



The Maronite Voice

A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA

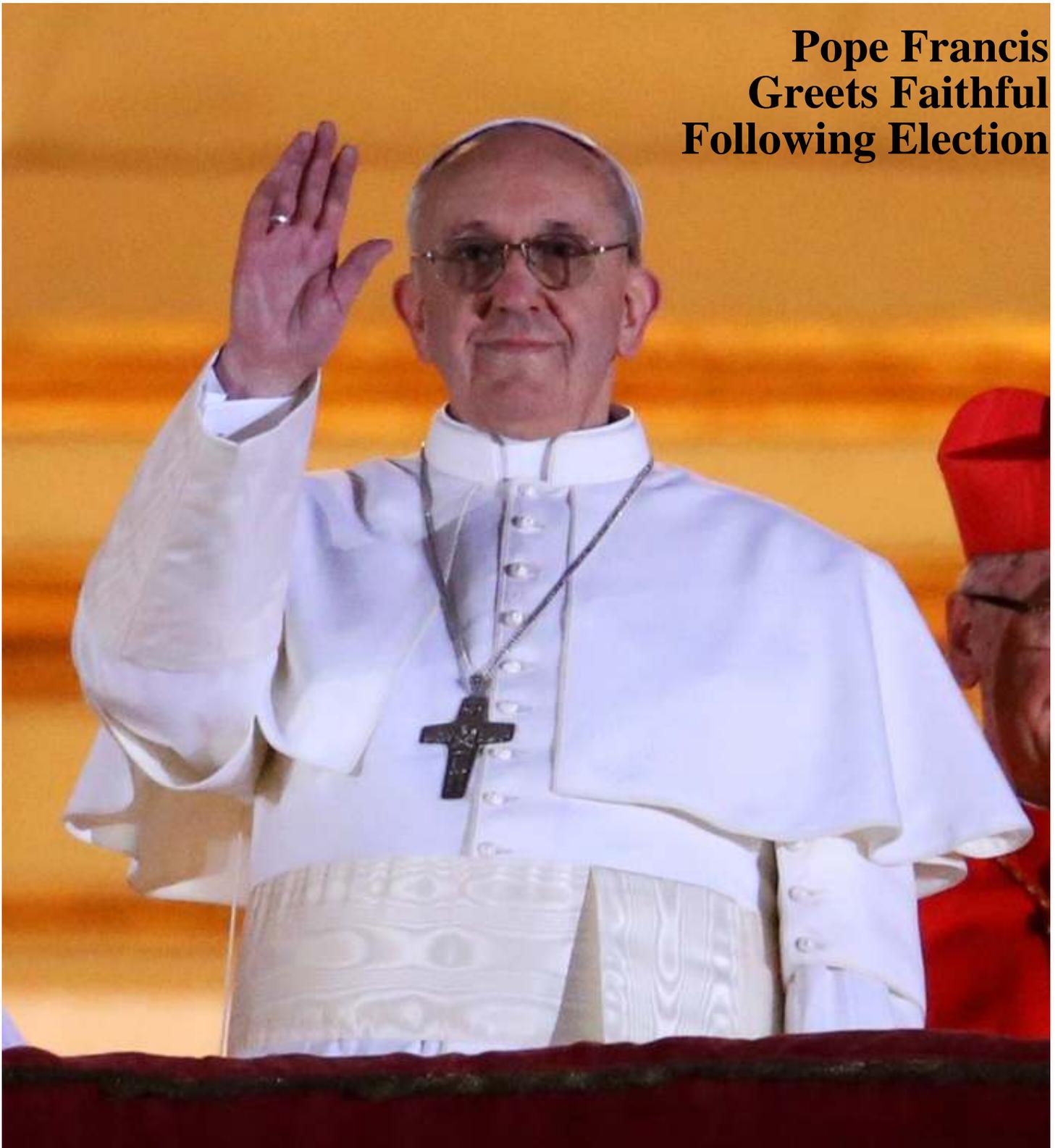


Volume IX

Issue No. IV

April 2013

Pope Francis Greets Faithful Following Election



Schedule of Bishop Robert Shaheen

April 4 - 6, 2013

Eparchial Convocation, St. Louis, Mo.

April 7, 2013

Closing of the Convocation, Solemn Liturgy, St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

April 9 - 11, 2013

Eastern Rite Catholic Bishops' Meeting, Saint Louis, Mo.

April 13 - 14, 2013

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

April 16 - 23, 2013

Maronite Bishops' Meeting, Argentina

April 26, 2013

Lecture to Saint Francis of Assisi School at the Maronite Heritage Center, Saint Louis, Mo.

April 27 - 28, 2013

Fundraising Banquet, Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Chicago, Ill.

May 2, 2013

Bishop Shaheen's Forty-ninth Anniversary, Saint Louis, Mo.

May 11, 2013

Pastoral Visit to Holy Family Church, Saint Paul, Minn.

May 11, 2013

Joint Banquet, Holy Family Church and Saint Maron Church, Minneapolis, Minn.

May 12, 2013

Pastoral Visit to Saint Maron Church, Minneapolis, Minn. □

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Sts. Peter and Paul Maronite Church

Tampa, Florida

July 3 - 7, 2013

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

Habemus Papam!

As this publication of *The Maronite Voice* is about to go to press, we have received the joyful news that the See of Peter is no longer vacant. Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, S.J., has been elected as the Bishop of Rome. He takes the name for the first time in papal history as Pope Francis after the famous Saint Francis of Assisi. He is a Cardinal from Argentina and has served as the Archbishop of Buenos Aires since 1998. He was elevated to the rank of Cardinal in 2001.

His election as the Holy Father was a surprise to the world, as was the resignation of Pope Benedict the XVI. The eyes of the world were on the Vatican. Both Catholic and non-Catholic crowded into the area of St. Peter's in Rome and prayed, awaiting the white smoke from the stove placed in the Sistine Chapel. When the Holy Father appeared at the balcony overlooking St. Peter's Square, the crowds received him with jubilation. The new Holy Father acknowledged their presence and before granting his first blessing to the city in the world, he bowed his head and asked the crowd below to pray over him. Over one hundred thousand in the square fell silent. Never had this happened before. As he raised his hand in benediction, a sense of security and peace fell over the crowd. The Church of Peter is secure. We have a new Saint Francis. The rest will be history. □

+ Bishop Robert J. Shaheen
Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon

Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, Argentina, Has Been Elected Pope

Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, S.J., was elected as Supreme Pontiff, the 265th Successor of Peter, and has chosen the name Francis. The cardinal proto-deacon Jean-Louis Tauran made the solemn announcement to the people at 8:12 p.m., on March 13, 2013, from the external Loggia of the Hall of Blessings of the Vatican Basilica following the white "fumata" which occurred at 7:06 p.m.

The new Pontiff is the first Latin American ever to become Roman Pontiff, and the first Jesuit. The Argentine cardinal was elected on the 5th ballot of the Conclave, and white smoke appeared from the chimney of the Sistine Chapel just after 2 p.m., on Wednesday, March 13. More than an hour lapsed before Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, the Senior Cardinal-deacon, appeared on the central balcony of St. Peter's basilica to make the traditional announcement: "Habemus Papam!"

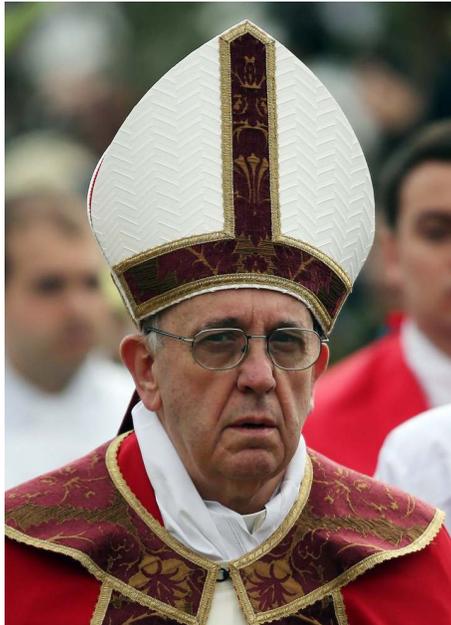
Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum; habemus Papam; Eminentissimum ac Reverendissimum Dominum, Dominum Georgium Marium Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae Cardinalem Bergoglio Qui sibi nomen imposuit Franciscum

[I announce to you with great joy; we have a Pope; the Most Eminent and Most Reverend Lord, Lord Jorge Mario Cardinal of Holy Roman Church Bergoglio who has taken the name Francis.]

After another long pause the new Pope appeared, acknowledging the loud applause from more than 200,000 people packed into St. Peter's Square. In his first remarks he led the crowd in prayers for Pope-emeritus Benedict XVI, then asked for prayers for himself before giving his *Urbi et Orbi* blessing.

"And now let us begin this journey, the bishop and people, this journey of the Church of Rome which presides in charity over all the churches, a journey of brotherhood in love, of mutual trust," the new Pope said just before delivering his blessing. "Let us always pray for one another."

