



# The Maronite Voice

A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA



Volume VII

Issue No. VII

July - August 2011

## The Gift of Our Vocation



Recently, even more than usual, I have been reflecting on just what a gift life is and how many blessings we so often take for granted. Married people find that it brings them happiness to consider their spouse and children a gift and their married life a vocation. In other words, God has had something to do with bringing them together and helping them stay together during good times and bad. When consecrated people think of their vocation as a real gift they then deem it a privilege to be in such a relationship with God and to serve His people. By means of these happy and holy vocations to the priesthood, religious life and to marriage, God assists the Church and makes it possible for Her to prosper.

This year, some of our Maronite Missions will have full time priests for the first time because we have been blessed with a few more vocations. Likewise, our Seminary will turn fifty this year, and Chorbishop Seely Beggiani, Seminary Rector,

will also celebrate his 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary to priesthood. The parish in Washington, and her pastor, Chorbishop Dominic Ashkar, helped us to host the recent Benefit Dinner for the Eparchy, and will now help host both 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries as well as the dedication of a small Maronite stone chapel at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

Bishop Robert J. Shaheen, the first graduate of the Seminary, will celebrate a Divine Liturgy of Thanksgiving in the Basilica, in the very chapel in which he was ordained a priest almost fifty years ago. God willing, priests, deacons, subdeacons and wives, seminarians, religious sisters, faithful laity, members of N.A.M. and the Order of Sharbel, who have made, and continue to make, the Maronite Church a beautiful home, as our founding bishop, the late Archbishop Francis M. Zayek would have wanted, hope to be present September 23 - 24, 2011, for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the dedication. The Inter-Eparchial History Committee is busy collecting and compiling the history of our Church here in the United States as early as the 1850s. They will be with us as well. All are invited to these two days of reflection, celebration and dedication.

Details of these three celebrations can be found inside this issue of *The Maronite Voice* and at our website at [www.stmaron.org](http://www.stmaron.org) (see especially the article by Seminarian George Hajj on page 9). Also inside this issue, one will find stories of First Holy Communion, an ordination, parish activities, anniversaries, awards, the schedule of our annual pilgrimage to our National Shrine, and many more reminders of just how good it is to belong to the Church and live our individual vocations to serve and love Her.

When I think of all the people, living and deceased, who have answered so generously the call to love and serve the Church, I join with Bishop Robert J. Shaheen and pray in gratitude for this gift the greatest prayer ever prayed: Thank You.

+ Gregory J. Mansour  
Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

## Schedule of Bishop Robert Shaheen

### June 27 - July 2, 2011

Maronite Youth Retreat, Latrobe, Penn.

### July 5 -7, 2011

Clergy Conference, Philadelphia, Penn.

### July 7 - 10, 2011

Maronite Convention, Philadelphia, Penn.

### July 18 - 24, 2011

Personal Vacation and Retreat

### August 12 - 15, 2011

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

### August 13, 2011

Meeting of Our Lady of Lebanon National Shrine's Board of Directors, North Jackson, Ohio

### August 27- 28, 2011

Lecture Series, Heritage Center, St. Louis, Mo. □

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*The Maronite Voice*, (ISSN 1080-9880) the official newsletter of the Maronite Eparchies in the U.S.A. (Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles and Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn), is published monthly.

Send all changes of address, news, pictures and personal correspondence to *The Maronite Voice* at the above captioned address. Subscription rates are \$20.00 per year. Advertising rates are available upon request.

### Publishers

- Most Reverend Bishop Robert Joseph Shaheen
- Most Reverend Bishop Gregory John Mansour

**Editor** Msgr. George M. Sebaali

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Printed in Richmond, Virginia.

## Maronite Convention 2011

St. Sharbel Church  
Newtown Square, Pennsylvania

### July 6 - 10, 2011

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

## Fall River, Massachusetts Sister Marla Marie's Jubilee

by Sister Therese Maria

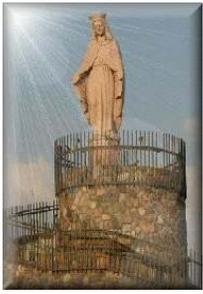
On Saturday, May 28, 2011, more than a hundred people came together at St. Anthony of the Desert Maronite Church in Fall River, Mass., to attend the celebration of Sister Marla Marie's 25<sup>th</sup> Jubilee of religious consecration. Sister Marla Marie's family, including her father, Lucas J. Lucas, and her two brothers, John Lucas and Michael Lucas, and clergy, religious and friends from various places attended the Divine Liturgy and reception.

His Excellency Bishop Gregory J. Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, offered the Divine Liturgy, concelebrated by Chorbishop Michael Thomas, Vicar General; Chorbishop Joseph Kaddo, Pastor; Fr. James Root, Rector of Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.; Fr. Rudy Gonzalez and Fr. David Desimone. The Divine Liturgy was followed by a reception dinner in the parish hall organized by Mrs. Therese Abouzied and Mrs. Rosanne Solomon, members of Our Lady of the Cedars in Boston, Mass. They have been great friends and supporters of the Maronite Servants' mission. We thank them dearly for all the sacrifices they made and their genuine love in organizing this successful event.

The lively program at the reception included a lineup of speeches given by close friends of Sister Marla Marie. Each personalized speech and presentation brought out the unique qualities of Sister, and the special witness of Christ she has given in living out her religious life. □



Bishop Gregory and Sister Marla Marie, joined by her family and Sr. Therese Maria.



## North Jackson, Ohio 46<sup>th</sup> Assumption Pilgrimage

August 13, 14, and 15, 2011, mark the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in North Jackson, Ohio. "The years have passed quickly and many visitors and pilgrims have come to Mary's home for many reasons. All have left with God's blessings and graces," says Monsignor Anthony S. Spinosa, Rector.

### *Pilgrimage Schedule*

#### **Saturday, August 13**

Deacon Paul Salamy of St. Louis Gonzaga Maronite Church, Utica, N.Y., will conduct a spiritual conference at 4:00 p.m., followed by a 7:00 p.m. Divine Liturgy in the Roman Rite celebrated by Bishop Roger W Gries OSB, Auxiliary Bishop of Cleveland, and a Candlelight Procession.

#### **Sunday, August 14**

- 10 a.m. Maronite Divine Liturgy
- 2 p.m. Maronite Divine Liturgy with Anointing of the Sick celebrated by Bishops Robert J. Shaheen, D.D., Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, and Bishop Gregory Mansour S.T.L., Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn
- 4 p.m. Spiritual Conference by Father Claude Franklin, Pastor of St. John the Baptist, New Castle, Penn.
- 7 p.m. Bishop John Bura for the Eparchy of St. Josaphat, Parma, Ohio, will celebrate a Byzantine Ukrainian Liturgy followed by a Paracletis to the Blessed Virgin Mary, which includes Procession and Falling Asleep of the Virgin, led by Monsignor George Appleyard of St. Peter and Paul, Carnegie, Penn.

#### **Monday, August 15**

##### *Feast of the Assumption*

- 10 a.m. Maronite Divine Liturgy with Anointing of the Sick
- 12 noon Solemn High Tridentine Mass celebrated by Fr. Dennis Bouchard, FSSP, of Queen of the Holy Rosary Church, Vienna, Ohio
- 2 p.m. Maronite Divine Liturgy
- 4 p.m. Maronite Vespers chanted by the Antonine Sisters
- 7 p.m. Maronite Pontifical Liturgy celebrated by Bishop Robert Shaheen and Bishop Gregory Mansour. Candlelight procession will follow.

