zaidan, St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo. □

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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

Aliquippa, Pennsylvania Pastoral Visit



by Jeannette Ayoob - Urban

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Maronite Catholic Mission, formerly the Maronite Community of Aliquippa, hosted Bishop Gregory Mansour for the first time at its new home in Darlington, Penn., on Sunday, August 11, 2013.

Bishop Mansour celebrated the Divine Liturgy along with the Mission's Administrator, Fr. Simon Elhajj; Fr. Rodolph Wakim, the Pastor from their mother-parish Our Lady of Victory Maronite Church, Carnegie [Pittsburgh]; and Fr. Lou Valone, the Pastor at St. Catherine of Siena Roman Catholic Church and a bi-ritual priest from the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Following the Liturgy over sixty people joined Bishop Mansour and the clergy for a luncheon in the Church Hall. □

The Synod of Maronite Bishops Elects Father Abdullah Zaidan as Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon

On July 10, 2013, His Holiness Pope Francis gave his blessing to the election by the Synod of Maronite Bishops and appointed Reverend Abdullah Elias Zaidan, M.L.M., Rector of Our Lady of Mount Lebanon-St. Peter Cathedral, Los Angeles, California, as Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon.

Bishop-Elect Zaidan succeeds His Excellency Bishop Robert J. Shaheen, whose resignation the Pope accepted in conformity with Canon 210, paragraph 2 of the Code of Canons of the Oriental Churches.¹

Bishop-Elect Zaidan will be ordained on September 28, 2013, at Our Lady of Lebanon Basilica, *Harissa*, Lebanon, by His Beatitude Patriarch Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East. He will be installed at St. Raymond Cathedral in St. Louis, Mo., on October 23, 2013.

Press Conference

On July 12, 2013, Bishop Robert J. Shaheen and Bishop-Elect Abdallah Elias Zaidan held a mutual press conference at the Eparchial Pastoral Center in St. Louis, Mo. Bishop Shaheen welcomed Bishop-Elect Zaidan and gave details of the ordination. Bishop-Elect Zaidan, whose motto is "Thy Will Be Done," invited all people of God to join him for his ordination and gave the following statement:

"On July 10, 2013, the Feast of the Blessed Massabki Brothers in our Maronite Liturgical calendar, I was appointed by His Holiness Pope Francis to succeed His Excellency Robert Shaheen as the third bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles.

I am humbled by this appointment and by the trust of His Holiness. This appointment came following the recommendation of the Synod of our Maronite Bishops presided by His Eminence and Beatitude Cardinal Bechara Peter Rai, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East. Therefore, I want to express the following words in my message today:

1. A word of thanks to the Almighty God, who has called me to the order of the priesthood years back and now to the fullness of the priesthood as bishop. My gratitude to His Holiness Pope Francis, who is stressing the need for bishops to be true pastors, compassionate and caring like the Divine Master. My gratitude to His Eminence Cardinal Rai, our Patriarch, and to the Synod of Maronite Bishops,

who have chosen me for this task. My gratitude to His Eminence Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect, and to the staff at the Congregation of the Eastern Churches. My thanks to my brother priests, my collaborators and to the laity at large.

Nevertheless, my deep gratitude goes to *Sayedna*, His Excellency Robert Shaheen, who shepherded our Eparchy for the last twelve and a half years. During that time, I have learned a lot from him, and I have witnessed his love and care for the flock entrusted to him. I appreciate your love for me and trust in me, *Sayedna*. I want to thank the Congregation of Maronite Lebanese Missionaries, who formed me all of these years.



2. A word of promise to all, I will strive to the best of my abilities to be the good shepherd following the example of Christ, the Good Shepherd. I promise to lay myself down at the service of the Church and even place my human weakness into His hands to remind myself of the need to be humble. I promise to work hard, to reach out to all, to strengthen the weak and encourage the faithful, to move forward the message of the New Evangelization, the message of love that is much needed in today's world. I promise to strive to do God's will in my life. "Thy will be done" will be my motto in my Episcopal ministry.
3. A word of appeal. I would first like to ask for your prayers for me. I am overwhelmed these days with the outpouring of love from the clergy and laity. Pray to God to keep me focused on the ministry and on the people. Pray for me that I may hold strong against all errors and scandals. Pray for me that I may remain faithful every step of the way. I would also like to ask for your collaboration with me so that we can work together to showcase the beauty of our Maronite Church, to keep it a haven to all who search for God and to make it a sanctuary of holiness.

As I start my Episcopal ministry, I will rely on the grace of our Loving God, on the intercession of the Blessed Mother, Our Lady of Lebanon, the Patroness of our diocese, and the intercession of our Maronite Saints: Maron, John Maron, Rafka, Sharbel, Nemetallah, the Blessed Massabki brothers, the Blessed Estephan Nehme and the multitude of all the righteous and just.

May God lead my path every step of the way. Thank you and God Bless." □

¹ This resignation from office by the eparchial bishop is to be submitted to the patriarch if it is the case of an eparchial bishop exercising authority inside the territorial boundaries of a patriarchal church; in other cases, it is submitted to the Roman pontiff; further, if the bishop belongs to a patriarch church, the patriarch is to be notified as soon as possible. (Eastern Code of Canon Law; canon 210, paragraph 2.)

Biographical Highlights of His Excellency The Most Reverend Abdullah Elias Zaidan Bishop-Elect of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon

The newly appointed Bishop Abdullah Elias Zaidan was born in *Kseibe*, Lebanon, in 1963. He joined the Congregation of Maronite Lebanese Missionaries [M.L.M.] and was ordained to the priesthood on July 20, 1986. His education was in Lebanon where he earned a License in Theology in 1986 and a License in Philosophy in 1987. In 1988 he came to the U.S. and attended St. John's University in New York where he earned a Masters degree in education and then pursued doctoral studies in education at Pepperdine University in California.

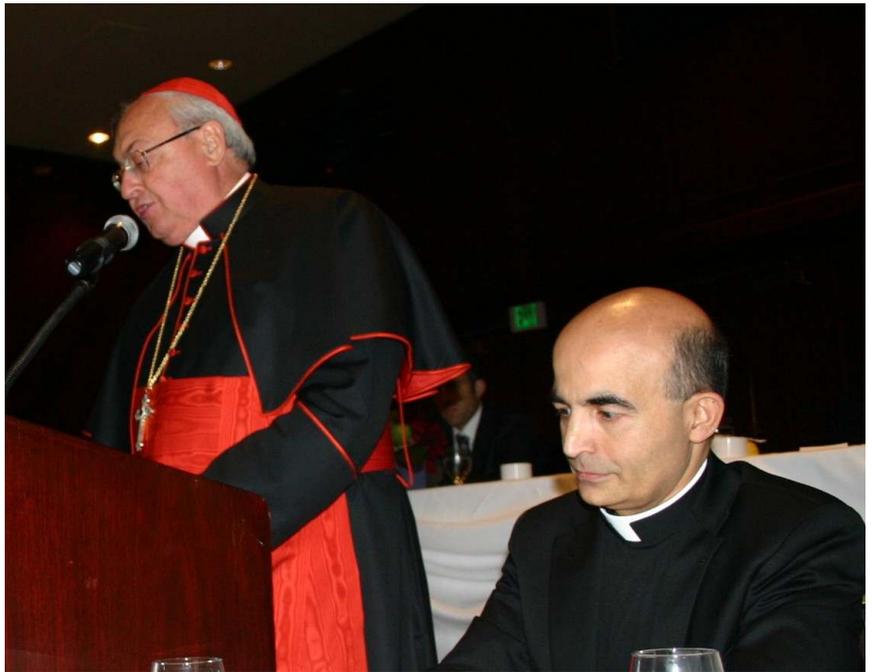
After his ordination, Fr. Zaidan served from July 1986 to September 1988 as Assistant Rector of Minor Seminary of the Congregation of Maronite Lebanese Missionaries; Chaplain of Lay Apostolic Marianist Movement and Young Catholic Students; and as a Retreat Master for various ages and parishes. From October 1986 - September 1988 he taught as a Religious Education teacher in Catholic schools.

After his arrival in the U.S., Fr. Zaidan served from September 1988 to January 1990 as Assistant Rector at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y., while studying for his Masters Degree at St. John's University.

In January 1990, Fr. Zaidan was transferred to Pastor of St. George Maronite Catholic Church, San Antonio, Texas, where he served until August of 1994. While in San Antonio, he contributed to the establishment of Maronite missions in Dallas and Houston, Texas.