Cardinal Tauran announced, and the new Pope confirmed, that everyone who received the Pope's first apostolic blessing—either in person or by a radio, television, or internet broadcast—would receive a plenary indulgence, subject to the usual conditions.



At 76, Pope Francis is old enough so that he had already submitted his resignation as Archbishop of Buenos Aires, as required by canon law. Pope Benedict had not chosen to accept that resignation. But the Argentine prelate's age was the main reason why he was not prominently listed among the leading *papabili* going into the conclave.

By taking the name Francis the new Pope sent a dramatic message, appealing to the millions of people devoted to one of the Catholic world's most popular saints. That the first Jesuit Pontiff would advance Franciscan spirituality is almost as striking as the reality that a man from Argentina has been named Bishop of Rome.

Who Is Pope Francis?

Following is the official biography of Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, S.J.

Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, S.J., Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina, Ordinary for Eastern-rite faithful in Argentina who lack an Ordinary of their own rite, was born on December 17, 1936, in Buenos Aires. He studied as and holds a degree as a chemical technician, but then chose the priesthood and entered the seminary of Villa Devoto. On March 11, 1958, he moved to the novitiate of the Company of Jesus where he finished studies in the humanities in Chile. In 1963, on returning to Buenos Aires, he obtained a degree in philosophy at the St. Joseph Major Seminary of San Miguel.

Between 1964 and 1965 he taught literature and psychology at the Immacolata College in Santa Fe and then in 1966 he taught the same subjects at the University of El Salvador, in Buenos Aires.

From 1967 to 1970 he studied theology at the St. Joseph Major Seminary of San Miguel where he obtained a degree. On December 13, 1969, he was ordained a priest. From 1970 to 1971 he completed the third probation at Alcala de Henares, Spain, and on April 22, 1973, pronounced his perpetual vows.

He was Novice Master at Villa Varilari in San Miguel from 1972 to 1973, where he also taught theology. On July 31, 1973, he was elected as Provincial for Argentina, a role he served for six years.

From 1980 to 1986 he was Rector of the Philosophical and Theological Faculty of San Miguel as well as Pastor of the Patriarca San Jose Parish in the Diocese of San Miguel. In March of 1986 he went to Germany to finish his doctoral thesis. The superiors then, sent him to the University of El

Salvador and then to Cordoba where he served as a confessor and spiritual director.

On May 20, 1992, Pope John Paul II appointed him titular Bishop of *Auca* and Auxiliary of Buenos Aires. He received episcopal consecration in the Cathedral of Buenos Aires from Cardinal Antonio Quarracino, Apostolic Nunzio Ubaldo Calabresi, and Bishop Emilio Ognenovich of Mercedes-Lujan on June 27 of that year.

On June 3, 1997, he was appointed Coadjutor Archbishop of Buenos Aires and succeeded Cardinal Antonio Quarracino on February 28, 1998.

He was Adjunct Relator General of the Tenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, October 2001.

He served as President of the Bishops' Conference of Argentina from November 8, 2005, until November 8, 2011.

He was created and proclaimed Cardinal by Blessed John Paul II in the consistory of February 21, 2001, of the Title of S. Roberto Bellarmino (St. Robert Bellarmine).

He was a member of:

- The Congregations for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments; for the Clergy; and for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life;
- The Pontifical Council for the Family; and
- The Pontifical Commission for Latin America. □

(Source CWN, March 13, 2013;
VIS, March 13, 2013)

Getting the Numbers Right 1st, 2nds and 267ths

by Kathleen Naab

After Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran announced to the world on Wednesday, March 13, 2013, that "Habemus Papam" and that he had taken the name Francis, many immediately started referring to the new Pontiff as Francis I.

Some hours later and again today [March 14], the Vatican clarified that his name is just Francis, and there is no need to refer to him with a number unless or until a future pope takes the name Francis II.

More confusion surrounds references to Francis as the Successor of St. Peter. Is he the 265th, 266th or 267th Pope?

Everyone knows St. Peter was the first pope, which means St. Linus (who reigned from 67 to 76) was St. Peter's first successor. Following that logic and according to some counts, Francis is the 266th Pope, the 265th Successor of St. Peter.

However, as James Hitchcock, author of "History of the Catholic Church," clarified for ZENIT, "Stephen II in the eighth century died before he was installed as pope. Some lists count him and some do not."

Thus, Francis is considered by some the 267th pope, the 266th successor of St. Peter. □ (Zenit.org, March 14, 2013)

The Ring of the Fisherman Pope Francis Chooses Original Design Intended For Pope Paul VI

by Junno Arocho Esteves

In a statement released to journalists, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Director of the Holy See Press Office, gave new information on the Ring of the Fisherman. The ring was given to Pope Francis at the beginning of the Inauguration of the Petrine Ministry Mass held in St. Peter's Square on March 19, 2013.

The Ring of the Fisherman, which depicts the apostle St. Peter holding keys, was designed by the artist Henry Manfrini and was originally made for Pope Paul VI. "The ring was never cast into metal, and Paul VI had never worn it because he always wore the ring that was commissioned at the time of the Second Vatican Council," the statement read.

The wax cast of Manfrini's design was kept by the late Archbishop Pasquale Macchi, the former personal secretary of Pope Paul VI. According to Fr. Lombardi's statement, Archbishop Macchi left the wax cast, along with other objects to Monsignor Ettore Malnati, who in turn commissioned a gold-plated silver ring from the wax cast.

The ring, along with other possible rings were presented to the Holy Father by the Papal Master of Ceremonies, "through the auspices of Cardinal [Giovanni Battista] Re.

"It was this ring," Fr. Lombardi's statement concluded, "that Pope Francis [chose] to be the ring of the Fisherman, presented to him at the Mass of Inauguration of his Petrine Ministry. □ (Zenit.org, March 19, 2013)

Pope's Motto: 'Miserando Atque Eligendo'

by Junno Arocho Esteves

Pope Francis has chosen to remain with his episcopal seal and motto. Added to the original papal seal are a blue background along with a miter with cross keys of gold and silver along with a red cord, symbol of his pontifical office.

The emblem of the Society of Jesus, the order to which Pope Francis belongs, is placed above on the shield. The emblem is an image of a radiant sun with the letters "IHS," the monogram of the name of Christ. A cross is placed above the letter H of the monogram while three nails are placed below it.

On the bottom left hand side of the shield is an image of a star, which according to heraldic tradition, symbolizes the Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ and of the Church. To the right of the star is the image of the spikenard, an aromatic plant, meant to symbolize St. Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church.



(Continues on page 9)

200,000 Faithful Attend Inauguration of Petrine Ministry Mass

An estimated 200,000 faithful flocked to St. Peter's Square for the Inauguration of the Petrine Ministry Mass celebrated by Pope Francis on March 19, 2013. There were 132 government delegations and representatives of different religious faiths on hand to participate in the Mass, which celebrated the Feast of St. Joseph, patron saint of the Universal Church.

The new Pope arrived in the "popemobile" about 45 minutes before the Mass began, and drove slowly through the crowd, greeting the public. In one dramatic gesture Pope Francis ordered the driver to stop the vehicle, and he climbed out to give his blessing to a severely disabled man, chatting for a few moments before resuming his tour.

The formal ceremony began with a procession into St. Peter's Basilica, where the Pope venerated the tomb of St. Peter. Then he was vested with the pallium, the symbol of his authority, placed over his shoulders by Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, the senior cardinal-deacon. Next he received the Fisherman's Ring, placed on his finger by Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Dean of the College of Cardinals. In the final ritual confirming his new authority, he received acts of obedience from six cardinals who had been selected to represent the entire College of Cardinals.

In line with the Pope's desire for a relatively simple ceremony, there was no Offertory procession, and the Gospel was chanted only in Greek—rather than in both Greek and Latin, as at previous inaugural Masses. Pope Francis delivered his homily in Italian.

The Pope began his homily by noting how appropriate it was to begin his papal ministry on the Feast of St. Joseph, the patron of the universal Church. He mentioned, too, that the feast was the name-day of his predecessor Benedict XVI, Joseph Ratzinger. Then he observed that St. Joseph's mission in life was to protect Jesus and Mary, and offered that same mission as a model for everyone.

"Let us protect Christ in our lives, so that we can protect others, so that we



Pope Francis' first blessing after election.

can protect creation," the Pope said. He went on: I would like to ask all those who have positions of responsibility in economic, political and social life, and all men and women of goodwill: let us be "protectors" of creation, protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment.

The new Pope acknowledged that he now has a special responsibility as the 265th Successor to St. Peter. But he quickly added that Jesus told St. Peter to "feed my lambs, feed my sheep." Pope Francis remarked: "Let us never forget that authentic power is service, and that the Pope, too, when exercising power, must enter ever more fully into that service which has its radiant culmination on the Cross."