The National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon will open

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

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

## Danbury, Connecticut Subdeacon Ordination



Assisted by Fr. Jean Younes M.L.M and Fr. Jack Morrison, Chorbishop Michael Thomas ordains George Jabbour to the Order of Subdeacon.

There was a sense of joy and peace and of profound fulfillment for George Jabbour as he stood before the Altar of St. Anthony Church, Danbury, Connecticut, and was ordained to the Orders of Cantor, Lector and Subdeacon on Saturday, June 5, 2011. He stood before Chorbishop Michael Thomas, the Vicar General of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, and his own parish priest, Fr. Jean Younes M.L.M, along with Father Paul Mooradd, Pastor of our Lady of Mercy Church in Worcester Mass.; Father Jack Morrison Pastor of Our Lady of Purgatory Church in New Bedford; and Father Larry Jensen, Pastor of Saint Joseph Church in Waterville, Maine; and many deacons and subdeacons. His wife Mariane and his two daughters, Claire and Lydia, along with George's brothers and sisters stood proudly as he was ordained. After the solemnity of the service, a celebration dinner put together by the parishioners of St. Anthony followed in the Church Hall. □

## *Summer Break*

The Maronite Voice wishes its readers an enjoyable, safe and God-filled summer. *The Maronite Voice* will not be published in August. It will appear again in September. The deadline for the September issue is August 25, 2011. □



## San Antonio, Texas *Forty Years of Service*



by Jason Mery

For forty years now, St. George Maronite Catholic Church has participated in the Texas Folklife Festival held annually at the Institute of Texan Cultures in downtown San Antonio, Texas. The Folklife Festival is a celebration of all of the diverse cultures present in Texas and St. George has been a member from the very first festival forty years ago. In the beginning there were only ten cultures represented at the festival.

Back in those days, the members of St. George worked, danced, and cooked all day and all night to educate as many people in the culture of Lebanon. The food cooked then is much the same as is cooked now. The shish-ka-bob, lemon-seasoned chicken, *tabouli*, and many of the various pastries that have been served over the years are now famous in Texas for their succulence and flavor, a fact which the local supermarkets have certainly noticed and taken advantage of by marketing the spices used by the inventive cooks at St. George.

In addition to the food is the performance of the *dabke*, the traditional dance of Lebanon. The St. George dancers have been performing a combination of various *dabkes* and belly dances for years now, and the program of dances is being ever expanded to continue to awe the crowds of people who come to see these talented dancers year after year.

The participation in the Texas Folklife Festival is just one of the many arms that St. George stretches to the community life of San Antonio. The members of St. George Parish itself are a microcosm of the culture of San Antonio and of Texas in general. Looking at the volunteers in the St. George booth and the dancers on stage at the festival one would of course see both the old and new Lebanese members of the church, but they would also see the descendants of other Middle Eastern countries, Hispanics, Anglos, Africans, Italians, and many others all working together to make this event a success.

This tradition is strong within the members of St. George Maronite Catholic Church. Forty years of volunteering and two entire generations of children growing up participating in the culture of St. George and the community of San Antonio show how involved St. George has been in the past and will continue to be in the future. The faith of its members gives strength to the community of San Antonio and continues to spread the Maronite voice throughout the state of Texas. □

## Roanoke, Virginia *A Successful Lebanese Festival*

The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Lebanese Festival at St. Elias Church in Roanoke, Va., June 3 - 5, 2011, drew thousands of visitors and was pronounced a great success. Renee Turk, Pierre Ellis and Charles Aesy were festival co-chairs.

For the first time, parish youth co-chaired many of the festival committees and were much in evidence, manning games, performing the traditional Lebanese dances and helping in food lines serving the food and Lebanese pastries.

"Our youth have always helped out at the Lebanese Festival," Turk says, "and visitors always comment on how many they are and how much they do. Serving as co-chairs is a way of getting their input and giving them additional on-the-job training for the festivals they'll run in the future.

The local CBS affiliate, WDBJ7, sponsored the festival, as it has since 2007. For the first time, some popular Lebanese food items were frozen and sold for visitors to bring home, in addition to the regular take-out orders.

Professional musician Samer Amso, a St. Elias parishioner from Iraq, provided live music all three days. A Silent Auction featured baskets of goods from popular valley firms. Treats for children included games and a Moon Bounce. There were frequent tours of the church, including explanations of the Maronite rite and its beautiful ancient liturgy.

This was the first St. Elias Lebanese Festival for our new pastor, Father Kevin Beaton, who said he was impressed by the way St. Elias parishioners worked together to make the festival successful. "It was truly beautiful to see everyone in the St. Elias family devoting so much time, energy and effort to this event," he said, "and that kind of joint effort promises much for the future." □



**Deadline for next month's issue of *The Maronite Voice* is August 25, 2011.**

*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: *The Maronite Voice*

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Pictures must be original. Digital pictures must be in "JPG" format and in high resolution. The Maronite Voice is also available online, in PDF format, at [www.stmaron.org](http://www.stmaron.org). □

## Somerset, New Jersey *Parish Festival*



Members of St. Sharbel *Dabke* group in their traditional Lebanese clothing.

The Parish of Saint Sharbel in Somerset, New Jersey, celebrated its annual three-day festival June 10 -12, 2011. The preparations started months before as all organizations worked diligently for the success of this event. The weather did not cooperate during the setup nor during the first twenty-four hours of the festival as winds were blowing away tents and tables, and rain was coming down on the volunteers. In his Pentecost homily, Fr. Tony Ackoury, Pastor, explained how on Pentecost, the Holy Spirit gave the Disciples of Jesus Christ courage, wisdom, knowledge and power they never had before. Fr. Tony also stressed on accepting what the Lord allows for us because good deed will come out of it. Sure enough the good deed was reflected in the pouring of the Lord's love. Volunteers joined hands and worked through challenges to turn around a possible disappointment into a successful Festival.

The wind and rain cleared Saturday night and we had beautiful weather on Sunday. Parishioners, neighbors, and friends came to enjoy Lebanese food, music, and games. The highlight of the festival was the two newly formed Saint Sharbel Church *Dabke* groups, who trained with Mr. Gaby Matar. They were watched with awe and applauded enthusiastically during and after all four performances.

A couple new features were a hit during the festival: Photos in traditional Lebanese clothing, and *Manakeech Zaatar aal Saj*. Everyone who came to the festival was a winner and several guests won big raffle prizes including an MEA airline ticket to Lebanon, a recliner chair, HD TVs, and more... In addition to being the Parish's biggest fundraising event, the festival keeps our traditions alive, gives us a chance to get together in a fun environment, teaches our kids to volunteer and support our church. Thank you to all who donated their time or money. □



## Danbury, Connecticut *Pastor's Graduation*



Fr. Jean Younes with his mother Naime.

by Yolla Harb

On Saturday, May 21, 2011, St. Anthony Maronite Catholic Church of Danbury, Conn., celebrated with its Pastor, Father Jean Younes, his graduation from Fordham University in New York. Fr. Younes, received his Ph.D. in Educational Leadership, Administration and Policy. Many families throughout the area attended the Divine Liturgy and the graduation party in the Church hall to celebrate with Father Younes and the parish. The celebration was coordinated by a committee of parishioners from St. Anthony. □

### *Patriarchal Transfer*

His Beatitude Patriarch Bechara Peter Rai, Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, with the consent of the Synod of the Maronite Church and having informed the Apostolic See, has transferred, in accordance with canon 85 para. 2 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, Archbishop Paul Nabil El-Sayah of Haifa of the Maronites, Patriarchal Exarch for Jerusalem, Palestine and Jordan, to the office of Bishop of the Patriarchal Curia. The Holy Father has allowed the prelate to maintain his title of Archbishop "*ad personam*". □

Vatican Information Service (VIS) June 25, 2011



## Brooklyn, New York *An Evening With the Maronites*



The main entrance of Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral facing Henry Street in Brooklyn, New York.

by Yumilka Pamela Ortiz

Cultural Festivals are celebrated for the particular reason to be connected to a diaspora and share the sentiment of celebrating a place elsewhere called home. I was pleased to spend an evening with the Lebanese Maronite community of Brooklyn Heights in order to obtain an experience of Lebanon, through the Annual Lebanese Festival. My impression of the community of Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral was a sense of unity and brotherhood among parishes that wish to preserve and promote the culture and religion of the Lebanese people.