From August of 1992 to the present he has been serving as Regional Superior of Maronite Lebanese Missionaries in the United States. From September 1994 to the present, Fr. Zaidan has been the Rector of Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon-St. Peter Cathedral, Los Angeles, California; a member of the Eparchial College of Consultors; a Member of the Eparchial Presbyteral Council and the Protopresbyter for the Southwest and Northwest Regions of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon. From 1996 to the present he is the Eparchial Chairman of the Commission for Lebanon. From March 1998 to June 2001, he helped establish St. Jude Mission in San Gabriel Valley, Los Angeles County.

From 2001 to the present, Fr. Zaidan has been a Board member of *Tele-Lumiere* International; the Coordinator for the Eparchial Marriage Tribunal; and on the Board of Pastors and Personnel Board. In 2003 Bishop Robert Shaheen assigned him as a Member of the Eparchial Sexual Abuse Board. In 2005, he was assigned as Consultor of *The*



Bishop-Elect Zaidan listens to remarks by His Eminence Leonardo Cardinal Sandri at the Maronite Convention in Los Angeles, Calif., in 2009.

Maronite Voice, the official newsletter of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon and the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn; the Treasurer of the Catholic Schools Assistance Fund and of Caritas, Lebanon in the U.S.

In 2009, Fr. Zaidan became the Director of Project Roots; a member of the Inter-eparchial History Committee while helping in the establishment of Sts. Peter and Paul Mission in San Fernando Valley - Los Angeles County. In 2011, he became the Supervisor of the Eparchial Stewardship Office and Vicar for Clergy.

Between 2003 and 2005, Fr. Zaidan participated as a delegate and a special expert in the Maronite Patriarchal Synod held in Lebanon. In October 2006 he participated as a member in the Encounter for the Eastern Churches in the U.S.A. in Chicago, Illinois. And in October he participated as a translator at the Synod for the Christians of the Middle East at the Vatican.

On July 10, 2013, the Holy See announced that His Holiness Pope Francis had appointed Father Abdullah Elias Zaidan as Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon. The new Bishop is fluent in Arabic, French, English and Syriac. □

Biographical Highlights of His Excellency Bishop Robert Shaheen, Bishop-Emeritus of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon

On July 10, 2013, His Holiness Pope Francis accepted the resignation of His Excellency Bishop Robert Shaheen, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon in conformity with Canon 210, paragraph 2 of the Code of Canons of the Oriental Churches (age limit).

Who is Bishop Shaheen?

The oldest of four brothers: Richard (deceased), William and John, Bishop Robert Shaheen was born to Albert and Aileen Shaheen on June 3, 1937, in Danbury, Connecticut. After graduating from Danbury Public High School, he entered St. Thomas (Latin Rite) Seminary in Bloomfield, Conn. In 1958 he transferred to St. Basil (Eastern Catholic) Seminary, Methuen, Massachusetts, while attending classes at St. Anselm College, Manchester, New Hampshire. In 1961 he enrolled in the newly established Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary in Washington, D.C., becoming one of the first four seminarians, and attended classes at The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.



On October 2, 1962, he was ordained a subdeacon by Archbishop Anthony Khoraiiche (during the pastoral visit of Patriarch Paul Peter Meouchi to the U.S.); a deacon on June 7, 1963; and on May 2, 1964, he was ordained a priest by Bishop Francis M. Zayek (Bishop of the Maronites of Brazil) in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C., on the occasion of the first Maronite Convention in the United States. In September 1978 Bishop Francis M. Zayek ordained him an Archpriest, and on March 31, 1986, Chorbishop.

Assignments

- 1964-1965: Associate Pastor, St. Anthony Church, Danbury, Conn.
- October 1965 - Spring 1966
Administrator, St. Anthony Church, Springfield, Massachusetts; purchased six acre plot for new Church.
- Spring 1966 - January 1967
Administrator, St. Anthony Church, Danbury, Conn.
- January 1967 - November 1967
Administrator, St. Raymond Church, St. Louis, Missouri

- November 1967- present
Pastor, St. Raymond Church, St. Louis, Mo.

Ecclesiastical Honors and Societies

- 1993 Order of St. Sharbel, perpetual membership
- 1998 Admitted to the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem as Knight Commander with Star.

Eparchial Assignments

(initially in the Diocese of Saint Maron - USA, and then in the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles)

- Member of Priest Senate
- Member of the Eparchial Liturgical Commission
- Member of the College of Consultors
- Proto-Presbyter of the Eparchial MidAmerica Region
- Vice-Chairman of the Eparchial Financial Committee
- Chairman of the Eparchial Family Life Office
- Eparchial Advisor for Priests
- Spiritual Director of the Order of St. Sharbel

Parish Accomplishments

- At the time of his becoming the Administrator of St. Raymond Church, St. Louis, Mo., the parish had been without a resident Maronite priest for over twenty years. Bishop Shaheen led the parish from just a few faithful parishioners using a four family flat to the beautiful, vibrant Maronite Parish of today with some 350-plus active families.
- 1967-1970: Maronite liturgies were organized and celebrated on a regular basis. He developed newsletters, bulletins, fliers; conducted a census to identify Maronites in the greater metropolitan area and began inviting them back to St. Raymond Church
- Spiritual and cultural programs, including Maronite religious education classes
- Acquiring of property for expansion
- 1970: Hosted Maronite Convention (NAM)
- 1971: Kick-off fund drive for new church; numerous fundraising activities
- 1975: Dedication of new Church (November) "Lest we forget our heritage, we will build our new Church for the coming ages"
- 1977: (February) New rectory dedicated
- 1979: (November) Dedication of new parish center "The Cedars." Besides being a parish hall, "The Cedars" is also a public facility rented to many groups throughout the City; additionally, it is a restaurant on Wednesdays, staffed by parish volunteers and well-known for serving Lebanese lunches to greater St. Louis.

(Continues on page 19)



Eparchial Condolences

Tampa, Florida

Sts. Peter and Paul Mission Mourns the Death of Its Pastor

Reverend Peter (Eid) Boulos, Pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Mission, Tampa, Fla., passed away suddenly on Monday, August 19, 2013, at the rectory. Father Peter is survived by his parents, Elias and Labibeh Boulos, and the following brothers and sisters, Jean, Kamil, Joseph, Aida and Rita.



Father Peter was born on May 10, 1966, in Lebanon and was ordained a priest on October 16, 1993, for the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, at Saint Sharbel Church, *Adonis*, Lebanon, by Bishop Guy-Paul Noujaim. He served as Parochial Vicar at Saint Jude Church in Orlando, Florida, and then at Saint Anthony Church in Lawrence, Massachusetts. He was appointed as Pastor of Saint Joseph Church in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1996 and served there for thirteen years. During that time, he helped in the establishment of Saint Rafka Mission in Greenville, South Carolina. He served as Pastor at Saints Peter and Paul Church in Tampa, Florida, since 2009.

On Friday, August 23, 2013, His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour received Father Peter's body at Saints Peter and Paul Church and presided at the *Ginnaz* for Priests. Father Peter's body laid in state at Saints Peter and Paul Mission until 7:00 pm., and a Funeral Divine Liturgy (Commemoration of the Priests) was celebrated at 8:00 pm on the same day at the Church of the Incarnation in Tampa, Fla., before his body was shipped to Lebanon for burial in his native village.

Condolences can be sent to Father Peter's family care of: Saints Peter and Paul Church, 6201 Sheldon Road, Tampa, Florida 33615.

Bishop Gregory along with the clergy and faithful of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn extend their heartfelt sympathy and the promise of their prayers to the family of Father Boulos and to the parishioners of Saints Peter and Paul. May God grant rest to his soul and consolation to his parishioners, friends, and family. □

Petersham, Massachusetts *Most Holy Trinity Monastery*

After many years as a contemplative monk, eighteen of those years as a priest of God, our dear brother, **Father Martin** of the Blessed Sacrament finished the course of his life in this world. St. John Chrysostom attests that the monks around

Antioch refused to say that a Christian monk ever "died" ... rather, they would say: "he was perfected." And when they received the news of such perfection, the monks would respond, saying: "Alleluia."



So we, from the heart of the same monastic tradition, acknowledge with gratitude to God that Father Martin was perfected and we, too, sing "Alleluia."