The Pope concluded his homily by saying that he saw his role as very similar to that of St. Joseph: "To protect Jesus with Mary, to protect the whole of creation, to protect each person, especially the poorest, to protect ourselves." □

(VIS, March 19, 2013)



Glossary

Conclave

Conclave [from the Latin *con* (with) and *clavis* (key)] refers to the private meeting of the College of Cardinals in which a new Pope is elected. During a conclave, the voting cardinals are literally locked into their meeting, and communication with the outside world is closed. By tradition, the cardinals signal the results of each vote by burning treated paper to produce black smoke when they have been unsuccessful in selecting a new Pontiff, white smoke when the new Pope is chosen.

The current regulations for a papal conclave restrict the voting to members of the College of Cardinals who have not yet reached their 80th birthday.

The tradition of closing the doors on a conclave was introduced in 1274 by Pope Gregory X, as a means of guarding against outside political interference and also as an inducement for the cardinals to make their selection promptly. (Pope Gregory X himself was elected after a period in which the Church went three years without a Pope, prompting cries for reform and acceleration of the selection process).

The Pallium

The pallium is a very ancient episcopal symbol made of lamb's wool which indicates the authority of a bishop and his link with the See of Peter. The Petrine Pallium is white and a mix of lamb's wool and sheep wool and is embroidered with five red crosses. It symbolizes both the Good Shepherd who places on His shoulders the lost sheep and the triple answer, "you know I love you," made by Peter to the Risen Jesus Who asked him to feed his lambs and his sheep.

Prelate

A "prelate" is any member of the Church hierarchy. Ordinarily the term is used to refer to a bishop, but it can also apply to monsignors who are "domestic prelates." □

Let Us Be “Protectors” Of Creation, Not Allowing Omens of Destruction And Death to Accompany Our World’s Journey Pope Francis’ Homily at Inauguration Mass

Following is the complete text of the homily that Pope Francis gave during the Mass inaugurating his Petrine ministry. Beginning with the image of St. Joseph, the “protector,” the Pope stressed that the vocation to protect creation and humanity concerns everyone. He urged all to not be afraid of goodness or even of tenderness.

“Dear Brothers and Sisters, I thank the Lord that I can celebrate this Holy Mass for the inauguration of my Petrine ministry on the solemnity of Saint Joseph, the spouse of the Virgin Mary and the patron of the universal Church. It is a significant coincidence, and it is also the name-day of my venerable predecessor: we are close to him with our prayers, full of affection and gratitude.”

“I offer a warm greeting to my brother cardinals and bishops, the priests, deacons, men and women religious, and all the lay faithful. I thank the representatives of the other Churches and Ecclesial Communities, as well as the representatives of the Jewish community and the other religious communities, for their presence. My cordial greetings go to the Heads of State and Government, the members of the official Delegations from many countries throughout the world, and the Diplomatic Corps.”

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“In the Gospel we heard that 'Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary as his wife' (Mt 1:24). These words already point to the mission that God entrusts to Joseph: he is to be the 'custos,' the protector. The protector of whom? Of Mary and Jesus; but this protection is then extended to the Church, as Blessed John Paul II pointed out: 'Just as Saint Joseph took loving care of Mary and gladly dedicated himself to Jesus Christ's upbringing, he likewise watches over and protects Christ's Mystical Body, the Church, of which the Virgin Mary is the exemplar and model' (Redemptoris Custos, 1).”

“How does Joseph exercise his role as protector? Discreetly, humbly, and silently, but with an unfailing presence and utter fidelity, even when he finds it hard to understand. From the time of



Pope Francis greets the faithful on his way to the inaugural Mass on March 19.

his betrothal to Mary until the finding of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem, he is there at every moment with loving care. As the spouse of Mary, he is at her side in good times and bad, on the journey to Bethlehem for the census and in the anxious and joyful hours when she gave birth; amid the drama of the flight into Egypt and during the frantic search for their child in the Temple; and later in the day-to-day life of the home of Nazareth, in the workshop where he taught his trade to Jesus.”

“How does Joseph respond to his calling to be the protector of Mary, Jesus and the Church? By being constantly attentive to God, open to the signs of God's presence and receptive to God's plans and not simply to his own. This is what God asked of David, as we heard in the first reading. God does not want a house built by humans, but faithfulness to his word, to his plan. It is God himself who builds the house, but from living stones sealed by his Spirit. Joseph is a “protector” because he is able to hear God's voice and be guided by his will; and for this reason he is all the more sensitive to the persons entrusted to his safekeeping. He can look at things

realistically, he is in touch with his surroundings, he can make truly wise decisions. In him, dear friends, we learn how to respond to God's call, readily and willingly, but we also see the heart of the Christian vocation, which is Christ! Let us protect Christ in our lives, so that we can protect others, so that we can protect creation!”

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“The vocation of being a 'protector', however, is not just something involving us Christians alone; it also has a prior dimension which is simply human, involving everyone. It means protecting all creation, the beauty of the created world, as the Book of Genesis tells us and as Saint Francis of Assisi showed us. It means respecting each of God's creatures and respecting the environment in which we live. It means protecting people, showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, those in need, who are often the last we think about. It means caring for one another in our families: husbands and wives first protect one another, and then, as parents, they care for their children, and children

themselves, in time, protect their parents. It means building sincere friendships in which we protect one another in trust, respect, and goodness. In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God's gifts!"

"Whenever human beings fail to live up to this responsibility, whenever we fail to care for creation and for our brothers and sisters, the way is opened to destruction and our hearts are hardened. Tragically, in every period of history there are 'Herods' who plot death, wreak havoc, and mar the countenance of men and women."

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"Please, I would like to ask all those who have positions of responsibility in economic, political, and social life, and all men and women of goodwill: let us be 'protectors' of creation, protectors of God's plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment. Let us not allow omens of destruction and death to accompany our world's journey! But to be 'protectors', we also have to keep watch over ourselves! Let us not forget that hatred, envy, and pride defile our lives! Being protectors, then, also means keeping watch over our emotions, over our hearts, because they are the seat of good and evil intentions: intentions that build up or tear down! We must not be afraid of goodness or even tenderness!"

"Here I would add one more thing: caring, protecting, demands goodness; it calls for a certain tenderness. In the Gospels, Saint Joseph appears as a strong and courageous man, a working man, yet in his heart we see great tenderness, which is not the virtue of the weak but rather a sign of strength of spirit and a capacity for concern, for compassion, for genuine openness to others, for love. We must not be afraid of goodness, of tenderness!"

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"Today, together with the Feast of Saint Joseph, we are celebrating the beginning of the ministry of the new Bishop of Rome, the Successor of Peter, which also involves a certain

power. Certainly, Jesus Christ conferred power upon Peter, but what sort of power was it? Jesus' three questions to Peter about love are followed by three commands: feed my lambs, feed my sheep. Let us never forget that authentic power is service, and that the Pope, too, when exercising power, must enter ever more fully into that service which has its radiant culmination on the Cross. He must be inspired by the lowly, concrete, and faithful service which marked Saint Joseph and, like him, he must open his arms to protect all of God's people and embrace with tender affection the whole of humanity, especially the poorest, the weakest, the least important, those whom Matthew lists in the final judgement on love: the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and those in prison (cf. Mt 25:31-46). Only those who serve with love are able to protect!"

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"In the second reading, Saint Paul speaks of Abraham, who, 'hoping against hope, believed' (Rom 4:18). Hoping against hope! Today, too, amid so much darkness, we need to see the light of hope and to be men and women who bring hope to others. To protect creation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope; it is to let a shaft of light break through the heavy clouds; it is to bring the warmth of hope! For believers, for us Christians, like Abraham, like Saint Joseph, the hope that we bring is set against the horizon of God that has opened up before us in Christ. It is a hope built on the rock that is God."

"To protect Jesus with Mary, to protect the whole of creation, to protect each person, especially the poorest, to protect ourselves: this is a service that the Bishop of Rome is called to carry out, yet one to which all of us are called, so that the star of hope will shine brightly. Let us protect with love all that God has given us!"

"I implore the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph, Saints Peter and Paul, and Saint Francis, that the Holy Spirit may accompany my ministry, and I ask all of you to pray for me! Amen." □

(VIS, March 19, 2013)

Reaction to Papal Election

Media reaction to the election and inauguration of Pope Francis has been generally very positive.

Many have hailed him as a pope of firsts: the first non-European for over a thousand years, the first from the New World, the first Jesuit, the first to choose the name of Francis, and the first whose inauguration was attended by the Patriarch of Constantinople since the schism of 1054.

Some criticism emerged over whether he had done enough to defend priests when the military regime was in power in Argentina.

Mary Anastasia O'Grady, veteran reporter and an editor of the Wall Street Journal, looked at this in an article dated March 17. The Argentine government's "pit bulls" began a campaign to smear the new Pontiff's character, she charged.

Intellectually honest observers, she commented, have a different view, including Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1980. Esquivel defended Archbishop Bergoglio against any charge of complicity with the military dictatorship.