"Being Lebanese is more than just a culture; it is a lifestyle" said nineteen-year old Patrick Abou-Chrouh, who has never visited Lebanon but takes pride in such heritage. Being a Maronite plays a major role in his identity. He has been collaborating within the church as a volunteer for the festival, as well as serving a term of president for the cathedral's youth group and a role model to others. For someone who has never visited Lebanese soil and yet feels deeply tied to his roots was a revitalizing experience. I was delighted to hear the words of the young man who was eager to preserve the elements of language, religion, and culture connected to his beloved Lebanon.

On the other hand, Claire Habib, someone who projected the impression of being a well-respected member among the rest for her seniority within the community, shared a nuance of being Lebanese-American. Her parents migrated from a town near the Bekaa Valley region of Lebanon. Born and raised in Brooklyn, Claire shares her long-term commitment with the Maronite Church, "This is the place where I was baptized," enthusiastically shared Claire. Her glance transmitted a trail of memories lived around the church both nostalgic and sweet.

Although the parishioners of Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Cathedral wished to launch the first night of the festivity along Renssen street, they worked within their means and created a welcoming atmosphere corralled in a narrow but warm space leading into a hall, decorated by the exquisite

scents of Lebanese food and desserts, refreshments, and a variety of colorful garments and accessories for sale. People were able to share time among friends and family while savoring the calmness of the Friday evening before the festival would be carried into the streets. A repertoire of live entertainment catered to families would maintain a yearly tradition and a place in which Lebanese can connect and share a piece of their homeland through their parish. □

## Utica, New York *Scholarship Award*



Chorbishop John Faris with St. Louis of Gonzaga Church's scholarship awardees and representatives of the golf outing organizers.

Members of the MYO who graduated from high school and who are going to college in the fall were awarded \$500 scholarships by Saint Louis Gonzaga Church in Utica, N.Y., on June 19, 2011, at the end of the Divine Liturgy. The awardees are Stephanie Ciaccia (daughter of Vince and Roseanne Ciaccia), who will attend American University; David Lloyd (son of David and Susan Lloyd), who will attend Mohawk Valley Community College; and Anthony Obeid (son of Dr. H. Joseph and Sylvie Obeid), who will attend Boston University.

The Pastor of Saint Louis Church, Chorbishop John D. Faris, recognized that the amount was not very much in the "big picture" of the costs for higher education. However, Chorbishop Faris went on to say that "the scholarship represents the love and concern that the parish family has for these young people."

The scholarships are made possible because of the Annual Golf Classic that will be conducted this year on September 11, 2011, at Valley View Golf Course. Mr. Louis Raya and Mr. Richard Blank represented the organizers of the golf outing at the award ceremony. □



## Westchester, New York Father's Day Haftli



by Antoine Najjar

The Westchester Maronite Mission celebrated Father's Day with a dinner and concert event on Friday June 10, 2011, in White Plains, N.Y. The evening started with a Lebanese dinner followed by a concert of the "Sukoon" musical group. It started with a mix of traditional "tarab" music and popular Lebanese songs. The quality of the music and the singers brought the people to their feet very quickly. During the intermission the guests had the opportunity to finalize their bids for the silent auction and some prizes were aggressively sought. The second part of the concert was mostly focused on Ziad Rahbani's creations, and at this point the dance floor was filled by people of all ages singing and dancing to the music. The concert ended at about midnight after several repeat songs. □

## Birmingham, Alabama 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary

Fred and Harriet Bostany of Birmingham, Ala., celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary recently with a family dinner at Ross Bridge Resort and Spa. Married on May 26, 1951, at St. John Catholic Church in Peoria, Illinois, the couple renewed their vows at St. Elias Maronite Catholic Church, officiated by Chorbishop Richard Saad, Pastor. The dinner reception was hosted by their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Fred and Harriet have been members of St. Elias for sixty years. □



## Youngstown, Ohio Ladies' Luncheon



by Sarah Clarke

On Sunday, May 22, 2011, St. Maron Church in Youngstown, Ohio, held a ladies' luncheon prepared and served by the men of the parish. The luncheon was held to honor daughters, mothers, aunts and grandmothers. After the meal, the men "serenaded" the women with a musical performance and gave away beautiful angel centerpieces. This luncheon was just one of the many events being held in conjunction with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church in Youngstown. □

## NAM Spring Raffle

The NAM Board of Directors wished to thank you sincerely for participating in this year's raffle. The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Raffle 2011 was a great success, with 366 tickets sold out of the 400 available. Since the drawing, NAM has distributed the \$17,500 in cash prizes to the winners. The remaining proceeds of \$19,100 are being allocated to NAM's general account to help continue the Apostolate's work for the Maronite Church in the U.S.A.

The drawing was held in St. Louis, Missouri, at the closing of the NAM Board of Directors' spring meeting hosted by St. Raymond's Church and following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, May 22, 2011. Several NAM Board Members supervised the drawing, and the winning tickets were drawn by young members of the St. Louis parish.

Following is a list of this year's winners.

- ★ **Nadim Dergham** of Gates Mills, Ohio, won the first prize of \$10,000 (ticket No. 242)
- ★ **Christopher Farhet** of Columbia Heights, Minn., won the second prize of \$3,000 (ticket No. 34)
- ★ **Terri Elias** of Cypress, Calif., won the third prize of \$2,000 (ticket No. 325)
- ★ **Cheryl and Donald Butler** of Berwick, Me., won the fourth prize of \$1,500 (ticket No. 121)
- ★ **Jamil Maroun**, Somerset, N.J., won the fifth prize of \$1,000 (ticket No. 103)

Once again, we thank you for your support and pray you have a prosperous and rewarding year. □

**THE ORDER  
OF  
SAINT SHARBEL**



**Annual Members**

★ **Christopher and Mia Hariz**  
*Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon  
Cathedral, Los Angeles, Calif.*

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

For more information about the Order, ask your pastor or 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 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
St. Louis, MO 63104

**Houston, Texas**  
*Silver Massabki Award*



Fr. Pierre El Khoury presents the Silver Massabki Award to Tony and Suzanne Dib.