Father Martin was born in 1929 and raised in the farm country of northern Vermont. He sought God from an early age and, as a young man, he began to discern a vocation. It took many years but eventually he came to our valley here in Petersham, Mass. He was already in his sixties when he arrived to give his life to God and made his final profession of vows in 1994.

Ordained a priest in 1995 by Archbishop Francis Zayek, he soon became everyone's favorite priest for confession. His cheerful and devout ways endeared him to all.

He served the community of the Most Holy Trinity Monastery in all the humble chores of the house but excelled as gardener. Even last year, when he was eighty-seven years old, after enduring a blood clot in his leg, he took charge of the garden, even digging the potatoes!

In recent months, the monks watched Fr. Martin slowly diminish, but with the tranquil and cheerful disposition that made him well-loved. He spent his last evening with them at recreation before retiring early because of his ailments. The next morning, June 3, 2013, they discovered that he had taken flight already and had gone to God.

Bishop Gregory along with the clergy and faithful of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn extend their heartfelt sympathy and the promise of their prayers to the family of Father Martin and to the monks of the Most Holy Trinity Monastery. May God grant rest to his soul and consolation to his family, friends and brother monks. □

Eparchy of Saint Maron **Save the Date**

Thursday, November 21, 2013

Join Us For the

Fourth Annual Benefit Dinner for
The Eparchy Of Saint Maron

Honoring Dr. Hamid and Leila Mouallem

Archdiocese of New York Catholic Center
9th Floor Dining Room, New York City. □

Tampa, Florida

National Maronite Youth Workshop

"Rejoice in the Lord Always and Sing Until the Whole World Hears!"

by Maria Lorenz
St. Jude Maronite Church
Orlando, Florida

The MYO would like to thank everyone at Saints Peter & Paul Maronite Catholic Mission in Tampa, Florida, who made it possible for us to participate in the 2013 National MYO Workshop in Tampa. We spent five days exploring and deepening our faith, meeting and reacquainting with friends, and celebrating our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. There were over 250 youth present that participated in Morning Prayer, daily Divine Liturgy, and celebrated the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Father Gary George, National Youth Director, provided us with many opportunities to intensify and strengthen our identity as young Catholics. "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:4-7).

Fr. Gary also introduced us to great speakers who shared their stories of faith. We were inspired by nineteen-year-old John Paul George. His story of beating the odds and overcoming challenges and his testimonial of faith were nothing short of miraculous and amazing. Walter J. Mendenhall, a former NFL running back, founder of Young and Unashamed Youth Movement, and Chicago based Youth Minister and Special Needs teacher, spoke to the importance of being authentic to Christ and being real. His message concluded with the acronym, REAL: R - respond to your call; E - exert every effort to keep unity; A - affirm you are called to live authentically; and L - level up with each other and love!

Michael Clayton, N.Y. Giants wide receiver and 2012 Super Bowl champion, surprised the MYO on the 4th of July with the message to be a leader among men you do not know. He shared his story of hardships, struggles and faith, and he advised the youth to finish what you start, do your best, and be the reflection of Christ in the world.

We spent a breakout session listening to Monsignor sharbel Maroun, Vocation Director for the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, Fr. Sami Chaaya, M.L.M., and Fr. Gary George speaking to the youth about vocation, challenges and values of life, and being tested throughout life. Each MYO group shared their talents throughout the week. There were dancers, singers, skits, and more that truly showcased our giftedness and talents.



Youth and clergy after the morning Liturgy.

Although our afternoon at the beach was rained out, we enjoyed an impromptu dance and pizza! Our final night included a Grand *Hafli*, a formal dinner attended by Bishop Gregory J. Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, and Father Bassam M. Saade, Pastor of St. Jude Church in Orlando, Fla., followed by great music and dancing. It was truly a spirit-filled week. "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything is worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you" (Phil. 4:8-9). □



Deadline for next month's issue of *The Maronite Voice* is September 25, 2013.

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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Email: Gmsebaali@aol.com

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

Austin, Texas, Maronite Youth Meet in Tampa

"Fighting for Faith - Soldiers for Christ"



by Rania Kattura
Our Lady's Maronite Church,
Austin, Texas

Over 250 youth (12 - 18 year - olds) from across the United States gathered in Tampa, Florida, from July 1 - July 5, 2013, for the annual National Maronite Youth Organization (MYO) retreat, which centered around the theme of "Fighting for Faith - Soldiers for Christ." This year's retreat coincided with both the priests meeting as well as the 50th annual National Apostolate of Maronites (NAM) Convention. With a record number of attendees, the retreat kicked off with a liturgy led by Bishop Gregory Mansour, who reflected on Our Lord's Prayer and the five requests embedded within this prayer. From this day forward each day at the retreat the youth prayed the Our Father to kick start various parts of the workshop. Every day, I observed the power of this prayer among the youth and how they responded to the different talks and workshops held.

In the mornings we would walk over to the Marriott Chapel for *Safro* followed by a rich breakfast at the Embassy Suites, where the youth gathered and continued to build their relationships with youth who share their heritage, values and faith across the nation. Daily Liturgy occurred before lunch, and youth from different parishes served as altar servers, gift bearers, lectors, and peace givers and provided petitions. The petitions ranged from prayers for the youth to those whose lives were lost in the Arizona fires. Each petition added a special zest to each of the liturgies alongside the number of clergy who celebrated liturgy with the youth.

Unique this year is the number of priests and clergy who were present during various retreat functions. This allowed

the youth a special experience during Eucharistic Adoration and confessions. The priests themselves commented that the youth in attendance gave them the energy and charge to do more. During Eucharistic Adoration and confession it was moving to see the youth interact with Our Lord in different ways, some through deep prayers and personal reflection, others through shedding tears and talking things out with adult advisors. Time was spent reflecting on Philipians 4:4 -9, and each age group was asked to come up with a poster of what the verses meant to them. Each group presented insightful interpretation to this scripture reading and allowed further spiritual growth and discussion. It was intriguing to see how different age groups reflected on these verses and what it meant to them, resulting in six different reflections! While spending time with God is a goal of this retreat, Father Gary, our Youth Minister, never forgets the earthly challenges and allowed the youth to listen to people's testimony of finding God and answering to His call. Known to many was Michael Clayton, NFL football player, who talked about his experience with Our Lord and provided insight that even with fame, God would be with us. The youth erupted with cheer to see him in their midst and also were in complete silence as they heard him speak. They were taken by his testimony.

Each group was asked to present a talent. Talents varied from group dance performances, group raps, instrumentals, martial arts, solo and group singing to a comedy skit about Middle Eastern parents in America. The Grand Finale for the retreat was watching the 4th of July fireworks over Tampa Bay, dancing the night away to Middle Eastern and Western tunes while delighting in a spread of colorful candies and a sugar high. The retreat closed on a high note with Divine Liturgy on Friday that featured the ordination of Deacon George el Hajj to the priesthood.

The majority of the youth returned home after the retreat ended, while some reunited with their families and continued on to the 50th Annual NAM Convention and worked on strengthening the ties of fellowship that brought them together in the first place. Many of the youth are already counting down to the 2014 National MYO retreat, but until they meet again, they will each continue to communicate through their prayers for one another and follow each other on facebook and twitter! □

Detroit, Michigan Wheelchairs For Lebanon

The Knights of Columbus Council 8231 for the Maronite parishes of Detroit, Livonia, and Warren Mich., is once again showing their support not only to their local community, but abroad too! A few member Knights recently attended the NAM convention in Tampa, Fla., where they presented information about the Knights' current fundraising drive, Wheelchairs for Lebanon. This drive is aimed at assisting those less fortunate in Lebanon who are immobile, which are so many. The Knights received a warm response from the attendees, though there is still some work to go!

If you or your organization would like more information or would like to sponsor a wheelchair, please contact Mr. Ed O'Brien at eobrien1@sbcglobal.net. Thank you all in advance and may God shower you all with his abundant blessings. □

THE ORDER OF SAINT SHARBEL



Perpetual Members

★ **Amelia Habib**

(changed from Annual to Perpetual Member)

*St. John Maron Church
Williamsville, N.Y.*

Annual Members

★ **Anna Moreno-Nava**

*Our Lady of Lebanon Church
Miami, Fla.*

★ **Marian Ciaccia**

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

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, log on to www.orderstsharbel.org, or write to:

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

Or

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

Dartmouth, Massachusetts *Light of Life - Maronite Bible Camp*



by Sister Marla Marie

LoL (Light of Life) Maronite Bible Club week-long summer camp concluded with the Divine Liturgy celebrated at the Maronite Servants Convent in Dartmouth, Mass., by Chorbishop Joseph F. Kaddo of St. Anthony of the Desert, Fall River, Mass. There were forty people attending the Liturgy which included the LoL members, volunteers, and parents. After the closing Liturgy, all those in attendance enjoyed mini-golf, bumper boats and lunch at a local venue.