Another theme of debate is over what the new Pope's simplicity and desire for a Church to help the poor might entail. We have a leader "with mud on his boots," wrote the Australian newspaper's Foreign editor, Greg Sheridan, in a March 16 article.

It will be fascinating, he said, to see how Pope Francis develops his social teaching, an opinion no doubt shared by many.

(Zenit.org, March 20, 2013)

This New Francis

by Very Rev. Robert Barron

I had an excellent vantage point for the presentation of Pope Francis to the world, for I was doing commentary for NBC News from a perch above St. Peter's Square. I will confess that my initial impression was negative, not because he was a relative surprise or because he wasn't from the United States, but because, for more than a minute, he stood ramrod straight, hands at his side, and not smiling. I remember saying to his image on the TV monitor: "Do something!" Then - praise God - the new Pope spoke, and he immediately won me over. Asking the people to bless him, bowing low to receive that blessing, promising to work for the evangelization of the city of Rome, pledging to beg the Mother of God to watch over his papacy, leading the people in the Hail Mary and Our Father, and yes, even managing to smile a little - the new Pope didn't make a false move.

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But what most impressed me was his first truly significant gesture, the choice of his papal name. Francis of Assisi (and it was confirmed that the Pope was honoring the founder of the Franciscans and not his fellow Jesuit, Francis Xavier) was a friend of the poor. So close was his identification with "Lady Poverty" that he was referred to in his own time as *il poverello* (the little poor man). By all accounts, Cardinal Bergoglio, now Pope Francis, has a similar feel for the spiritual value of poverty, taking the subway to work rather than a limousine, eschewing the trappings of power, living in a simple apartment rather than the episcopal palace, happily flying coach class to Rome, and passionately advocating for social justice on behalf of the underprivileged.

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But there is another dimension to this identification with the poor man of Assisi. When St. Francis was just beginning his spiritual pilgrimage, he had an extraordinary encounter with

Christ. While praying in the little church of San Damiano, the young man heard a voice coming from the crucifix: "Francis, rebuild my church." At first, he thought that the Lord was indicating that some work needed to be done on a local church structure that had fallen into disrepair. But what became clear soon enough, both to Francis and others, was that this command of the Lord had a far wider valence. Precisely through his recovery of the radical heart of the Gospel, Francis would help to revitalize a church that had been compromised by worldliness, ambition, and clerical corruption. This interpretation of the Lord's words was most dramatically confirmed by a dream that Pope Innocent III had on the eve of meeting *il poverello*. The Pope dreamt that a small man, dressed in a brown habit, was holding up the Church, which was about to collapse. When he saw Francis, he recognized him as the man from his dream and resolved, on the spot, to sanction the Franciscan order.

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For the past couple of decades, the Catholic Church has been living through not so much a dream as a nightmare. The first wave of the clerical sex abuse scandal broke in the early 1990s, shocking us with story after story of priests violating their vow of celibacy in the most egregious ways, and of bishops who, far too often, turned a blind eye to the outrages or covered them up. The second and even more devastating wave hit in the early 2000s, beginning in Boston and then spreading, it seemed, all across the country. There were thousands of victims, hundreds of guilty priests and negligent bishops, and over \$1 billion of Church money paid out in settlements. And just when the American crisis began to calm, the same awful pattern revealed itself in Europe, most terribly in intensely Catholic Ireland. And on top of all of this, the Vatican itself seems under a cloud of scandal. Charges of corruption, financial mismanagement, careerism, and serious personal misbehavior are coming at the Roman Curia from all sides.

It seems to me impossible to deny that Jorge Mario Bergoglio was thinking of *il poverello's* "church rebuilding" project when he took the name of the saint of Assisi. And the program of this new Francis remains fundamentally the same as that of his spiritual forebear, namely to re-energize the Church through a recovery of the radical Gospel. If you want to be my follower, said the Lord, then sell everything and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. That means that the true disciple has to become detached from his career, his own projects and plans, his will, his pleasure, his need to be first — in order to become a vehicle of God's will, God's purpose, God's projects, God's pleasure.

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I believe that this new Pope wants to put the winsome face of Francis of Assisi on the Church, and he wants to unleash the same reforming energy that *il poverello* unleashed eight centuries ago. □

About the Author

Father Robert Barron is the founder of the global ministry, Word on Fire, and the Rector/President of Mundelein Seminary. He is the creator of the award winning documentary series, "Catholicism." Word on Fire will be releasing "The New Evangelization" documentary this year. Father Barron also works with NBC News as an On Air Contributor/Analyst. Learn more at www.WordonFire.org.



US Bishops' Statement on Papal Inauguration

"The Church in our country has felt a renewed sense of unity, hope and love of Jesus Christ and His Church"

Here is the statement from Cardinal Timothy Dolan, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), on the occasion of the official inauguration of Francis' pontificate.

Most Holy Father,

On the joyful occasion of the Mass to inaugurate your ministry as Bishop of Rome, I wish to convey to you the deep affection, prayerful support and sincere pledge of fidelity of the Bishops of the United States of America and the more than 70 million Catholic faithful throughout the 195 dioceses and eparchies across our nation.

Since your election as Roman Pontiff on March 13, the Church in our country has felt a renewed sense of unity, hope and love of Jesus Christ and His Church. Your messages of mercy and forgiveness spur us on to continue the faithful work of the new evangelization in our country and our world. The inauguration of your Petrine ministry, occurring as it does on the Feast of St. Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church, inspires us with the profound awareness that we stand as one before God and before the world united with you as our beloved Shepherd.

The election to the See of Peter of a bishop from the Americas fills us with special happiness as we sense a special bond and closeness with you. We pray for you, Holy Father, for strength, wisdom and much joy as you begin your ministry to the Church as the Vicar of Christ and the Successor of Saint Peter. □

(USCCB Office of Communications, March 20, 2013)

Bishop Gregory Mansour's Statement on the Papal Election

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

What a surprise! What a joy! The Holy Spirit knows how to help and guide us and never leave us orphans. The past few weeks the Church has shined brightly, even with age-old ceremonies. She knows how to live her calling with love and serenity, and how to carefully and respectfully choose a leader in the footsteps of Saint Peter.

The popes that I remember, John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul I, John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and now Francis, are all so very different in personality, in leadership style and in thinking, yet they are all the same in that they are all faithful

and obedient to Christ and His Church. What an inspiration to all of us. We can truly be ourselves, yet at the same time, be faithful.

It was a particular joy for me to see Pope Francis with his hands at his side looking out at the 150,000 plus people in Saint Peter's Square. All I could imagine was that here was a man that realized he does not have to impress anyone, all he needs to do is to be faithful to his calling and obedient to the Holy Spirit. This in itself is enough to inspire all of us. Let us pray for Pope Francis, the Universal Church, and the world that we, too, be truly ourselves, and at the same time faithful and obedient to our heavenly call.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
+Bishop Gregory J. Mansour
Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

Pope's Motto

Continued from page 4

According to Spanish iconographic tradition, St. Joseph is depicted holding a branch of spikenard in his hand.

By placing these two symbols on his coat of arms, Pope Francis wished to express his particular devotion to the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph.

The Holy Father's motto, "*Miserando Atque Eligendo*," (because he saw him through the eyes of mercy and chose him) is taken from a homily by Saint Bede the Venerable regarding the calling of St. Matthew by Jesus.

Saint Bede's homily, which is read on the feast of St. Matthew, is a homage to the divine mercy of Christ, and is of significance to the Holy Father in his spiritual itinerary. According to a communique explaining the Papal coat of arms, at the age of seventeen, the young Jorge Bergoglio experienced in a particular way the loving presence of God in his life.

"Following confession, his heart was touched by the descent of the mercy of God, who with tender love called him to the religious life, following the example of Saint Ignatius of Loyola," the communique stated.

"Upon being chosen as bishop, Bishop Bergoglio, in remembrance of that event that began his total consecration to God in the Church, decides to choose as motto and program of his life, the phrase by Saint Bede *miserando atque eligendo* which he has chosen to reproduce on his own pontifical coat of arms." □

Zenit.org, March 18, 2013

Pope Francis First Tweet

Pope Francis sent his first tweet on Sunday, March 17, 2013, after Sunday's midday Angelus and address.

"Dear Friends, I offer my heartfelt thanks and ask you to continue to pray for me," it read.

The twitter account @pontifex, in nine languages, has been reactivated and already has 3.4 million followers. □

Zenit.org, March 18, 2013)

From Bishop Shaheen's Desk

A Pastor Named Francis

by Randa Hakim

Dear Friends:

As many of you know, the code of canon law of both the Eastern Church and the Latin Church require a Bishop to submit his resignation on the day following his 75th birthday. The letter is written to the Holy Father and a copy is sent to our Maronite Patriarch. The letter of resignation was written some time ago, as I reached my 75th birthday last June, 2012.



The annual Synod of the Maronite Church will be held in June, 2013, and a new Bishop will be elected. It is the duty of the Synod to elect three names which will be sent by the Patriarch to the Holy See, and one of the three will be named Bishop by the Holy Father. I announce this now because in many places it has been announced that I retired, and it has caused some confusion.