Each year the National Apostolate of Maronites (NAM) allows parishes to recognize NAM members who have unselfishly served their parishes with the Silver Massabki Award. This year Our Lady of the Cedars in Houston, Texas, honored Tony and Suzanne Dib with this award for their service to the parish. The award was presented to Mr. and Mrs. Dib by Fr. Pierre El Khoury on Sunday, June 12, 2011. □

**Austin, Texas**  
*Seminarians*

During the Season of Resurrection, Our Lady's Maronite Catholic Parish in Austin, Texas, was privileged to have four devoted servants of Christ participate in the Divine Liturgies. Dr. Chris Fabre, a seminarian for the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, is currently studying Philosophy at St. Edward's University in Austin. George Hajj is a visiting seminarian from Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary in Washington, D.C.; Vincent LaVigna is currently applying to the seminary there as well. Sonja Weber will soon be joining The Holy Theophany Monastery in Olympia, Washington. She has been the Sacristan at Our Lady's for more than five years; the Parish will miss her devoted and selfless service. We wish them all the best in their spiritual journeys. □



(left to right) Dr. Chris Fabre, Vincent LaVigna, Rev. Msgr. Don Sawyer, Deacon Joe Crowley, Sonja Weber, and George Hajj.

# Washington. D.C. Golden Anniversaries

by Seminarian George Hajj

At the wedding feast of Cana of Galilee, after mentioning the needs to her son, Mary asks the servants to "do whatever He tells you." Freely, they chose to go and obey the commands of Jesus and to distribute His wine to all.

We all long for this wine, and the Church, like Mary, is always calling and preparing faithful servants to go and "do whatever He tells you." This year, the Maronite Church in the United States is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of that very house of Mary in which the priests of Jesus Christ are being formed and where they are born as loving sons and faithful servants of the Church, the People of God. By divine providence, Chorbishop Seely Beggiani, the Rector of the Seminary, is also celebrating his fiftieth anniversary of priesthood, most of those years were spent in the service of the Seminary. At the same time of this year's celebration, a chapel will be dedicated to Our Lady of Lebanon in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington D.C. This dedication comes as a special gift in gratitude to the many priests and faithful who have given of themselves over many years of labor in the vineyard of the Lord and as new beginning, an inauguration of the next fifty years and many more to come.

The Rector and the young men who are consecrating their lives to the service of the Church of Jesus Christ invite you to come and celebrate with them the life of their Mother House during this special year of celebrations.

## Anniversary Schedule

### Friday, September 23, 2011

- 10:30 a.m. Prayer in Honor of Saint Maron and Dedication of Chapel at the National Shrine
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch at Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary
- 1:30 p.m. Historical Perspective on the Seminary by Chorbishop Seely Beggiani
- 6:00 p.m. Divine Liturgy (Chorbishop Beggiani to preach) at Our Lady of Lebanon Parish Church
- 7:30 p.m. Dinner in honor of both 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries at the Church Hall

### Saturday, September 24, 2011

- 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy (Bishop Robert Shaheen) at the Crypt Chapel of the Immaculate Conception National Shrine
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch open to all at Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary. □

## Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

### July 3, 2011

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

### July 5 - 10, 2011

Annual Clergy Conference and Maronite Convention, Philadelphia, Penn.

### July 17, 2011

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

### July 23 - 24, 2011

Feast of St. Ann, Troy, N.Y.

### July 25 - 26, 2011

Feast of St. Ann, Scranton, Penn.

### July 28 - 29, 2011

Board of *Teelumiere* Meeting, Chicago, Ill.

### July 31, 2011

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

### August 7, 2011

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

### August 13 - 15, 2011

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

### August 21, 2011

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

### August 28, 2011

Pastoral Visit to Our Lady of Purgatory, New Bedford, Mass.

### September 28 - September 7, 2011

Personal Silent Retreat. □

## Project Roots

The Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn and the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon join together to help people reconnect with their Christian spiritual roots in Lebanon and the Middle East. An office in Los Angeles, Calif., under the responsibility of Fr. Abdallah Zaidan, M.L.M., will assist those interested to:

- ★ Obtain their sacramental records from their country of origin
- ★ Connect with family members living in their place of origins and throughout the world where they emigrated
- ★ Obtain Lebanese citizenship, if desired
- ★ Obtain immigration records, if desired
- ★ Remain connected with the Maronite Church here and throughout the world.

No eparchial funds will be used, but the office will accept financial help from those willing to help. For more information contact:

Father Abdallah Zaidan, M.L.M.  
333 South San Vicente Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90048 □

# Why The Land Is Holy?

By  
**Chorbishop John D. Faris**

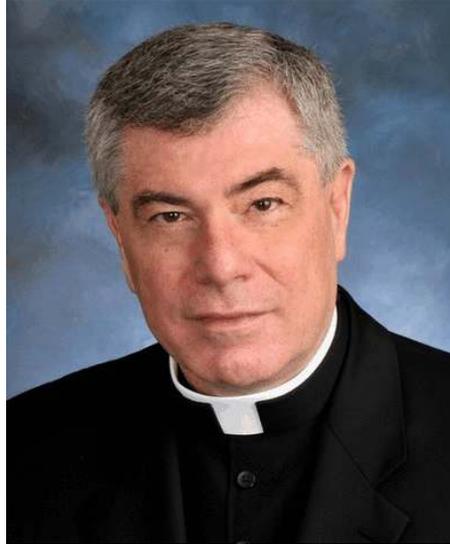
*This article is adapted from a presentation given by Chorbishop Faris to the Northeastern Lieutenancy-US of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.*

**"T**he Lord said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your kindred and your father's house for a country which I shall show you...' "So Abram went as the Lord told him..." Abram passed through the country as far as the hold place at Shechem....The Canaanites were in the country at the time. The Lord appeared to Abram and said, 'I shall give this country to your offspring.' [Abram] pitched his tent....There he built an altar to the Lord and invoked the name of the Lord" (Genesis 12:1, 4, 6-8).

And the drama begins. God called Abram, a nomad living in Ur (a region in present-day Iraq), and told him to take his family and possessions and go to the region encompassing modern-day Israel, Palestinian territories, Lebanon, and the western parts of Jordan. This passage from Genesis ends with Abram's building an altar and invoking the name of One God for the first time in this new land.

The One God invoked by Abraham is today worshiped by the 3.8 billion descendants of Abraham, adherents of three monotheistic religions, Judaism (14 million), Christianity (2.14 billion), and Islam (1.57 billion). It behooves us to ponder why Divine Providence chose such a region to have a central role in religious history. The land had nothing to speak for it: It was remote, lacking in water and other natural resources. It played no significant political, cultural or commercial role in the region, much less the world. But Jews, Christians and Muslims acclaim this land as holy - each in a different way. As Christians who yearn for a peaceful and just resolution to the conflicts in this part of the world, it is beneficial for us to understand how these three religious groups view the holy land.

Most sadly, conflict and displacement were going to characterize the state of affairs in the region for millennia. This has been the state of affairs from the



Chorbishop John Faris

beginning; let us consider for a moment the situation as Abram found it. Genesis tells us that the land promised to Abram already belonged to someone else, the Canaanites. In order for Abram to possess the land, it had to be taken from someone else! So from the moment of the call to Abram and the promise that this was going to be his land, there was going to be conflict and displacement.

Another example is the Holy City, Jerusalem. Jerusalem is first mentioned in the Bible as being in the possession of a Canaanite tribe, the Jebusites. King David wanted to take control of the city, but as would be expected the Jebusites resisted. The fortress there was reputed to be the strongest in all of Canaan and the Jebusites gloated that their blind and lame could defeat David's army. David managed to conquer the city by a surprise attack through the water supply tunnels. Once Jerusalem had become an Israelite city, the Jebusites were reduced by King Solomon to the status of serfs. From the start, the Holy Land has been marked by victors and vanquished.