The Maronite Servants of Christ the Light hosted the program for the children to grow in their relationship with Jesus through dvd's, crafts, Bible sharing, games, prayer and choir practice, and fellowship. As one parent said, "They were spiritually driven and eager to learn more about Christ." The Maronite traditions and hymns were the focus of this program designed by Sister Marla Marie and supported by Father Jack Morrison, Pastor of Our Lady of Purgatory in New Bedford, Mass. □

Warren, Michigan *Liturgy of Thanksgiving*

On Sunday, July 14, 2013, the newly ordained Fr. George Hajj celebrated his first Liturgy of Thanksgiving at his home parish, St. Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church in Warren, Michigan. Over 600 guests, including family and friends, attended this joyful occasion with Chorbishop Alfred Badawi, Pastor, of St. Sharbel Church. An elegant reception followed allowing Fr. George to visit with the parishioners who have prayed for and supported him during his vocation training these past few years. Congratulations Fr. George and may God bless you in your ministry! □



The Bishop: A Brief Reflection From Tradition

by Father David A. Fisher

For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or addicted to wine or violent or greedy for gain - Titus 1:7

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons - Philippians 1:1

As the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon welcomes the ministry of a new bishop, it might be of some service to reflect upon the historical/theological roots of the episcopal ministry.

We see from the very beginnings of Christianity, as reflected in the New Testament, the existence of the ministry of bishop. A bishop (in Greek, "episcopos" - sing. and "episcopoi" - pl.) was installed as "overseer" of each new Christian community founded by the apostles.

Bishops are referred to as the "successors of the apostles," the Jesuit theologian Gerald O'Collins has coined a possibly more accurate term, "successors to the apostles," thereby preserving the unique calling of the apostles through their direct encounter with the resurrected Lord Jesus.

In the First Letter of Timothy we see the New Testament requirements for a bishop: "Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher" (1 Timothy 3:2). We can deduce from this passage that the apostles looked for not only one who had leadership qualities, but also a man who had the respect of his fellow believers for his steadiness, maturity, and compassion. As Catholic and Orthodox Christian readers of this passage, we may be surprised to see that bishops could be married in the biblical era of the Church. While the law of celibacy entered the Latin Church for all in major orders in the year 1139 A.D., the celibate episcopacy has its roots (not uniformly) in various parts of Christianity from the earliest centuries. We see the origins of this in the early exhortations during the Patristic Era for married clerics to live in continence (abstain) with their wives. Today among Catholics and Orthodox only the Assyrian Orthodox Church of the East (Nestorians) allow for bishops to be married.

The ministry of the bishop in the early church was intimately tied to the Eucharist. The Eucharist was the sacrament that "made the church," and all her other sacraments and all her ministries flowed from the Eucharistic liturgy. St. Ignatius of Antioch writes in his Letter to the Philadelphians, "For there is one flesh of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup to show forth the unity of His blood; one altar, as there is one bishop." St. Ignatius sees the bishop as the one who guarantees the unity, the truth, and the catholicity of the Church. We see in his Letter to the Smyrnaeans, "Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist which is administered either by the bishop or by one to whom he has entrusted it."

In the third century, a century after St. Ignatius, we find in the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, that the bishop was ordained to "shepherd the flock" and "to offer Thee [God] the gifts of the Thy Holy Church." In the same vein the Syriac writing, usually referred to by its Latin title *Didascalia Apostolorum*, states "that the Eucharist is offered only

through the bishop who for this reason occupies 'the place of God' in the church" (see *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* by John Zizioulas, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001).

In the New Testament the word for church, "ekklesia," is used close to eighty times, and fifty-seven of those times it refers to a specific concrete "gathering." The experience and understanding of the church for early Christians was simultaneously local and universal because of the Eucharist, presided over by the bishop who simultaneously affirmed the unity of the concrete gathering and their unity with the universal (catholicity) gathering of all true believers. This liturgical-theological truth was so ingrained in the mind of the early church that even with the advent of the Constantinian period and the interfacing of church governance with Imperial Roman governance could not destroy its memory. So in making the bishop a territorial administrator with priests to preside at the Eucharist of numerous parishes, with the church's population exploding after Constantine; to signify this ancient sense of unity a portion of the bishop's consecrated bread would be taken to his parishes reminding them that he is still their Eucharistic presider.

These brief reflections remind us that "power" in the church is not like that of the world. Power within the church always remains God's power, and those who are called to govern do so ultimately as ministers of service, service that is ordained by their intimate proximity to the Eucharist. Let us conclude with the final exhortations and witness of St. Ignatius, who came to realize that his imitation of Christ at the Eucharist would eventually call for his imitation of Christ as martyr. On his way to Rome he writes to the Christians there, "I am the wheat of God. Let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ" (Letter to the Romans, St. Ignatius of Antioch). □

About the Author

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

Eparchial Assignment

His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, has appointed **Chorbishop Joseph Kaddo** as Protopresbyter of the New England Region effective immediately. As Protopresbyter he is also a member of the Presbyteral Council and the College of Consultors. Chorbishop Kaddo continues to serve as Pastor of St. Anthony of the Desert, Fall River, Mass. □

Reflection on the Restoration of the Diaconate in the Maronite Church

by Deacon Louis Peters

Over the past forty years the Church on the whole has called for the reinstatement of a permanent diaconate. This is true also of the Maronite Church. This movement, as noted by the recently concluded Maronite Patriarchal Synod, is "not to fill the void resulting from the shortage in the number of priests, but to regain the mission of evangelical service denoted by the meaning of the word deacon in Syriac, and to regain her special and unique role in the service of the altar and the service of love."



In 2006 the Maronite Patriarchal Synod (the first such gathering since the 18th century) concluded its work. The themes of "the church as a sign of hope" and "a church with a mission" were evident throughout the three years of work (2003-2006) and in its conclusion and in the promulgation of its documents. The Patriarchal Synod dedicated significant time and energy in studying the pastoral and spiritual renewal of the Church. In addition to examining the ministry of the bishop and priest, there was also a section dedicated to the diaconate. All the Synod documents are meant to guide the Maronite Church forward in renewal and in restoration; the documents are not meant to be placed on the shelf. As former Patriarch Sfeir noted in his preface to the promulgation of the synodal documents: "Today the Synod has begun."

The Maronite Patriarchal Synod addressed the role of the deacon. Not only did it encourage a broader restoration of the diaconate in the Maronite Church but it also framed the unique role that the deacon can play in the life of the Church. In addressing the needs of the church, the Synod declared, "The bishop...needs priests like Christ the Shepherd and deacons like Christ the Servant to help him in his episcopal ministry. In line with our ancient traditions, which see the role of the deacon as faithful service, the Synod clearly places its understanding of the role of the deacon as an essential component of the life of the Church. The deacon manifests his ministry of "pure service" in several ways, chief among them, he serves at the altar, he serves his church community in teaching, visitation of the sick and imprisoned, and he assists his bishop and pastor in whatever manner is deemed appropriate. It is worth noting as well that the deacon in the Maronite Church is not seen as the "ordinary" minister of any of the Mysteries. He does not solemnly baptize nor witness and bless marriage, for example. He has a very specific liturgical role in each, but he has no power over the Mysteries (as Bishop Gregory Mansour would say).

"The needs of the Church come first from among the constituents of the vocation to the ministry of priesthood or that of the diaconate," noted the Synod. What are the contemporary needs of the Church to which a vibrant diaconate can respond in the 21st century? The Synod

identified three very important societal changes that deacons (and subdeacons) may be in a unique position to address. These developments are recognized as (1) in Lebanon, the rapid urbanization of the population, (2) life-style changes that place people in closer contact with one another - especially in direct contact with those of different cultures, religions or political affiliations, and (3) the emergence of secularism, globalization resulting in great part, from technological progress. The Synod even expanded this third point to include "the spread of intellectual and ideological trends, sects and heresies." These major changes necessitate a response from the Church. "The needs of the Church," as noted earlier, would seem to flow from these contemporary major cultural and societal changes. In reflecting on these rapid transformations in the lives of the people, the Synod clearly is calling for new methods, new approaches, new ways to evangelize. What may have worked in the past (e.g., the village priest teaching the children under the oak tree) may not serve well for the present and into the future.