As the time for the new Bishop draws near, I would like to thank so many of you for the prayers, the love and the respect you have always shown. I thank, above all, my brother priests, deacons and subdeacons who worked for the upbuilding of our Diocese, and only the Good Lord will ever know how much they sacrificed in their daily duties. Our Laity are second to none. They have always received me with respect and joy on the occasions of my pastoral visits to them. It was always refreshing for me to witness their enthusiasm and their devotion to their church and its traditions. Seeing our youth at the various parishes and especially at our annual workshops assures me that our future is in very good hands. They have a vision for the future and I know that our Diocese will grow more than anyone could ever imagine.

We have many religious serving in our Diocese. We have the devoted Antonine Sisters, the Congregation of the Maronite Lebanese Missionaries and the Maronite Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our National Apostolate of Maronites and the Order of St. Sharbel are an inspiration and a source of great pride for the Diocese. I cannot forget the Oblates of Jesus, Mary and Joseph who are under the direction of Father Jonathan Decker and the new Monastic Order of which he is the Prior. They add a new dimension for our growth.

I have much more to write but we will leave it for another time. I ask your prayers and continued love and friendship.

+Bishop Robert Shaheen
Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon. □



We are blessed by having a new bishop of Rome, a new Pope. Looking back at his life, he is a humble pastor, cooking and cleaning, using public transportation. And he chose the name "Francis."

Is it after St. Francis of Assisi, who rejected all the wellness of his parents to serve the poor, or after St. Francis Xavier, who listened to St. Ignatius repeating "What profits a man, if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?" Both of them were humble and consecrated their lives to serve the poor and the sick, trying to bring the world to Jesus Christ. "To walk, to build, to witness" these were the first words of the new Pope.

Walk our path in the light and presence of Our Lord.

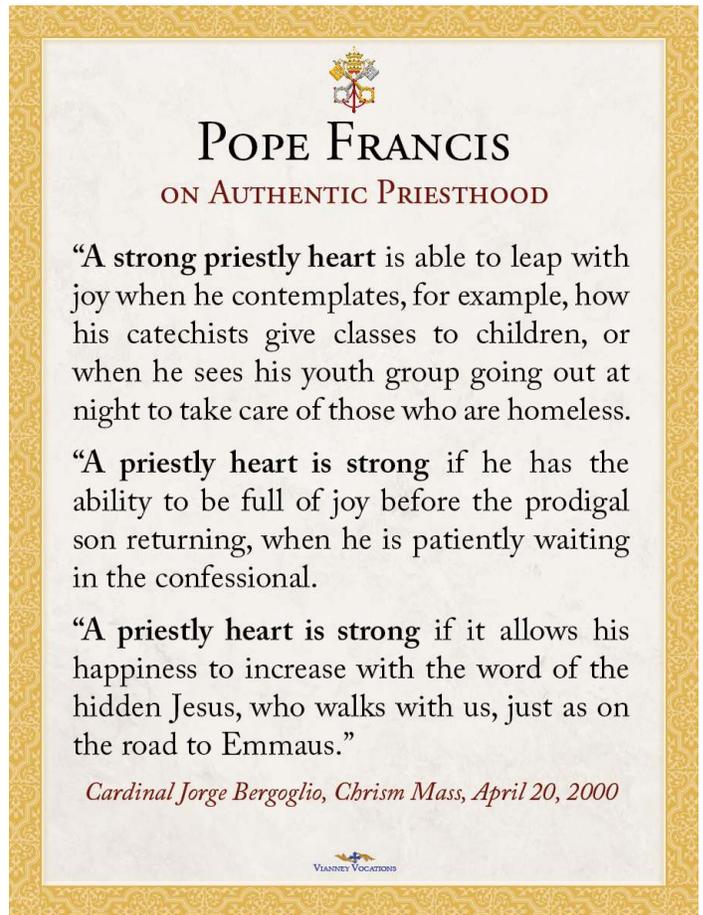
Build with living stones, anointed by the Holy Spirit.

Witness Jesus Christ.

If we walk, we build or we profess without the Cross, we are worldly people and not disciples of the Lord.

Listen to these words and remember the Gospel of Matthew (23:1-12) when Jesus said, "They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on people's shoulders. ... All their works are performed to be seen....They love places of honor at banquets.... and the salutation 'Rabbi....'"

Is it the time for our Church to shift from a Church of prestige to a Church of service and prayers? □




POPE FRANCIS
ON AUTHENTIC PRIESTHOOD

“A strong priestly heart is able to leap with joy when he contemplates, for example, how his catechists give classes to children, or when he sees his youth group going out at night to take care of those who are homeless.

“A priestly heart is strong if he has the ability to be full of joy before the prodigal son returning, when he is patiently waiting in the confessional.

“A priestly heart is strong if it allows his happiness to increase with the word of the hidden Jesus, who walks with us, just as on the road to Emmaus.”

Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, Chrism Mass, April 20, 2000

Vocations



Eparchial Condolences

Margaret Lourdes Cermak, the mother of Father Michael Gilmary Cermak of the Maronite Monks of Adoration in Petersham, Mass., passed away on February 25, 2013. Mrs. Cermak was predeceased by her husband, Gene, of sixty years. In addition to Father Cermak, she is survived by her son, Patrick, and his family of Chicago, Illinois, and her daughter, Mollie Cermak Garcia, and her family of Jacksonville, Florida. Condolences may be sent to Reverend Michael Gilmary Cermak, Most Holy Trinity Monastery, 67 Dugway Road, Petersham, MA 01366.

Bishop Gregory along with the clergy and faithful of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn extend their heartfelt sympathy and the promise of our prayers to Father Cermak and his family.

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

Dartmouth, Massachusetts Retreats at the Convent



Visitors at a recent *Rasmho* and Supper at Mother of the Light Convent.

by Mother Marla Marie Lucas

The Maronite Servants of Christ the Light open their convent to our Maronite parishes for days of prayer and spirituality.

On Sunday afternoon, March 10, 2013, we hosted a Lenten reflection on the Prodigal Son with young adults from the Boston and Brockton Maronite parishes. Mother Marla Marie shared on the importance of the homecoming of the Prodigal Son and his journey of conversion back to the Father. Mother Marie challenged the group to examine their own lives to see where they have left home and how they can return back to the loving mercy of God's embrace. The young men and women joined the Sisters for their monthly *Rasmho* and supper evening. On March 16, the Daughters of the

Cedars from the Boston parish came for a day of retreat.

Upcoming Events and Retreats at Mother of the Light Convent

April 14, May 19, and June 9, 2013

Maronite evening prayer (*Ramsho*) and Supper

April 26, 2013

MYO movie night

May 5, 2013

Brockton, Mass., MYO/MYA Retreat

May 31 - June 1, 2013

Women's overnight retreat, ages 18-30

July 15 - 19, 2013

Year of Faith Children's Bible Camp

Please contact the Sisters to plan a spiritual event at sister@maroniteservants.org or phone (508) 996-1753. □

Utica, New York Former Pastor Pays a Visit



by Chorbishop John D. Faris

Father John Andary, a senior priest of the Eparchy of Saint Maron who served at Saint Louis Gonzaga Church in Utica, New York, from 1964 to 1986, made his annual visit to the Utica area. On Sunday, March 10, 2013, Father Andary celebrated the Divine Liturgy for the community. During hospitality hour in the Church Hall, the young people were especially happy to see the priest they had heard so much about, and the more senior members of the parish expressed gratitude for his many years of dedicated service to their parish family. □



Portland, Oregon Diaconate Ordination



From left: Fr. Prior Jonathan J. Decker, MMJMJ, Mona Kaldawi, Deacon Wadih Kaldawi, Bishop Robert J. Shaheen, Zaki Kaldawi, Monk Anthony Joseph Alles, MMJMJ, and Brother John Michael Morgan.

by Nadia Redmond

On Saturday, March 2, 2013, at St. Raymond Maronite Cathedral in St. Louis, Mo., His Excellency Bishop Robert J. Shaheen, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, elevated Wadih Z. Kaldawi to the Order of Deacon. Deacon Wadih's wife, Mona, and son, Zaki, as well as Msgr. Moussa Joseph, Rector of St. Raymond; Deacon Louis Peters, Director of Faith Formation; Deacon Wadih's Pastor of St. Sharbel Maronite Church in Portland, Ore., Fr. Prior Jonathan Decker, M.M.J.M.J.; Subdeacon Monk Anthony Joseph Alles, M.M.J.M.J.; Brother John Michael Morgan, and Sr. Mariam Sharbel Vianney were in attendance.