Throughout its long history, Jerusalem

has been destroyed twice, besieged twenty-three times, attacked fifty-two times, and captured and recaptured forty-four times.

So we must not presume that the present turmoil of this land is a modern phenomenon. Nor should we anticipate a speedy, painless resolution of the conflicts. And lastly, we should not presume that a just resolution can be achieved without consideration for the religious significance of this place not only for its current residents (who are directly affected), but for more than half the population of the world who are all concerned about the destiny of a place they cherish as holy and their co-religionists who live in it.

In the Holy Land, everything is religious - and everything is political. Religious beliefs are the basis of the assertion of claims; religious affiliation is a factor included in the governmental identification of persons; and religious affiliation is the primary factor in self-awareness as a member of a community. For example, in the Middle East, one is first a Muslim, or a Christian or a Jew and then the citizen of a particular country. We must remember that Middle Eastern nations in their present form are creations of the twentieth century. In many cases, these political structures have not entered into the popular consciousness. The purpose of this paper is not a political exposition nor does it intend to justify any claims of any religion to certain prerogatives in the Holy Land.

## ***Jews and the Promised Land***

Undoubtedly, the Holy Land looms greatest in the religious minds and hearts of the Jews. The Hebrew Bible refers to the Land of Israel, a land given by God to the Israelites. For devout Jews, this is the basis of their political claim. For the Jews, this land is

different than any other part of the planet.

Although the fact that God Himself gave the land to them is sufficient for them, there are other reasons why the Jews cherish the land as holy. In Jewish law, certain religious obligations could be fulfilled only in the Land of Israel. Some commentators also regard the land to be holy because God's "holy people" settled there. At the end of Joshua, the land was distributed among the Israelite tribes and the promise to Abraham is fulfilled and the land becomes the Holy Land.

Further, certain places in the Land of Israel are considered as more holy than others. Some cities of ancient Israel are imbued with even greater holiness. Jerusalem, as the site of the Temple, has been esteemed as the holiest city in Judaism and the spiritual epicenter of the Jewish people since the 10<sup>th</sup> century BCE when the site was chosen during the lifetime of King David to be the location of the Temple. Because of the many religious obligations that could be fulfilled only in Jerusalem, the city is mentioned 669 times in the Hebrew Bible. Jerusalem is held to be the site of Mt. Moriah, where Isaac was to be sacrificed to the Lord (Genesis 22:14). Elsewhere the Holy Scripture seems to identify the location of this event as the hill on which Solomon later built the Temple, now known as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 3:1; Psalm 24:3; Isaiah 2:3 and 30:29).

Since the Roman retribution for several Jewish revolts culminating with the revolt in the second century, Jews have sought to remain in, or return to this land for over almost two thousand years.

## ***Christians and the Holy Sites***

**C**hristians have a very different view of the Holy Land. We do not claim it to be a gift of God to us. Jesus never stated that with the New Covenant, the land was to pass from the Jews to us. For us there is nothing in the land that intrinsically differentiates it from any other land. Rather, this land is cherished as holy

because of its association with the birth, ministry, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, his Blessed Mother and the Apostles. Early Christian maps of the world portrayed Jerusalem in the center, with the rest of the inhabited world revolving around that.

According to the New Testament, Jerusalem was the city to which Jesus was brought as a child to be presented at the Temple (Luke 2:22) and to attend festivals (Luke 2:41). Jesus preached and healed in Jerusalem, especially in the Temple Courts. There is also an account of Jesus' cleansing of the Temple at the Temple Court, chasing various traders out of the sacred precincts (Mark 11:15-19).

There are numerous places in and around Jerusalem that are identified with the passion and resurrection of Jesus.

★ *Gethsemane* - Jesus spent his last night of his earthly life in agonized prayer and was arrested at Gethsemane, a garden at the foot of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem (Luke 22:43-44).

★ *The Cenacle* - The term "Cenacle" designates the "Upper Room," the site of many important events in the history of salvation: The term "cenacle" evolved from the Latin word *cena* ("dinner") and originally designated a little dining room, usually in an upper story. The Upper Room seems to have been the place where the disciples stayed when they were in Jerusalem (Acts 1:13). It is the site of the Washing of the Feet, the Last Supper, some appearances of the Risen Lord, the gathering of the disciples after the Ascension of Jesus, the election of Matthias, and the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

★ *Via Dolorosa and Golgotha* - The Way of the Cross, now known as the *Via Dolorosa*, is the path on which Jesus carried his cross to Golgotha, the place of the crucifixion.

★ *Holy Sepulchre* - The Holy Sepulchre is traditionally believed to be the location of Golgotha and Jesus' nearby tomb. The original church was built in 336 by

Constantine the Great and his mother, Saint Helen.

★ *Mt. Olivet* - The Acts of the Apostles (1:9-12) places the site of the Ascension on Mt. Olivet, a mountain ridge in eastern Jerusalem. The site is marked by the Chapel of the Ascension, built around the rock which is said to bear the imprint of the right foot of Christ. It is venerated as the last point on earth touched by Christ during his earthly life.

After the Pentecost, the New Testament tells how, James was the leader of the early Jerusalem church. He and his successors were the focus for the Jewish Christian community until Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman emperor Hadrian in 135 AD. It seems that the interest of Christians in Jerusalem and the Holy Land was not very strong in the first three hundred years of Christianity. Jerusalem had been destroyed in 135 AD. One must also recall that Christians were being persecuted until the early fourth century. Interest resumed in 325 AD when the emperor Constantine and his mother, Helen, endowed Jerusalem with churches and shrines, making it the foremost center of Christian pilgrimage.

## ***Muslims and the Night Journey***

Muslims are obliged to pray five times in the day facing Mecca. It might be of interest that in the early years of Islam (610 - 623 CE), Muslims prayed toward the Noble Sanctuary in Jerusalem. Seventeen months after the Mohammed's arrival in Medina in 622 CE, orientation of prayer was re-directed to Mecca. Some of us are aware that Jerusalem is of concern to the followers of Islam, but few know why.

The Quran does not mention Jerusalem, but according to Islamic tradition the Prophet Mohammed took a two-part "Night Journey" there around the year 621: it is known as the *Isra* and *Mi'raj*. The *Isra* begins with Mohammed praying in the *Kaaba* in Mecca, when Archangel Gabriel appeared and gave him the mythological horse of the prophets, Buraq. Buraq carried

Mohammed to the "Farthest Mosque," the *Masjid Al Aqsa*, which Muslims believe is the *Al-Aqsa* Mosque in Jerusalem. At the *Al-Aqsa* Mosque, Islamic tradition holds that Mohammed led the other prophets, among them, Adam, Moses and Jesus, in prayer.

In the second part of the journey, the *Mi'raj* (Arabic for "ladder"), Buraq takes Mohammed to the heavens, where he tours the circles of heaven, and speaks with the earlier prophets such as Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. He is then taken by the Archangel Gabriel to meet God. According to Islamic tradition, God instructs Mohammed about the number of times that Muslims must pray each day. (Originally the required number was fifty, but tradition holds that Mohammed, upon the encouragement of Moses, negotiated a reduction to five times a day.)

It is interesting that in its initial stages, Muslim faithful directed themselves to Jerusalem, only later to change the direction to Mecca.