In the Western world, where most Maronites now live, these same transformations are already present and are accelerating. The cultural or even family bonds that once held Maronites together are much weaker, urban development often decreases one's sense of community, and religious anonymity is possible (and often likely). A secularized culture and political milieu are direct threats to the religious and spiritual formation of the faithful. Often the culture and society do not support the individual or family in its religious role. But then, this is not all new. Almost forty years ago, Pope Paul VI published his Apostolic Exhortation "Evangelization in the Modern World" (*EVANGELII NUNTIANDI*), as a response to the new challenges for the mission of the Church that he saw in the contemporary world. Blessed John Paul II carried this initiative forward using the term "The New Evangelization." Pope John Paul II called all Catholics to deepen their faith in God, freely accept the Gospel's message, and proclaim this Good News to others. Pope Benedict XVI further explained this new thrust of the Gospel message by focusing on "reproposing" the Gospel to those who have experienced a crisis of faith. And now our own Maronite Patriarchal Synod is calling us to do likewise: "They [societal/cultural changes] impelled our Church, incarnated in the world, to take these changes into consideration and devise new methods to help her read the signs of the times through inspiration from the Spirit; and to continue its special mission in serving the Good News and fulfilling the salvific work of God in the new places she is now to be found."

The deacon (and the subdeacon) is in a unique position, both in Lebanon and in the countries where the Maronite Church now finds herself, to respond to this call. The deacon is tied closely to his community; he is not only part of his local parish community, but also embedded in the local civic, cultural and social order where he lives.

(Continues on page 13)

Utica, New York *Feast of Saints Peter and Paul*



Fr. Miled Jreig (left), Msgr. Faris and Bishop Cunningham.

On Saturday, June 29, 2013, Saint Louis Gonzaga Maronite Catholic Church in Utica, New York, hosted Bishop Robert Cunningham, Bishop of the Diocese of Syracuse, and the Members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem from the Diocese of Syracuse to celebrate the feast of Saints Peter and Paul.

Chorbishop John Faris, Pastor, celebrated the evening Maronite Divine Liturgy in honor of Saints Peter and Paul. Bishop Cunningham delivered the Homily which reflected on Saints Peter and Paul and the most crucial role they had in establishing the Church throughout the known world. Father Miled Jreig, Parochial Vicar; Father Ralph Fraats, a member of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem; Deacon Paul Salamy; and Subdeacon Peter Hobaica assisted at the Divine Liturgy. Members of the Order were part of the Bishop's honor guard, proclaimed the Epistle, and assisted with the Transfer of the Offerings. Members of the Order of Saint Sharbel from Saint Louis Gonzaga Church were present and served in the Bishop's honor guard.

Following the Divine Liturgy, a dinner was held at the Radisson Hotel in Utica for Bishop Cunningham and the members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. At the dinner, Chorbishop Faris, who is a member of the Order and serves on the Board of Councilors for the Eastern Lieutenancy, spoke about the Christians in the Holy Land and the good work the Order is doing to help them.

Parishioners John Ryznar and Nathan Hanna, both members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, organized the Liturgy and the dinner on behalf of the Order and the parish.

The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem is a Papal Order that dates back to the First Crusade. It is one of the few remaining orders of knights and dames within the Church. The purpose of the Order is to provide assistance to the Christians in the Holy Land. Membership in the Order is granted by the Holy Father, based upon the recommendation of the local Bishop. The criteria for membership are service to the Church and support of the Christians in the Holy Land. As a sign of membership in the Order, during special liturgical ceremonies the members are permitted to wear the distinctive garb of the Order. □

Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

September 4, 2013

Close eight- day Silent Retreat. Divine Liturgy for the Gloucester, Mass., Community at 6:00 p.m.

September 7, 2013

Shalom Festival, Brooklyn, N.Y.

September 8 - 11, 2013

Monastic Chapter, Petersham, Mass.

September 11 - 12, 2013

Catholic Relief Services Board of Trustees Meeting, Baltimore, Md.

September 13, 2013

Dinner of Thanks for Fr. Jean Younes, Danbury, Conn.

September 15, 2013

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

September 16, 2013

Liturgy for the United Nations Opening Session, New York, N.Y.

September 19, 2013

Installation of Bishop Frank Caggiano, Bridgeport, Conn.

September 21, 2013

Liturgy and Dinner for Benefit Dinner Committee members, Brooklyn, N.Y.

September 22, 2013

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

September 23 - 24, 2013

Catholic University of America, Board of Directors Meetings, Chicago, Ill.

September 25 - October 2, 2013

Ordination of Bishop-Elect A. Elias Zaidan and ordinations to the priesthood of Antoine Kayrouz and Elias Khalil

October 3 - 4, 2013

Banquet in Honor of Chorbishop Seely Beggiani and to welcome Fr. Geoffrey Abdallah, Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary, Washington, D.C.

October 4 - 6, 2013

Retreat and Meeting with Deacons, Subdeacons and their spouses, Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary, Washington, D.C.

October 9 - 11, 2013

Host to Bishop Elias Sleiman of Latakia, Syria

October 10 - 11, 2013

Oriental Orthodox/Catholic Dialogue, New York, N.Y.

October 12 - 13, 2013

Benefit Dinner and Divine Liturgy, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

October 14, 2013

Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Miami, Fla.

October 15, 2013

Mary Mother of the Light Mission in Tequesta [West Palm Beach], Fla. □

Providence, Rhode Island *A Tale of Two Churches*

by Joseph P. Checallah, Jr.

"It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." Those immortal words, first written in 1859 by Charles Dickens in "A Tale of Two Cities," best describes the circumstances shared by St. George Maronite Catholic Church of Lincoln, Rhode Island, and St. Raymond Catholic Church of Providence, Rhode Island.



St. George, a tightly-knit Maronite Catholic community under the authority of the Pope, dates back to the turn of the century in a period when there was an influx of Lebanese immigrants, who settled mainly in the Federal Hill area of Providence. Their original church, a three-story converted house at 85 America Street in Providence, was home until November 1977, when the growing community moved to a larger church in Pawtucket, where they stayed for twenty-eight years.

On August 23, 1983, Father Paul F. Mouawad was assigned as Pastor to St. George Church. During his first three months, the Church Hall was remodeled, the Sunday school was reformed, and a host of new fundraising activities were implemented. Within a very short time, the church and hall were paid in full, and on December 11 - 12, 1983, festivities were held to celebrate the final mortgage payment. It was the best of times.

On October 25, 2005, St. George Maronite Catholic Church and Hall at 50 Main Street, Pawtucket, were stricken with devastation as a fire raced quickly through the buildings. The entire facility was ruined beyond repair, requiring a crane to completely demolish the remains the very next day. The parishioners were devastated and left homeless with an enormous loss in their lives. It was the worst of times.

Within a few weeks of the tragedy, the parish rented St. Raymond Church in Providence to use as a temporary house of worship. In July 2006, Fr. Paul was transferred to Newtown Square, Pennsylvania, to serve the Maronite parish of St. Sharbel Church. Father Edward T. Nedder was assigned to serve as Pastor of Saint George Church, his primary mission to restore the faith of his congregation and to establish a new permanent home for the parishioners. In May 2007, a house on eight plus acres of land at 171 Twin River Road, Lincoln, Rhode Island, was purchased to be the site of the future church, hall and rectory of Saint George.

Fr. Ed quickly earned the respect and admiration of his new Parish with his enthusiasm, inspiration, and unlimited energy. He oversaw the 100th Anniversary Celebration of St. George, and worked tirelessly to build a new Church. He established a building committee, and worked diligently to secure the permits and approvals to begin building. As time went on, it became evident that building a new Church would

be too costly and beyond the reach of the Parish. The effort shifted into purchase mode, and he then led the effort to investigate every lead where a Church was thought to be going up for sale.



St. Raymond Church

St. Raymond Catholic Church, where St. George's community worshiped in the interim, also has a Fr. Ed. Besides being Pastor, Father Edward Pieroni is a hospital chaplain, an individual with great compassion and an infectious warmth that is inspirational and admired by all who meet him. Coincidentally, he oversaw the 100th Anniversary Celebration of St. Raymond.