On Sunday, March 10, Deacon Wadih celebrated his first Divine Liturgy as a Deacon with his parish family of St. Sharbel in Portland. Near the end of the Liturgy, Deacon Wadih shared his heartfelt gratitude, acknowledging his wife and children, his pastor, and fellow subdeacons and deacons who helped him in his formation. Immediately after the Holy Mysteries, friends and parishioners congratulated their newly ordained deacon with a celebration luncheon put together by Deacon Wadih's family in the parish hall. The Parish of St. Sharbel offers its thanks to Bishop Robert Shaheen for making this day possible for Deacon Wadih Kaldawi.

San Antonio, Texas St. Maron's Feast Day

On Saturday and Sunday, February 8 - 9, 2013, the parish community of St. George Maronite Church, San Antonio, Texas, celebrated the Feast of St. Maron. The weekend began with a *Hafli* attended by over 500 people who enjoyed a Lebanese meal. The evening was opened by the famous Lebanese singer Danny Achkar and band, followed by the Lebanese folk dancers of St. George Church.

On Sunday Fr. Ghassan Mattar, M.L.M., celebrated the



Divine Liturgy in honor of St. Maron and blessed all the Parish's committees. After the Liturgy, the parishioners proceeded to the banquet hall for a luncheon and a year in review slide show. Fr. Ghassan awarded the Silver Massabki Medal to Albert and Nancy Karam; the Faith of the Mountain Award to Layla Fernandez; the Young Adult Award to Alexis Haase; the Youth Award to Crystel Harb; the Altar Boys Award to Thomas Andry; and the St. George Maronite Church Award to Fernando and Elmosa Herrera, Jose and Sharon Fernandez, George and Michelle Chebib, Tom and Lorraine Taylor, Ronald and Sheila Mery, Joseph and Eleanor Khattar. The Bishop's Award was given to Julie Mery. □

Tulsa, Oklahoma Lenten Retreats



Saint Theresse Maronite Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma, recently had two Lenten Retreats. On March 9, 2013, the St. Theresse Women's Club was hosted by the Religious Sisters of Mercy at their convent. Mother Mary Patricia's, RSM, spoke about Father Robert Barron's Seven Stages of Mortal Sin to twenty-four ladies of the Women's Club.

On March 16, 2013, at the Parish Hall, Fr. Denis Casey spoke on the topics of abortion and gay marriage with nine members of the the Saint Theresse Men's Club. □

THE ORDER OF SAINT SHARBEL



Perpetual Members

- ★ Mr. Joseph Hanna
- ★ Dr. Robert A. DiSibio
- ★ Mrs. Marie A. DiSibio

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

- ★ Mrs. Ann Koury
- ★ Mrs. Judith Hobaica

St. Louis Gonzaga Church, Utica, N.Y.

Annual Members

- ★ Waddie N. Kalil
- ★ Mr. Albert S. Mazloom
- ★ Mrs. Gloria A. Shaheen
- ★ Dr. Nancy Shaheen
- ★ Dr. Hamid Obeid
- ★ Dr. Anthony J. Jadhon
- ★ Dr. Naji El Khoury

St. Louis Gonzaga Church, Utica, 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 write to:

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

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

Brooklyn, New York *Jesus Run*

by *Salma Vahdat*

The Respect Life Lenten Mission undertaken by the Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral's young adults (MYA) and other parishioners was a grand and humbling event. On Saturday, March 9, 2013, the group gathered at the Cathedral to prepare an act of service toward the homeless on the streets of New York City. This charitable gesture



is not only about distributing food, clothing, blankets and personal sundries to the homeless poor. It is mainly about listening to the homeless who are ignored and unnoticed by millions of people who pass by them every day.

After preparing the food, drink and clothing the group spent an hour in the Cathedral Chapel in meditation and prayer. Fortified with purpose they went into Manhattan to the Penn Station area and met their guide, a Franciscan Friar of the Renewal. Their gifts to the homeless were graciously accepted ...it was obvious they were in dire need. However, there was one exception. Msgr. James Root, Rector, who traveled with the group, had this tale to tell. He approached a lady and offered her some food. She politely refused saying she wasn't hungry. He offered her a blanket which she also refused, saying she had one. It was then she offered her blanket to Msgr. Root to give to someone else who might need it. He was so impressed with her kindness; it is an example of how Jesus resides in all of us regardless of our station in life.

The other members of the group asked the people they approached if they had any words of wisdom to impart. The answers they received strengthened their faith in the goodness and humanity of man. They are ready and willing to return again, following Our Lord's command, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me."

MYO Retreat

Friday, March 15, 2013, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral opened its doors and hearts to one hundred and fifty MYO members from four surrounding states: Mass., Penn., Conn., and N.Y. The Retreat was conducted by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal. Following the Cathedral's Friday evening Service of the Cross and a pizza dinner, a healing service was conducted and reconciliation was offered to the group. The group bedded down in the Social Hall.

Saturday began with a Divine Liturgy after which the group was separated by gender for the topics to be discussed. A Catholic authorized organization, Generation Life, provided lecturers who concentrated on the theme "Chastity." They help to provide a better understanding of the pro-life issue and the sanctity of marriage in these discussions. Genders are separated so that the youth can ask questions freely without embarrassment. By all accounts, all were quite pleased with the timely topics and benefitted from the discussions.

Finally after many hugs and promises of "keeping in touch," the retreatants left and made their way back to their homes, reflecting on the issues which face them as they approach adulthood. It is our hope that they are reinforced to meet the everyday struggles they face and keep their faith in what is moral, good and right. □

Glen Allen, Virginia Youth Regional Retreat



"Have you seen Jesus during your talks with him?" This was the question asked of Father Gary during the retreat. His answer, without hesitation, is a resounding "Yes."

The fourth Regional Youth Retreat took place March 8-10, 2013, at St. Anthony Maronite Church in Glen Allen [Richmond], Va. The theme was "Becoming Christ-like through your Voice of Truth." Youths from St. Sharbel Mission, Raleigh, N.C.; St. Elias Maronite Church, Roanoke, Va.; and Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Washington, D.C., joined St. Anthony's youth for the retreat. These same churches come each year, and the youth are filled with excitement when they get the chance to see their long-distance friends again. Father Gary George, Director of Youth Ministry in both Maronite eparchies in the U.S., was the Retreat Master.

Friday night consisted of ice breaker games and a short talk about the theme for the weekend. Throughout those three days, Fr. Gary led the participants through a series of stories, reflection, and activities to discover their inner voices of truth. A reconciliation service was held on Saturday evening. A priest from the Mary, Mother of the Church Abbey in Richmond joined us and offered confession along with Fr. Gary George and Monsignor George Sebaali, Pastor.

Amanuel Rizk of Our Lady of Lebanon Parish in Washington, D.C., said "Truly, the Light of Jesus is shining through Father Gary's eyes and his words reached deep into our hearts and rekindled our spirits. Father Gary's personal and spiritual experiences shared with us throughout the weekend brought tears and joy to us all, and kept us wanting more. Our Lord has blessed Father Gary with the gift of Charity and he is generous to share all he has received from the Lord with us, God's children. I think the retreat was beautiful and educational. I can tell you right now that it was very beneficial to me. We were taught in a way that was educational but entertaining at the same time. I will be looking forward to going again next year."

Joseph Sandroussi of Our Lady of Lebanon Parish expressed his feelings in this way "I met friends that I consider family now. Father Gary, through his words and experiences, brought me closer to God. I hope that we can do this more often with Father Gary."

And Maria Ayoub met Jesus. "This weekend, I met Jesus. I have never wanted to grow closer to God more than I do now, and nothing in the world could feel more amazing."

Rita Younes agreed. "This weekend was one of the most beneficial weekends of my life. Through Father Gary's words, he helped bring us closer to God. He showed us the importance of prayer and building our relationship with Christ. This weekend was filled with prayer and reflection, that allowed us to truly strengthen our bond with God and each other. Father Gary has a way of opening our hearts to accept others and most of all God. I hope everyone has a chance to meet a person like Father Gary, who does everything out of charity and the good of his heart."

And for Heba Abou Chabke, "This retreat was one of the most inspirational retreats I have ever been to and it helped wake me up spiritually and mentally about life and how I should be living it. It was truly a brilliant experience that I would redo any day."

On Sunday, following the Divine Liturgy a breakfast was served in the social hall before the youth departed for home. □

Warren, Michigan Winter Warm



by Christine Akroush

The junior high and high school classes of the Maronite Christian Formation (MCF) program and the Maronite Youth Organization (MYO) at St. Sharbel Maronite Church, Warren, Mich., helped sponsor the Haven of Hope Winter Warm-Up for the second year in a row. The mission of this organization is to help provide winter gear for individuals and families most in need during this chilly weather. Catechist Keith J. Khalil led this mission by joining with the Haven of Hope. "I realized how much this organization impacts the community. They provide for so many families, from food to clothing, and they do it in a very organized way," said Danielle Malouf about her experience. For a few weeks, the teens worked diligently to obtain donations for this worthy cause.

On the first day, a group of MCF and MYO members

went down to Detroit despite braving a brutal Michigan snowstorm in the process. Once they reached their destination, they helped sort and distribute food to the needy families. "We don't realize how we take things for granted when we go to the grocery store and all the options we have but these families come in and get only one box of food and all their items are already picked out," Joseph Akroush commented of his experience. After the meal pickup was complete, the group helped set up all of the donated items, which mainly consisted of winter accessories for all ages.