### ***Conflict and Conquests***

After the death of Mohammed, one of the first targets of Muslim conquest was Jerusalem. In 638, the Jewish Patriarch of Jerusalem handed over the keys of the city to Muslim forces. The Muslim authorities in Jerusalem were not kind to their Christian subjects, forcing them to live a life of "discrimination, servitude and humiliation."

The perceived holiness of the land was one of the motivational factors behind the efforts of the Crusades, which sought to win it back from the Muslims. The mistreatment of Christians would only worsen as the armies of the First Crusade approached Jerusalem. Fearing that the Christians had been conspiring with approaching Crusaders, the Muslim authorities massacred a sizeable part of the Christian population; the terrorized fortunate escaped the city. On July 15, 1099, the army of the First Crusade captured Jerusalem. Most of the city's population were killed.

Jerusalem became the capital of a Latin Kingdom with a Latin church and a Latin Patriarch, all under the authority of the Pope. The city's first Latin ruler,

Godfrey de Bouillon, was elected in 1099. Out of humility and deference to Jesus, he refused to be called king in a city where he thought only Jesus had the right to that title; he would only call himself Jerusalem's protector. Godfrey also has the distinction of being the founder of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre.

In 1187, when Saladin captured the city, the Holy Sepulchre and many other churches were returned to the care of Eastern Christians.

From the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, various European nations petitioned the Ottoman Empire for control of the holy places. The Franciscans are the traditional Catholic custodians of the holy places. Control swung back and forth between the Catholic and Orthodox churches throughout this period. The sultan, Abd-ul-Mejid I, perhaps out of despair, published a *firman* that laid out in detail the exact rights and responsibility of each community at the Holy Sepulchre. This document became known as the *Status Quo* and is still the basis for the complex protocol of the shrine. Five Christian communities currently have rights in the Holy Sepulchre: the Greek Patriarchate, Latins (Western Rite Roman Catholics), Armenians, Copts and Syriac Orthodox.

### ***Modern Demographics***

We have described how more than half the population of the globe looks to Jerusalem as a religious center. It is of no surprise - and indeed nothing new - that there is conflict regarding who possesses the land and who has the right to live there.

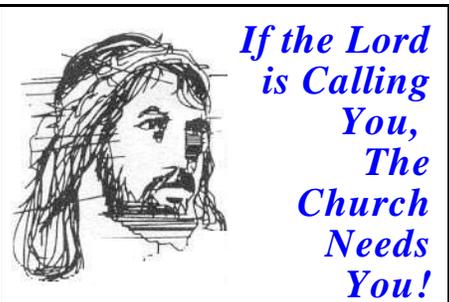
In this struggle, Christians find themselves in the midst of super-powers – religious, political and economic. The picture is not very bright for us.

- ★ In Israel, out of a total population of seven million, there are 147,000 Christians, or 2.1 per cent of the total population.
- ★ In the Palestinian Territories, with a population of 3.8 million, there are an estimated 40,000 - 90,000 Christians, or 1.1 - 2.4 per cent of

the population.

These Christians are helpless and need our prayers and support. If they leave, the land where Jesus, His Blessed Mother and the Apostles walked, they will no longer have a living church, but will be reduced to a place of memories.

Chorbishop John D. Faris  
Saint Louis Gonzaga Maronite Church,  
Utica, New York  
June, 2011 ☐



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

Msgr. sharbel Maroun, Director  
Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon  
Office of Vocations  
c/o St. Maron Church  
600 University Ave. NE  
Minneapolis, MN 55413

Or

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



## Phoenix, Arizona *Silver Massabki Award*



Fr. Ghattas Khoury presents the Silver Massabki Award to Mrs. Marie Medawar.

**M**arie Medawar received the Silver Massabki Award at St. Joseph Maronite Church in Phoenix, Arizona. As an active member of St. Joseph Church, Mrs. Medawar serves as a member of the Parish Advisory Council, the Moderator of the Young Adults, a member of the Ladies Guild, and a member of the Maronite Outreach. □

## Houston, Texas *Class of 2011*



**T**his past May a new tradition was born at Our Lady of the Cedars Maronite Church in Houston, Texas. This new tradition is honoring the accomplishment of our high school seniors as they graduate from their respective high schools.

This year fifteen high school graduates were honored at the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, May 29, 2011. The graduates took

part in the Liturgy by serving as lectors, presenting the offering, leading the prayers of the faithful and the prayer of thanksgiving. Following Communion, the graduates were called forward and each was introduced by name, the high school from which they graduated and where they would be attending college. Each graduate was presented a gift from the parish by Fr. Pierre ElKhoury. After Liturgy Fr. Pierre and the graduates cut a cake in honor of the occasion. The 2011 graduates are: Judy Adijoud, Jonathan Abou Jaoude, Lara Al-Fady, Diana Al-Nemri, Nancy Assaker, Bernadette Carrum, Christina Nemry, Johnny Maakaroun, Rita Obeid, Rebecca Skaff, Christian Tannous, Channel Youssef, Razzouk Moussa, Katrina Nemri, and Michael DeBakey. □

## Danbury, Connecticut *Graduation Day*



Fr. Jean Younes with Class of 2011 and members of the parish.

by Phyllis Moses

**O**n Father's Day, June 19, 2011, St. Anthony Maronite Catholic Church of Danbury, Conn., honored the fathers and the twelve 2011 high school graduates of the parish at the annual buffet breakfast, catered and served by Ferris Nasser and his kind assistants. Gifts from the parish family, service awards from the MYO, and four additional scholarships given in memory of deceased members of the parish were awarded by Father Jean Younes and members of the Awards Committee to the following: Christopher Ackell, Christopher Burns, Colin David, Shannon Gruda, Lydia Jabbour, Jacqueline Jowdy, Gabriel Lahoud, Philip Shakro, Alexandra Sweeney, Andrew Sweeney, and Alexandra Salame. All twelve will be attending college in the fall. □



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

## **St. Louis, Missouri**



**J**oseph Rounds, Amelia Cornelius Hurley, Joe Rask, Mary Miller, Christian Gutierrez, Kadan Risk, Alayna Hessler, Manny Meadows, Jenna Elking and Mitch Gamma received their First Holy Communion on May 1, 2011, at St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Missouri. □

## **Phoenix, Arizona**



**A**lexandra Chamoun, Reva Francis, Vannesa Ghosn, Rania Affas, Maria Dirani, Chris Thomasian, Charbel Medawar and Sharbel Ashkar received their First Holy Communion on May 8, 2011, at St. Joseph Church, Phoenix, Arizona. □

## **Fairlawn, Ohio**



**S**ara Kahwaji and Lucy, Julia and Joseph Lutman received their First Holy Communion on May 8, 2011, at Our Lady of the Cedars of Mount Lebanon Maronite Church, Fairlawn [Akron], Ohio. □

## **Lombard, Illinois**



**G**hassan Antonios, Lindsey Dwyer, Nathaniel Enriquez, Natalee Jaber, Nikolle Pang, John Sharshar, Theresa Tenn and Kennedy Grace Williams received their First Holy Communion on May 1, 2011, at Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Church, Lombard [Chicago], Ill. □

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

## **Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania**



**T**rystan Wielgopolski, Nicole Joseph, Sarah Chekan, Kurtis Nordmark, Peter Khoudary, Marc Chekan, Christina Kaspar, Carnel Shleborne and Andrew Wallace received their First Holy Communion on May 1, 2011, at St. Anthony/St.George, Wilkes-Barre, Penn. □