Two Father Eds, brought together by tragedy, began a partnership. They covered each other's schedules, co-celebrated their liturgies, took the time to meet and know each other's parishioners, and formed a genuine friendship. Quickly the parish families blended, often attending each other's functions and activities. "St. Raymond's is so warm and inviting....Everyone here is like a family" was spoken often by many of St. George parishioners.

In April, 2013, the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn entered into an agreement with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Providence, Rhode Island, to purchase the Church and Rectory of St. Ann Parish in Cranston, R.I. On June 30, the purchase was completed and became the new home of St. George Maronite Catholic Church. The first Maronite Liturgy was celebrated on July 6, 2013. Fr. Ed will continue to celebrate weekly Roman Catholic Masses for the Parishioners of St. Ann, and extends a warm welcome to all.

As a sendoff to the St. George parishioners they had welcomed almost eight years ago, the parishioners of St. Raymond invited everyone to a farewell reception the weekend of June 29 - 30, 2013. Two receptions were held, one after each of the Saturday and Sunday liturgies each a wonderful tribute given by one loving family to another. St. George has already started to make plans to welcome their family at St. Raymond to join them in a celebration of their new home. Two parishes, two Father Eds, two parishes blended together to become one family with one heart. It was the best of times. Isn't this the way it should be? □

Reflection on the Diaconate

Continued from page 11

With proper formation and with Christian love as his foundation, the deacon can be a credible witness to the joy of service and love for those whom he serves. He can bridge that metaphorical line that separates the altar from "the world." He can proclaim the Good News both within the sanctuary and in the midst of the world.

It is this reality that has stirred the Church in today's world to reinvigorate her own ministry through reinstating the ministry of service that is the deacon. □

Roanoke, Virginia *Forty Days For Life*

by Gerald Brunning
St. Elias Church, Roanoke, Virginia

For the past forty years Planned Parenthood and a host of other abortion promoting organizations have been killing little ones at a rate of about one and one half million per year in the United States. Thus, as a spiritual remedy, Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, is calling upon the faithful to seriously consider taking part in the witness of Forty Days for Life.

He wrote: "It is our duty and privilege to defend the sanctity of life. It is our Christian vocation to do so. One simple and effective way to do this is to take part in the prayers and public witness of Forty Days for Life. I sincerely hope that the faithful of our parishes will stand up for the Sanctity of Life September 25 to November 3, 2013, during the next Forty Days for Life campaign. I am asking all our pastors to promote and coordinate the campaign of prayer, reparation and witness within their parishes. May God encourage you and bless all your efforts."

Bishop Gregory is asking each one of us to take part as we can in prayers for the end of abortion, for a change of heart of those seeking abortion, for conversion of abortionists and those who promote it, and for healing for those women and men who suffer as a result of abortion.

For those who are able, a prayerful witness at an abortuary is a powerful statement of our belief in the sanctity of life. There, our prayers are joined to those of others at the sites where babies cry out to God for mercy. This public witness helps those considering abortion to reconsider, and also calls attention to the uninformed that this grisly business is taking place in their midst.

For those who cannot make a public witness, or for those where a Forty Days campaign has not yet been organized, prayers at home or at church are needed as well. In the course of nine years of the Forty Days for Life campaigns more than 7,500 babies' lives have been spared.

Forty Days for Life campaigns are held twice each year, during Lent and from late September to early November. The first was held in 2004. The idea of a prayerful vigil, not a protest or demonstration, caught on and spread rapidly. The last campaign was carried on in forty cities throughout the United States and Canada and in one hundred cities in eighteen other nations as well.

Campaign organizers try to schedule at least two (preferably more) people to pray at abortion facilities during each working hour of every day of the forty days. What is it like to be standing or kneeling in prayer in front of a Planned Parenthood clinic? At first it may seem scary, but the unity and camaraderie of other Catholics and non-Catholics fervently praying together is indescribably comforting and reassuring.

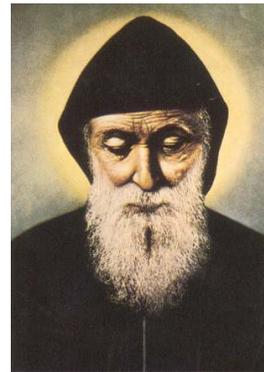
The fast-approaching campaign is September 25 to November 3, 2013. At latest count there are thirteen cities in which there are both organized Forty Days for Life campaigns as well as parishes of the Eparchy of Saint Maron. In those cities, let the Maronites be among the dedicated and

faithful pray-ers at the clinics. In the other cities please join in prayer at home and in church. If you do that, remember that you will be doing it for Jesus' little ones and therefore doing it for Him.

For more information on Forty Days for Life, consult your pastor or check www.Fortydaysforlife.com. □

Austin, Texas *Saint Sharbel Vigil*

On July 23, 2013, Our Lady's Maronite Catholic Church, Austin, Texas, observed Saint Sharbel's Feast Day with a dawn-to-dusk prayer vigil, liturgy and community supper. Beginning at 6 a.m. and concluding at 6 p.m., parishioners and visitors devoted one hour each praying the Rosary, Chaplet of Saint Sharbel and spent time in contemplative prayer. Every hour a candle was lit requesting a special intercession until all the candles before Saint Sharbel's icon were lit. The Saint was never left alone during the entire vigil.



At 6 p.m., Msgr. Donald Sawyer, Pastor, celebrated the Divine Liturgy to a full church with a homily about some of Saint Sharbel's miracles. Prior to the recitation of the consecration in Aramaic, Monsignor Sawyer urged everyone to lift up their requests for intercession to Saint Sharbel as this intimate part of the liturgy was special to him. After liturgy, a modest supper of salad and lentils was served. It has been decided that this vigil will be an annual event on Saint Sharbel's Holy Day. □

Pope Calls For End of Violence in Syria

by Junno Arocho Esteves

On Sunday, August 25, 2013, Pope Francis appealed for peace in Syria during his weekly Angelus address. The Pope's comment comes at a tragic time where reports of citizens attacked by chemical weapons believed to have been used by the government to quell the rebellion.

The Holy Father stated that he was following the situation with "great suffering and concern."

"The growth in violence in a war between brothers, with a multiplication of massacres and atrocities that we have all been able to see in the terrible images of recent days, moves me once again to call in a loud voice for the fighting to cease," the Pope exclaimed to the faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square.

"It is not conflict that offers a perspectives of hope for resolving problems, but it is the capacity for meeting and dialogue."

(Continues on page 20)

Fall River, Massachusetts Scholarship Award



by Karl Hetzler

On July 21, 2013, following the Sunday Liturgy, Chorbishop Joseph Kaddo and the parish family of St. Anthony of the Desert Church, Fall River, Mass., awarded scholarships of \$500 each to eight graduating high school seniors. The scholarship program, now in its eleventh year, is intended to further strengthen the bond with parish youth. The only criteria for eligibility are that the recipients be active parishioners of the church and submit a short essay of their best memories growing up in the parish. One of the scholarships is given each year in memory of Chorbishop Norman J. Ferris, while another is given in memory of Mary Ann Hallal, a former CCD instructor.

Recipients shown above from left to right:

Front row:

Andrea Nasiff: Daughter of Douglas and Nellie Nasiff, she will be attending Rivier University as a Human Development Major while minoring in Sociology. Andrea received the Chorbishop Norman Ferris Memorial Scholarship.

Kate Massoud: Daughter of Cliff and Holly Massoud, she will be attending Worcester State University while majoring in Biological Science. Kate is the recipient of the Mary Ann Hallal Memorial Scholarship.

Hannah Massoud: Daughter of Cliff and Holly Massoud, she will be attending Worcester State University while majoring in Psychology.

Back row:

Shawn Simon: Son of Evelyn Simon, he will be attending Bristol Community College as a Liberal Arts Major.

Colin Michael: Son of Mark and Kathleen Michael, he will be attending either Boston College or the University of Connecticut as a Political Science Major.

Courtney Michael: Daughter of Mark and Kathleen Michael, she will be attending Bridgewater State University while

majoring in Business Administration - Management Information Systems.

George Karam: Son of Albert and Paula Karam, he will be attending Boston University while studying Economics and Mathematics.