The next day, another group went down to help in distributing the items. This amazing experience truly touched Thea Barrack, who said, "After reading Matthew chapter 25, the verse (Amen I say to you, what you do for the least of my brothers you do for me) stood out to me, and as we served them, I kind of saw Jesus in them, and as if we were serving Him. I did it last year, did it this year, and I would definitely do this again next year." □

San Francisco, California *Youth Retreat*



by Jackie Kalil
Youth Ministry Coordinator

The first annual regional Youth Retreat of the San Francisco Bay Area, Calif., was held March 1- 3, 2013, at the YMCA Camp Campbell facility of the Silicon Valley. The camp is located among the redwood trees, approximately one hour away from Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Millbrae, Calif. Our Lady of Lebanon Church Youth Ministry office organized the 2013 regional Youth Retreat and it was directed by Fr. Gary George and Fr. John Nahal, the Pastor of Our Lady of Lebanon in Millbrae.

All Maronite parishes from the Eparchial Western Region were invited and given the opportunity to participate in the retreat.

Twelve youth from St. Ephrem Maronite Church, San Diego, Calif., along with their advisors and Fr. Toufic Nasr, Pastor, joined the youth from The Bay Area for the retreat.

Everyone who attended had a positive attitude and appreciated how well the retreat was structured and organized in addition to the depth of the spiritual topics covered and the variety of team building activities offered. It was apparent that all who were present were united in the Spirit and enjoyed Fr. Gary and what he had to offer to strengthen their faith. The retreat was concluded with a Divine Liturgy served by the youth from both parishes. □

Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

April 6 -7, 2013

Pastoral Visit to St. Jude Maronite Church and Ordination of Jack Manhire to the Diaconate, Orlando, Fla.

April 9 - 11, 2013

Meeting with Eastern Bishops, St. Louis, Mo.

April 13, 2013

Dedication of the New Parish Center, Philadelphia, Penn.

April 14, 2013

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

April 15 - 23, 2013

Meeting in Tucuman, Argentina, with Patriarch Rai and the Maronite Bishops outside the Middle East

April 24, 2013

Presbyteral Council Meeting, Brooklyn, N.Y.

April 25, 2013

Eparchial Finance Council Meeting, Brooklyn, N.Y.

April 26 - 28, 2013

Pastoral Visit to St. Louis Gonzaga Church, Utica, N.Y.

May 5, 2013

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

May 12, 2013

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

May 16, 2013

Visit with Syro-Malankar Major Archbishop in Rockville Center, N.Y.

May 17- 18, 2013

Dedication of St. Ann Church and Pentecost Sunday, Troy, N.Y. □

the Deadline is... **Deadline for next month's issue** of *The Maronite Voice* is April 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: *The Maronite Voice*,
4611 Sadler Road,
Glen Allen, Virginia 23060
Phone: (804) 270-7234; Fax: (804) 273-9914
Email: Gmsebaali@aol.com

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

Charlotte, North Carolina *Pastoral Visit*



Bishop Gregory Mansour and Bishop William Curlin bless the people as they exit the Church.

by *Natasha Beathe*

On March 8, 2013, Bishop Gregory Mansour of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn made his first pastoral visit to Charlotte, North Carolina, to meet with the Maronite Community of Charlotte, which has grown from a handful of worshipers to a congregation of a couple hundred in just three years.

A special Liturgy and dinner reception were held at St. Matthew Catholic Church, where the Maronite community has been holding Liturgy once a month since March 2010 thanks to the constant support of Msgr. John McSweeney, Pastor.

Bishop Mansour was greeted at the airport by an anxious delegation of council members accompanied by Fr. Kamil Al-Chouefati, Pastor of St. Sharbel Mission in Raleigh, who drives for three hours to celebrate Liturgy in Charlotte. The Bishop's itinerary began with an interview with Patricia Guilfoyle, Editor of the Catholic News Herald, the official newspaper of the Diocese of Charlotte.

Bishop Emeritus William Curlin, the retired Bishop of Charlotte, Msgr. McSweeney, Fr. Al-Chouefati and Fr. Ambrose Akinwande from St. Matthew Church concelebrated the Divine Liturgy with Bishop Mansour. In his homily Bishop Mansour said, "Pope John Paul II used to say that the Church was breathing with two lungs, East and West." He preached about the prodigal son and reminded everyone present that God forgives us no matter what because the depth of His love is unfathomable.

Following the Liturgy, Bishop Mansour was treated to a Middle Eastern Lenten dinner prepared by the women of the community. A nostalgic atmosphere was created by the use of table settings inspired by the Lebanese flag, a slide show highlighting Lebanon's rich Christian heritage, and a traditional improvised poem by community member Elias Bou Ghazali. Simply called Prayer, the Arabic poem got nods of approval from everyone who understood Arabic and afterwards Bishop Mansour thoughtfully explained the poem's meaning to those who don't speak Arabic.

Bishop Mansour spent the rest of the evening talking to the children, youths and every parishioner who wanted to meet him. He showed genuine interest in everyone's lives, and people were touched by how personable he was. "I enjoy meeting people more than anything else," said Bishop Mansour. He promised to visit Charlotte again next year and reassured the community that while their numbers are still modest, their commitment to grow was evident. "You are moving forward," he said. □

Olean, New York *Silver Massabki Award*



by *Mikki Cole*

Sunday, March 17, 2013, marked a special day for a member of St. Joseph Maronite Church in Olean, N.Y. Amiel Ash, who is referred to jokingly in some circles as "Monsignor Amiel" and respectfully in other circles as "St. Amiel" for his down-to-earth personal holiness and selfless dedication to the Church, was awarded the National Apostolate of Maronites Silver Massabki Medal.

In the Parish, he is just "Amiel," or "Mr. Ash" (depending on your age) and that is the way he likes it best. Amiel was surrounded by family and friends from near and far to be with him as he received this award by Fr. Anthony J. Salim, Pastor of St. Joseph.

As sacristan, Amiel goes about his work in the parish in a very quiet and humble way. He has served at the altar for many years; and at 90 this coming September, he is probably one of the oldest altar boys in the Maronite Church! In addition, he has often accompanied our various pastors as they make their rounds to those in hospitals and nursing homes and to the home-bound. As he said at the brunch attended by over 130 people held in his honor on this day, "I can't imagine being honored for something I love to do."

St. Joseph Parish is very proud and happy that Amiel has been given this well-deserved award. □

Tampa Prepares for the 50th Annual Maronite Convention



With the convention a short three months away, the committees are hard at work preparing for their guests. This year's convention starts on July 3, 2013, and everyone has been working on a full schedule of informative, inspiring workshops, colorful excursions and fun events for the evenings' entertainment.

Workshops

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

Fundraising and Stewardship

Thursday July 4, at 10 a.m. *Mr. John F. Kurey, Esq., MBA*

Fundraising is both an art and a science, and how often we have an event with this particular goal, yet we just don't really know where to start or how to accomplish this goal. This year we are privileged to have Mr. John Kurey, Stewardship Director for both eparchies, share his expertise and tips for helping your parish or organization raise money (with a special focus on creating successful fundraising events). This is also a perfect opportunity for pastors and parish leaders to learn also about the various grants that are given by various charitable institutions and how to apply for them.

Effective Church Leadership by the Laity

Thursday, July 4, at 3 p.m.

Panelists: Msgr. George Sebaali, Rev. Abdallah Zaidan, Mrs. Randa Hakim, and Mrs. Marlene Saad

A discussion on the laity's role in the Maronite church will be led by a panel of priests and community leaders. Many times we are elected or appointed to positions of leadership within our parish without knowing what are our specific responsibilities and legal liabilities. Find out what church guidelines say and how you can be most effective in your role of leadership within the church. As members of NAM, parish councils, and organizations we serve our parishes in many

roles. Learn more how to organize and maximize the benefits to our community by your leadership.

Seminar on Catechism and Religious Education

Thursday, July 5 at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. *Rev. George El-Khalli, Ph.D.*

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

- Foundational principles of religious education;
- A review of the basic tenets of the Catholic Faith;
- A review and overview of basic concepts of Christian education;
- A review of the documents of the recent Maronite Patriarchal Synod on Christian education;
- An overview of the recently revised Maronite religious education series *Faith of the Mountain*; and using the Liturgy and liturgical calendar in catechesis.

50th Anniversary of NAM – National Apostolate of Maronites, Friday, July 5 at 10 a.m.

Mr. Edward Shiner

Mr. Ed Shiner, former Executive Director of the National Apostolate of Maronites for approximately 23 years, will moderate this interactive discussion where all attendees (clergy and laity) will serve as the "panel" and will be invited to respond to several key points related to NAM's past, present and future. This special presentation will serve as a complement to the special journal being published for NAM's 50th Anniversary. Explore this special journal beforehand and come prepared to offer your recollections of the past, your observations on the present and your hopes and suggestions for the future.