## **Williamsville, New York**



**M**arie Mekhtafi, Sophia Moran, Miranda Frnak, Kayla Yax, Joseph Khoury, Mary Moussa, Danielle Behlok, LouLou Khoury, Jamie Badawy, Julian Khoury, Michael Shady, Sergio Al Mekhtifi, Anthony Aldik, Dylan Joseph, John Krier, Christopher Tartick and Richard Tartick received their First Holy Eucharist on May 1, 2011 at St. John Maron Church in Williamsville [Buffalo], N.Y. □

## **Lawrence, Massachusetts**



**J**amira Daher, Grace Pappalardo, Tia Abi Rached, Jenny El-Helou, Tatiana Azouri, Emma Azzi, Gaby Abdelnour, Nadine Sader, Brianna Ayoub, Amanda Swenson, Isabella Swenson, Andrew Azzi, Elie Safi, Joseph Mansour, Andrew Nadira, Geryes Geha, Louis Sader, Tyler Bishop, Antoine Assaf, Elias Moussa, Sami Elias, Jason Demers, Samir Maroun, and Anthony Chamoun received their First Holy Communion on May 1, 2011 at St. Anthony Maronite Church, Lawrence, Mass. □

## **Fall River, Massachusetts**



**C**hristopher Panchley, Jessy Heneine, Vanessa Heneine, Joshua Correia, Greta Costello, Maya Pontes, and Rachel Mahfouz recieved their First Holy Communion on May 1, 2011, at St. Anthony of the Desert Church in Fall River, Massachusetts. □

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

## San Diego, California



**M**arcellina Malham, Sara El Hayek, Fredrik Tume, Ghazal Sabri, Daniel Saghbini, Marie-Therese Mouawad, Sophia Mansour, Rosie Mouannes, Adam Malek, Gabriel Farhat, Marin George, Anthony Shenoda, Adel Adel, Rachel Fakhoury, Fidaa Alsawaf, Dawwod George and Jessica Chammas received their First Holy Communion at St. Ephrem Church in San Diego, Calif., on May 22, 2011. □

## Portland, Oregon



**B**enedict Thomas Sharbel Moffitt and Sarah Maria Rafka Redmond received their First Holy Communion at St. Sharbel Church in Portland, Ore., on May 1, 2011. □

## Houston, Texas



**W**alid Haddad, Basma Rassam, Husam Rassam, Thomas El Khoury, George Wakim, Joshua Abboud, Christina Yazbek, Izair Rickert, Perla Ready, Sammy Kmeid, George Hajjar, Abraham Tahtouh, Christophe Bou Saada, Seleene Rouhana, Gabriella Ghafari, George Tannous, Elie Jaber, Charles Abdo, Emily Saab, Brennan Rouhana, Celeste Ghossoub, Anthony Ramy, Mia Droubi, Christian Tahtouh, Arianna Ghafari, Michael Stephan and Sharbel Tannous received their First Holy Communion at Our Lady of the Cedars Maronite Church in Houston, Texas, on May 15, 2011. □

## San Francisco, California



**E**lli Raad, Daniel Wehbeh, Bernard Bousleiman, Rudy Assio, Elissa Eidson and Jessica Feghali received their First Holy Communion at Our Lady of Lebanon Church, San Francisco, Calif., on May 1, 2011. □

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

## **Troy, New York**



**D**avia Boutros, Natalia Karame, Michelle Rahal, Annalise Marron, Dominic Karrat, Sarkis Frangieh, Jarron Frangieh and Ryan Frangieh received their First Holy Communion at St. Ann Maronite Church in Troy, New York, on May 1, 2011. □

## **Easton, Pennsylvania**



**R**ita Michelle Boulos, Roben Jaoude, Nathan James D'Alessio, Maya Marie Elias, Sharbel Ghaleb, Nadima Theresa Melhem, Joseph Tristan Pijut, Sydney Camille Melhem and Rebecca Marie Koury received their First Holy Communion at Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Easton, Penn., on May 1, 2011. □

## **Orlando, Florida**



**I**saballa Dalvalle Cardona, Isaiah Price Christopher, Katelyn Dennaoui, Vanessa Ann Doueih, Brooke Elizabeth Durney, Carolina Fernandez, Jesus Manuel Flores, Nedjine Jean Francois, Kassandra Lee Gavilanez, Adrianna Marie Graziano, Micaela Joseph, Elizabeth Kim, Samuel Minaya, Samantha Minaya, Angelina Polselli, Remo Polselli, Caitlin Rechdan, Gabriel Rechdan, Stephanie Safie, Zacharia Simon, Oliwia Stolarz and Daniel Jonathan Zubieta received their First Holy Communion at St. Jude Maronite Church in Orlando, Fla., on May 1, 2011. □

## **Jacksonville, Florida**



**K**ayla Barakat, Isabella Nicodeme, Brianna Naddaf, Elie Haddad, Naya Haddad, Jason Assi, Joseph Mahfoud, Tresa El-Hajj, and Sophie Obaed received their First Holy Communion at Saint Maron Church in Jacksonville, Fla., on Sunday, May 15, 2011. □

# Washington, D.C. Golden Anniversary of Chorbishop Seely Beggiani

On September 23, 2011, Chorbishop Seely Beggiani, Rector of Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary, will celebrate his 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Priesthood. Son of the late Joseph and Sada Beggiani, he was born in Youngstown, Ohio. After graduating from Ursuline High School in Youngstown, he attended John Carroll University - Borromeo Seminary in Cleveland, Ohio, where he earned his Bachelors Degree. After attending Université de St. Joseph in Beirut, Lebanon, he returned to Catholic University of America (CUA) where he earned his doctorate in Sacred Theology (S.T.D.) in 1963. He was ordained to the priesthood on May 20, 2011 in Cleveland by Bishop Floyd Begin.



Throughout his fifty years of priesthood and in addition to his being an Adjunct Associate Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at CUA since 1967, Msgr. Beggiani has served the Eparchy of Saint Maron in many capacities:

- ★ Pastor of Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Washington, D.C., from 1967 - 1979
- ★ Chairman of the Commission for Lebanon, 1984 -present
- ★ Member of the Eparchial Finance Council
- ★ Member of the Presbyteral Council.

## Previous Assignments

- Peritus at the Maronite Patriarchal Synod (2003 - 06)
- Consultant for the Antiochene Churches to the National Catechetical Directory Committee (1975 - 77)
- Project Director of *Faith of the Mountain* (First edition grades 1 - 8; High School 9 - 12)
- Diocesan Theologian, Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn
- Diocesan Consultant, Eparchy of Saint Maron (1968 -2004)
- Director of Continuing Education for the Clergy (1976 - 77)
- Chairman of the Diocesan Catechetical Commission (1975 - 78)
- Consultant to the Eparchial Liturgical Office
- Former Member of the Board of Directors of *The Challenge*

## Previous Ministries and Activities

- Formation faculty of Theological College of Catholic University (1998 - 2006)
- Lecturer in Theology, John Carroll University, Cleveland, Ohio (1964 -1967)
- Lecturer in Graduate School of Religious Studies, University of San Diego, Calif. (Summer 1981)

- Lecturer in Graduate School of Religious Education, Barry University, Miami, Fla. (Summer 1974)