Andrew Howayeck: Son of Gary and Renee Howayeck, he will be attending UMass Dartmouth as a Political Science Major.

Also shown from left to right: Chorbishop Joseph Kaddo, Pastor, and scholarship committeeman Karl Hetzler. □

Cincinnati, Ohio Scholarship Awards



Mary Mezher, University of Cincinnati, received the Dr. Joseph D. Massoud Scholarship for the year 2012 - 2013.

Jason Thome, Vanderbilt University, and **Michael Khamis,** George Washington University, received the Dr. Joseph D. Massoud Scholarships for the year 2013-2014.

The Dr. Joseph D. Massoud Scholarship was established in 2012 in loving memory of Dr. Joseph Massoud, a life-long member of the St. Anthony of Padua Maronite Catholic Parish in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The award was presented by the scholarship committee, Fr. David Fisher, and Rob (Parish Council Chairman), Kristin and Molly Thiemann.

Scholarships are awarded based on a number of factors, not limited to academic excellence, active parish involvement, and a written essay. Additional scholarship application details can be found online at www.StAnthonyofPaduaChurch.com. □

Uniontown, Pennsylvania *Mini Retreat*



Members of the St. George Altar & Rosary Society and their guests surround their retreat guest speaker/coordinator, Sr. Mary Frances Grasinger, CSJ, Ph.D.

by Joanne John

St. George Altar & Rosary Society of Uniontown, Penn., recently held its annual Mini Retreat with Sister Mary Frances Grasinger, CSJ, Ph.D., Guest Coordinator/speaker.

Entitled “Sharing Our Legacy,” the retreat was centered on recognizing God’s presence in our lives and sharing this with others. Sister showed how this sharing assumes the belief that God often chooses to minister to us through the sharing and support of others without judgement or attempts to change the experience. Faith sharing starts not with words but how you live your life.

Sr. Mary Frances is a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph and is celebrating her 60th anniversary this year. Her teaching experiences included twenty-four years at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh where she served as professor of that college’s school of education. She eventually made a transition into administration duties. She now serves as Emerita Professor of Duquesne University.

In addition to faith sharing, the Altar & Rosary Society and their guests were instructed on tips for journal writing as a legacy. They also enjoyed a visit to the outdoor Garden of Prayer and Rosary Walk, an afternoon tea, Eucharistic Adoration, praying the chaplets of St. Sharbel and of the Divine Mercy. A Meditation Walk was open all day for all to experience the Legacy of the Maronite Church and its saints. Barbara George is president of the Altar & Rosary Society, and Fr. Nadim Helou, M.L.M., is their pastor. □

Fairlawn, Ohio *Sacred Art Donated*

This past year Marleine Lababidi made a visit to Lebanon, and she returned with two beautiful paintings, Jesus of the Divine Mercy and Our Lady of Perpetual Help, for the Sanctuary at Our Lady of the Cedars of Mt.

Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church in Fairlawn [Akron], Ohio.

Marleine Lababidi and her husband Ghassan are seen here, standing by one of their gifts, the painting of Jesus of Divine Mercy.

The two handmade wooden shrines for these paintings were built and installed by Mr. James Rodgers, and the Lababidi family were the benefactors. These new gifts were unveiled and blessed on June 30, 2013, by Msgr. William Bonczewski, Pastor. These holy images of Our Lord and Our Blessed Mother add much meaning to our beautiful Church. □



El Paso, Texas *Second Annual Dinner Dance*



by Deacon George Karam

On Saturday, July 20, 2013, the Mission of St. Sharbel in El Paso, Texas, held its second annual dinner dance, a fundraiser for the construction of their church, under the leadership of Msgr. Donald Sawyer, Administrator. Deacon George Karam started the festivities with a prayer and some announcements. There was a silent auction and a raffle; the food was delicious and the attendees danced to live music of several cultures. Those in attendance commented that they were already looking forward to the third annual dinner dance. □

Sacramento, California *Children's Camp*

Hold Your Cross & Follow Me!



Council Board committee members and many helpers cannot stop thanking God and Saint Sharbel for letting them see this little church and this little hall for the Mission community. This is the first church in California named after Saint Sharbel. It has a huge significance for the little flock in Stockton and for the state of California.

At the same time, Father Nabil Mouannes and the Council Board committee cannot give enough thanks to Bishop Shaheen, who guided the community into this big step. In addition, our heartfelt thanks go to those organizations who supported us and the benefactors who made sacrificial contributions toward the building of the house of St. Sharbel. Last but not least, we would like to thank John Deterding, the general contractor, who led us with an evangelical generosity toward the permit and the establishment of the little church and the little hall. □

by Jocelyne Fares

On August 10 - 11, 2013, Our Lady of the Rosary in Sacramento, Calif., held its second annual Children's Spiritual Camp in the garden of the Mother of God. A group of language and religious school children and their parents began arriving on Saturday and were there to celebrate the Divine Liturgy with the community on Sunday. Father Fady Chidiac led talks about faith and concluded with a prayer walk and stories from the Bible in the evening. On Sunday we held a prayer service for the children with Father Nabil Mouannes leading the morning prayer at the shrine of the Mother of God. Thirty-five children of backgrounds from different countries in the Middle East attended the Liturgy together. They kept in their heart the power of God from the Eucharist and held in their hands crosses they painted on Saturday. It was a successful event and we look forward to holding it again next year. □

Stockton, California *Mission Accomplished*

On the feast of Saint Sharbel, July 23, 2013, the little flock in Stockton, Calif., received a very special grace from God. A little church with a little hall were planted on the land. Father Nabil Mouannes with all the

Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania *Chicken Dinner*



by JoAnn M. Schultz

On Sunday, August 18, 2013, the Altar & Rosary Society of St. Anthony/St. George Maronite Church, Wilkes-Barre, Penn., held a Bar-B-Q Chicken dinner for the church parishioners and the public. The Bar-B-Q

dinner included a choice of sweet BBQ sauce or garlic marinade. Generous portions of sweet corn, cole slaw, baked potato, dinner rolls, beverages and ice cream were included. The dinner demonstrated the camaraderie of the Maronite church. Members of the Knights of Lebanon managed the grilling duty. The dinner was a hit, enjoyed by many, and sold out within three hours. Profits will go to the Altar & Rosary Society for its mission to keep up the Churches' altars and the Societies' activities.

Youngstown, Ohio *Assumption Pilgrimage*

by Amelia Yazbek

The annual pilgrimage for the Feast of the Assumption was held August 13 - 15, 2013, at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in North Jackson, Ohio. As has become tradition, the members of St. Maron Church, Youngstown, Ohio, donate food and staff the kitchen on August 14. They also get food donations from Akron and Cleveland, Ohio, as well as from Brooklyn, N.Y., and Pittsburgh, Penn. On August 15, the members of St. John the Baptist, New Castle, Penn., donate all the food and staff the kitchen. The Shrine staff hosts August 13 and staffs the bake sale all three days.

Buses from Brooklyn and Utica, N.Y., and from St. Louis, Mo., come with their members to honor Mary on this feast day. An estimated two thousand people attended the celebration this year.

On August 15, a solemn liturgical Liturgy was presided over by their Excellencies Bishop Robert Shaheen, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, and Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron. The evening culminated with a candlelight procession followed by fireworks.

That evening, Shrine Rector Monsignor Anthony Spinoza presented Bishop Shaheen with a beautifully decorated cake from all his faithful in attendance with everyone's blessings and best wishes for a very long and healthy retirement.

Annual Picnic And Scholarship Awards

The weekend of August 3 - 4, 2013, St. Maron Church, Youngstown, Ohio, held its annual "Back to Cedar Lake" weekend.

Activities kicked off on Friday night with a hot dog and hamburger get together in the Pavilion area followed by a movie night for the kids.

On Saturday, there was time for volleyball and bocce before the 4:30 p.m. Liturgy in the Church. After Liturgy, the St. Maron Education Foundation presented the annual scholarships to the youth of the parish. Thirty-three scholarships totaling \$40,000 were awarded to deserving applicants.

The Foundation is an independent society funded by investments made from donations from generous patrons inside and out of the parish.

Pillars Luncheon

On Sunday, August 11, 2013, St. Maron Church in Youngstown, Ohio, hosted a brunch after the 10:00 a.m. Liturgy to honor the "Pillars" of our Church.

More than eighty "Seniors" and their family members attended the sit-down affair that was prepared by Church members and served by the M.Y.O..