## Publications

### Books

- *Aspects of Maronite History*. New York, Saint Maron Publication, 2003
- *The Divine Liturgy of the Maronite Church: History and Commentary*. Revised Edition, New York, Saint Maron Publications, 1998
- *Introduction to Eastern Christian Spirituality: The Syriac Tradition*. London and Toronto: University of Scranton Press, Associated University Presses, 1991
- *Early Syriac Theology*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1983
- Translation of *History of the Maronite Church*, by Pierre Dib, Beirut, Lebanon: Imprimerie Catholique, 1971

### Research Articles

- "The Typological Approach of Syriac Sacramental Theology," *Theological Studies* 64 (2003): 543 - 57
- "Theology at the Service of Mysticism: Method in Pseudo-Dionysius," *Theological Studies* 57 (1996): 201 - 23
- "Christian initiation in the Eastern Churches," *The Living Light* 11 (1974): 536 - 47
- "The Place and Object of Infallibility," *Thoughts* 48 (1973): 256 - 65
- "The Meaning of Christ's Redemption," *The American Ecclesiastical Review* 166 (1972): 698 - 707
- "A Case for Logocentric Theology," *Theological Studies* 32 (1971): 371 - 406
- "Friedreich Schleiermacher and the Contemporary Search for Transcendence," *Enlightenment Essays* 2(1971): 176 - 82
- "A Re-evaluation of the Problem of Evil," *The American Ecclesiastical Review* 162 (1970) 173 - 83

### Chapter of a Book

- "Mythological and Ontological Elements in Early Christology," *Does Jesus Make a Difference*, edited by Thomas McFadden, 20 - 43. New York, The Seabury Press, 1974
- "Religious Experience and Revelation," *New Dimensions in Religious Experience*, edited by George Devine, 39 - 51. Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1971

### Paper Delivered

'How can the Maronite Tradition Remain Relevant in a North American Culture?' presented at the workshop on the Theology of the Eastern Churches, Annual Convention of the Catholic Theological Society of America, San Antonio, Texas, June 11, 1993.

### Other Articles

- "Antioch, Its Theological Tradition," *Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity* (Publication date 2007)
- (Continues on page 20)

## *History of Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary*



Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary.

**O**ur Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary, located in Washington, D.C., began in 1961 and today continues to train and ordain seminarians for service among the Maronite faithful throughout the United States.

In the decade of the 1950s, various members of the Maronite clergy and laity began to work actively for the establishment of a Maronite seminary in the United States. In 1959, the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches formed a committee of priests to collect funds for the proposed seminary. The site of the seminary was to be Washington, D.C. In addition to being the nation's capital, Washington was chosen especially to take advantage of the facilities of Catholic University of America with its ability to grant pontifical degrees in theology and canon law. The University is also known for its department of Semitic and Oriental languages. Archbishop (later Cardinal) Patrick O'Boyle of Washington was asked to take responsibility for the seminary's establishment, and Chorbishop Mansour Stephan was appointed as national chairman of the building fund.

In June, 1960, Archbishop O'Boyle called the Maronite clergy of the United States to a meeting in Washington where a goal of \$500,000 was set as a minimum to be raised from among the Maronite faithful of the United States. This meeting was attended by twenty-four Maronite priests. In July, 1961 Archbishop O'Boyle, with the approval of the Maronite clergy, purchased a house at Alaska Avenue, N.W., which was renovated and to which a chapel, bedrooms, and a recreation room were added.

Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary opened its doors on September 24, 1961. Its first rector was Reverend Elias El-Hayek, and the prefect of studies was Father Seely Beggiani. The first class consisted of five seminarians. During the first school year the seminary was visited by the Papal Secretary of State, Amleto Cardinal Cicognani, on December 3, 1961. The seminary held an open house for the Maronites living in the Washington area on St. Maron's Feast Day, 1962, and this event marked the beginnings of a Maronite parish community in Washington.

His Beatitude, Patriarch Paul Cardinal Meouchi formally

dedicated the seminary on August 26, 1962. Over two thousand Maronite clergy and laity, as well as nine Latin rite bishops, joined in the celebration at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. The nationally known television speaker, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, preached the homily. Cardinal Meouchi was accompanied by the future Patriarch and Cardinal Antoine Khoraiiche and the future Archbishop Khalil Abi-Nader.

In 1964, the building next door was purchased and used for seminary bedrooms and a library. On May 2<sup>nd</sup> of that year, Archbishop Francis Zayek (then Maronite Bishop of Sao Paulo, Brazil) ordained the first alumnus of the Maronite Seminary and future Bishop Robert Shaheen to the priesthood. Archbishop Zayek also presided over the creation of a national organization of Maronite laity, the National Association of Maronites. One of its main purposes was to provide support for the seminary.

On January 10, 1966, Archbishop Zayek became the first Maronite bishop of the United States and took responsibility for the seminary. In September 1967, Father (and later Chorbishop) Seely Beggiani was appointed Spiritual Director and Treasurer of the seminary and Administrator of the Washington parish which was in the process of formation. In May, 1968, Father Beggiani was named Rector, a post he currently holds.

Among those who assisted at the Seminary through the years have been: Chorbishop Dominic Ashkar, Msgr. Ronald Beshara, Chorbishop Camille Zaidan, the future Bishop Stephen Hector Doueih, Rev. Naji Kiwan, and Msgr. Ignace Sadek.

In recent times, the Order of St. Sharbel, an association of the laity, was established to provide financial assistance for the seminary and clergy. It underwrites a significant portion of the expenses of the seminary and also supports the retirement fund of the clergy.

On October 16-17, 1986, Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. With Archbishop Zayek, a large number of Maronite clergy and laity attended the events, which also featured seminars on the future of the seminary and the Maronite Church.

Under the guidance of Archbishop Zayek, his successors, Bishop Stephen Hector Doueih and Bishop Gregory Mansour, and Bishops John Chedid and Robert Shaheen, the seminary has experienced rapid growth and a steady influx of vocations and ordinations. During its forty-eight years of existence, sixty-eight men have been ordained to the priesthood. Two of the priest-alumni, Robert Shaheen and Gregory Mansour, have become bishops.

Thanks to a generous contribution by Mr. Anthony Abraham of Miami, Florida, a new wing was added to the Seminary in 2001. Patriarch Nasrallah Peter Cardinal Sfeir dedicated the new structure on March 6, 2001.

The new wing features a library, computer area, seminar rooms, and housing for faculty and seminarians. It can also serve as a nucleus for a Maronite research center. In recent years, the main building of the seminary was renovated, and the old church hall was converted into a library.

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## Golden Anniversary of Priesthood

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  - "The Maronite Church and its Theology," *Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity* (Publication date 2007)
  - "Maronite Church," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 9: 192 - 201
  - "Maronite Liturgy," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 9:201
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  - "Synod of Bishops: Special Assembly for Lebanon (1995), *New Catholic Encyclopedia: Jubilee Edition*, 168 - 69
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  - "Maronite Church (U.S.)," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 18: 279 - 81
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## History of Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary

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The rector, alumni, and students of the Maronite Seminary have played a prominent role in the Eparchies in producing texts on Maronite liturgy, catechetics, theology, spirituality, and history. During the years, many Maronite and Latin Rite church officials and civil dignitaries have visited



The original Chapel at Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary.

the seminary. These have included Patriarch Khoraihe in 1981 and Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir in 1988, 2001, 2005, and 2008, a number of Maronite Bishops, several Prefects of the Sacred Congregation of the Oriental Churches and every Apostolic Delegate and Papal Pro-Nuncio to the United States. Visitors have also included former presidents of Lebanon, Charles Helou, Bashir Gemayel (before his election) and Amin Gemayel. □