Each senior was presented a prayer card of St. Anthony of Padua, the patron saint of the elderly. □

Phoenix, Arizona *Roman Mass for Saint Sharbel Feast Day*

On Wednesday, July 24, the Roman Catholic Church's Feast Day for Saint Sharbel, over two hundred people from various churches in the Phoenix area attended Father Chris Axline's Mass for Saint Sharbel at Saint Mary Magdalene Church in Gilbert, Arizona. This was the first time that Saint Sharbel's feast day was observed in Arizona with a Mass specifically to honor him and his miracles.

During Father Chris's homily, he discussed Saint Sharbel's devotion to the Eucharist and the Mother of God, shared some facts about his canonization and urged people to use Saint Sharbel's life as an example of humility to succeed in their spiritual path with the Lord.

Saint Sharbel's prayer was recited, and people were encouraged to ask for his powerful intercession. Father Chris anointed with holy oil, blessed with a relic of Saint Sharbel from the Monastery of Saint Maron in *Annaya*, Lebanon, where Saint Sharbel spent his life as a monk and hermit and also the place of many miracles. Prayer cards were distributed and people requested extra holy oil. Many people lingered long after the Mass to kneel and pray before the icon of Saint Sharbel.

Most noteworthy was that the attendees were from many different counties - Puerto Rico, Nigeria, Italy, India and the Middle East - some of whom had no knowledge about Saint Sharbel but had heard about the special Mass.

Many thanks are given to Most Reverend Bishop Thomas J. Olmstad, Diocese of Phoenix, for continuing to promote activities for Saint Sharbel, and the Most Reverend Auxiliary Bishop Eduardo N. Nevares, who worked with Mrs. Rona Ayache to arrange this special Mass and who refers to Saint Sharbel as his "companion."

The day of the Mass, in a special interview on the Radio Rosary Family in Phoenix, Monsignor Donald R. Sawyer, Pastor of Our Lady's Maronite Catholic Church in Austin, Texas, provided an informative interview about Saint Sharbel's life and miracles. □



Biographical Highlights of His Excellency Bishop Robert Shaheen

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- 1979: Hosted the Maronite Convention (NAM)
- 1981: Hosted Patriarch Anthony Peter Khoraiiche
- 1983: Renovation and enlargement of the lower level of "The Cedars" as a religious education center
- 1987: The adding of a small hall ("Lebanon Room") to "The Cedars"
- 1988: Hosted Patriarch Nasrallah Peter Sfeir
- 1991: Purchase of additional property and buildings for future development as a Maronite retirement center and cultural center
- 1995: Hosted the Maronite Convention (NAM)
- Today: The Parish serves as a center for Arabic-speaking people; A resource for the Latin Archdiocese of St. Louis (for its clergy gatherings and for its many archdiocesan meetings); city gathering site, especially through lunches and banquet hall; above all, the Parish is a vibrant and growing Maronite Church witnessing to the catholicity of the Church in all its beauty.

Civic Outreach

- Numerous public talks and television/radio presentations on the Maronites
- Numerous awards and recognitions for contribution to the civic community, especially in preserving the La Salle Park neighborhood and committing to the city at a time when many were moving to the suburbs, an example of how to revitalize an old neighborhood
- September 1989 he received the Daughters of St. Paul "Man of the Year" Award with accompanying recognitions from the Governor, the State Congressman, and the Mayor
- Honorary Doctorate in Humanities from St. Louis University, May 14, 2004
- December 5, 2000, He was appointed as the second Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles by the Holy Father Pope John Paul II
- February 15, 2001, he was ordained and enthroned as second Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon in St. Louis, Mo., at the Basilica of St. Louis by His Beatitude Patriarch Nasrallah Peter Cardinal Sfeir
- July 10, 2001, The Eparchial See officially moved to St. Louis, Mo.; St. Raymond Church, was named a Cathedral

- January 1, 2003 saw the completion of the new Maronite Pastoral Center in St. Louis, Mo. The Pastoral Center is the new multi-purpose facility of the Eparchy
- Construction of the Maronite Heritage Institute - adjacent to the Maronite Pastoral Center in St. Louis, Mo., began in 2008. □

Springfield, Massachusetts The Saliba Douaihy Foundation

The Saliba Douaihy Foundation was recently established by the grandnephew of the Lebanese-born artist whose work is found around the world. Robert Wihbey of Springfield, Massachusetts, seeks to promote the name of Saliba Douaihy, his artistic achievements, his hometown of *Ehden*, and his country of origin throughout the world.

On visiting Lebanon, Robert was distressed to see that the greatest of Lebanese artists still rests in an unmarked grave, eighteen years after his death. Robert spoke with several prominent individuals to express his concerns about his great uncle's remains, and attempted on two different occasions to open a Foundation in Lebanon. Not speaking the language, and not knowing the players or the system, Robert returned to the U.S. but did not give up his dream of properly honoring his great uncle.

It was during a conversation with a young lady who was familiar with the works of Saliba Douaihy, that he was convinced that he had an 'obligation' to write a book about his experiences with this great man. While researching his book Robert came across many documents, letters, books, etc., from his travels with Saliba and he decided that he would take a stand on the issue of the birth date of Saliba Douaihy.

Robert claims that his documents can prove that Saliba Douaihy was born in the year 1915. Robert believed that the time was 'now or never' to honor his great uncle Saliba Douaihy, so he contacted Saliba Chediak El Verde in Lebanon to explain to him his goals for the foundation. With an old friend, Robert Swenson of Virginia, they created a non-profit public charitable and educational corporation registered in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Saliba Douaihy Foundation hopes to celebrate the 100th year anniversary of the birthday of this great American artist and Lebanese national treasure in *Ehden*, Lebanon, and to open a museum and library dedicated to the man and his work.

In the first step of this long journey, and in order to begin the process of honoring Saliba Douaihy's name, The Saliba Douaihy Foundation's Art Scholarship will accept submissions beginning September 14, 2013, and the awards will be granted January 14, 2014. For more information, please visit our website:

www.thesalibadouaihyfoundation.org, or contact us: staff@thesdf.info. □

Cincinnati, Ohio Gold Massabki Medal



From left: Bishop Robert Shaheen, Rose AbiRadi, Massabki Medal Recipient, Mr. Amin Harb, NAM President, and Chorbishop Richard Saad, NAM Spiritual Director.

by Linda Conour

On Saturday evening, July 6, 2013, during the Grand Banquet at the 50th Annual Maronite Convention sponsored by NAM in Tampa, Florida, Rose AbiRadi of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Cincinnati, Ohio, was awarded the Gold Massabki Medal and Certificate of Merit. First awarded in 1975, the Gold Massabki Medal is awarded annually to one layperson in each Maronite Eparchy to recognize their outstanding service to their parish and exemplary efforts to advance the awareness and teachings of the Maronite tradition. The Certificate of Merit states: "The National Apostolate of Maronites recognizes: Characteristics of true Christian values; Qualities of national leadership and

example to the Apostolate; Devotion above and beyond the call of duty to the Maronite Church in the United States of America."

Rose has been a member of NAM for over thirty years. For her local NAM Chapter at St. Anthony of Padua Parish, she has held the positions of President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and has coordinated NAM-sponsored Parish retreats. On the national level, Rose has been on the National NAM Board for six years, serving as the Secretary for four years. She chaired both the Adult and Heritage Committees, and was Secretary of the Executive Committee for four years. She was instrumental in having the history of NAM and the churches in the Eparchy documented for preservation purposes and for providing knowledge for future generations. Rose has represented St. Anthony of Padua Parish at numerous regional and national Maronite Conferences sponsored by NAM throughout the United States over the years, and was previously awarded the Silver Massabki Medal.

On Sunday, July 14, 2013, after returning home from the Maronite Convention in Tampa, Fla., Father David Fisher, Pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Church, recognized Rose after the Divine Liturgy, and the Parish celebrated with her on the award. □

Pope Calls For End of Violence

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Pope Francis expressed his solidarity to the victims of the ongoing conflict, inviting them despite the circumstances, to keep "the hope of peace alive." The Holy Father also called on the international community to be more responsive to the war in Syria.

The international community, he said, must "do all it can to help the beloved Syrian nation find a solution to a war that sows destruction and death."

Concluding his address, the Holy Father led the faithful in prayer for Syria saying "Mary, Queen of Peace, pray for us." (*Zenit.org, August 26, 2013*) □