New Translation of the Maronite Liturgy and Liturgical Music, Friday, July 5 at 3 p.m.

Chorbishop Michael Thomas and Rev. Geoffrey Abdallah

Chorbishop Thomas will present an in-depth explanation of the new translation of the Maronite liturgy, showcasing the parts where the Syriac is used and also enabling the worshiper to pray and understand in the language in which he/she is comfortable, Arabic or English. The liturgical music comprises the songs that fill our hearts during the Divine Liturgy and the poignancy of their words. Both are incredible testaments to the richness of our culture. Come fill your senses with the beauty that is the Maronite Church. You will also be able to experience the first-ever compilation of the Inter-Eparchial Music Commission that Rev. Abdallah has led for the past few years. Let the poetry that is our music fill your senses and soothe your soul.

"Maronites ... Destination Freedom" film screening Saturday, July 6 at 10 a.m.

University of the Holy Spirit - Kaslik (USEK), Lebanon

A short documentary drawing the route the Maronites took from persecutions towards freedom, answers the questions: Where do they come from? How did they live? Their monasteries, their monks, their churches, their way of life; why they settled in Lebanon and migration from Lebanon to

the four corners of the world. Let us reflect back on our history and faith.

The Holy Spirit University of Kaslik has been a leader in preserving the Maronite tradition and shaping the Maronite Identity. This film will show a brief look at the history of Maronites in Lebanon and the saints. The panel will open a discussion on the film and what USEK is doing to preserve Maronite manuscripts, photos, and archives.

The Eastern Church and the challenges of the Arab Spring Saturday, July 6 at 3 p.m.

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, Dr. Sami Nader, Ph.D. and Moderator Chorbishop Seely Beggiani

A panel will discuss how the Middle Eastern Christians are living these turbulent times, and how should they cope with these crucial challenges.

"A wave of revolts, often referred to as the Arab Spring is sweeping several countries of the Middle East. The Arab society is going through a deep transformation that stirs hopes but poses real threats. Political Islam is on the rise and democracy is still far from being a reality. While some consider that this troubled period is a mandatory route for progress, others fear a return to authoritarian regimes under religious cover." □

Raleigh, North Carolina Picnic for Maronite Communities

by Natasha Beathe

Maronite communities from Charlotte, Raleigh and Greensboro - the three largest cities in North Carolina - got together on March 16, 2013, for a picnic organized by the Maronite Young Adults (MYA), a group of devoted young people from the Saint Sharbel Mission in Raleigh.

The annual picnic was installed in 2011 to foster community growth and preserve the Maronite cultural heritage for future generations. The all-day event began at noon with an outdoor Liturgy for the Feast of St. Joseph, celebrated by Fr. Kamil Al-Chouefati, Administrator of Saint Sharbel Mission, and assisted by Subdeacon Claude Shiver. Immediately following the Liturgy, over one hundred adults and children enjoyed picnic lunches they brought with them, although many lined up to buy freshly baked food. The adults socialized, played backgammon, smoked *argileh*, danced the *dabke* and participated in many types of outdoor sports while the children were treated to games organized by the MYA, who also provided the musical entertainment. The children also had fun on the park's play structures and spent the day running about, climbing and swinging in the unseasonable sunshine. The fun and games was interrupted only to cut a large cake in honor of St. Joseph.

"This is the third picnic that I've attended and it has been instrumental in creating a bond between the different communities," said Judge Robert Moossa, council chairman of the Maronite Mission of Charlotte. "It has also proved to be a

great forum for information, because it gives us an opportunity to share our experiences and learn from each other about how to effectively build a church from the ground up," added Moossa, in reference to the fact that the communities in Charlotte, Raleigh and Greensboro are in varying stages of establishing a Maronite church.

The picnic was held at Triad Park in Greensboro, a central location about ninety minutes away from both Charlotte and Raleigh. □



Portland, Oregon New Novice

On March 2, 2013, His Excellency Bishop Robert J. Shaheen, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, invested Novice John Michael Morgan in cassock and medal to enter the novitiate of the Maronite Monks of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in Portland, Ore.

The vesting ceremony was held at St. Raymond Maronite Cathedral in St. Louis, Missouri. Prior Jonathan Decker, M.M.J.M.J., and Monk Anthony Joseph Alles, M.M.J.M.J. welcomed the newest monk into their community. Msgr. Moussa Joseph, Rector of St. Raymond Cathedral, Deacon Louis Peters, Sr. Mariam Sharbel Vianney of the Archdiocese of Portland, and Deacon Wadih Kaldawi with his family witnessed the joyous event.

Only a few years ago, Brother John Michael entered the Catholic Church. Prior to his conversion, he spent his summers doing missionary work in the Dominican Republic, Mexico and the Philippines. Through his time in Latin America he developed fluency in Spanish and from the Filipino people acquired a love for praying the Rosary. Nevertheless, he says of his three years as a Catholic, that "everything about me has been made new." Brother John graduated with a Liberal Arts degree in 2010 from Saint Mary's College of California, where he first encountered the intellectual traditions of the Catholic Church. However, he said that it was due to the care and prayers of Mary, the Mother of God, that he finally entered the Catholic Church, and ultimately the Maronite monks of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, who look to Our Lady and the entire Holy Family of Nazareth for their inspiration and example in faithfully living life as a monastic family.

(Continues on page 20)

Olean, New York *St. Joseph Church Prepares For Its New Home*

Fr. Anthony J. Salim

Like the proverbial phoenix rising from the ashes of the fire that eternally threatens to destroy it, the Maronite Catholic Community of Olean, New York, is preparing to create its new spiritual home. Seventeen months ago, a devastating fire demolished the second home of its parish community, the building at 4th and Reed Streets, a church building that stood there since 1919. Some parishioners of St. Joseph and some from St. Mary of the Angels Roman Catholic Church recall local Catholics of Middle Eastern descent - primarily from Lebanon - met at St. Mary's as their first spiritual home. These Catholics included not only Maronite Catholics but also Catholics of the Byzantine-Greek Melkite Tradition, many of whom still reside in Olean and whose families still are parish members to this day. Finally the day came when the Maronite Community was able to build its own church building. A serious fire nearly thirty years ago threatened to destroy the building at 4th and Reed; but it survived. Then came the disastrous event of August 27, 2011. Due to faulty wiring in the church, a devastating fire broke out and shockingly and rapidly leveled the church to the ground.

St. Joseph was and is fully insured. Immediately after the fire, a consultant from the insurance company recommended that ad-hoc committees be established, with an eye to gathering information about the possibilities for a new church. Fr. Anthony Salim, Pastor, told the Committees that whatever was discussed would ultimately be forwarded to Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn. Thus began over sixteen months of asking questions and seeking possibilities. The Committees ultimately agreed to investigate two options: buying an existing property or building new on the existing property. An offer for the 2.3 acres of Transfiguration Oratory on Walnut Street by St. John Roman Catholic parish, administrators of the Oratory, was made to St. Joseph. The two possibilities - buying or building - were presented to Bishop Mansour, who carefully examined both options.

In January Bishop Mansour informed Fr. Anthony and St. Joseph's parishioners that his choice was to buy and not to build at 4th and Reed. This announcement was made to the



congregation at the Divine Liturgies on the weekend of January 19 - 20, 2013, and the Bishop's letter was sent to all registered members of St. Joseph. "2012 was a difficult and stressful year for both the congregation and myself," said Fr. Anthony. "Yet, I don't think we ever lost sight of our goal and our hopes for a good outcome. St. Joseph is a good, faithful, prayerful and generous lot of people, whose forebears and now themselves have given much to Olean. That is why so many people have been supporting and continue to support us. Also, I thank all the members of the Committees, who put many hours into helping us examine the options."

The architect's proposal for the new St. Joseph's campus will include the renovation of the existing church in a style as consistently authentic with Eastern, Syriac and Maronite a style as possible. A proposed Community Center will include a 160-seat hall for parish events; full kitchen; storage areas; two classrooms for religious education; office spaces; a small and flexible daily chapel, and a gathering space for before and after worship. In addition, the grounds will be used to host our annual *Mahrajan* (Middle East Festival), so popular in this area. The plan is to build the Community Center first, and after the completion of the Center, the Community will worship in it until the renovation of the church is complete.

We give thanks to Our Lord and His Intercessor, St. Joseph, for allowing us to arrive at this point! And we'd love to hear your supportive comments at stjosepholean@roadrunner.com. ☐

Brooklyn, New York Chrism Liturgy



Assisted by Chorbishop Michael Thomas, Bishop Gregory Mansour consecrates the Holy Oil at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral on March 20, 2013.

by Salma Vahdat

The week before Holy Week is a busy time in Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral and sister Maronite parishes. It is a time to prepare our hearts and minds for the solemn remembrance and re-enactment of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, our Redeemer.

However, the needs of the faithful are recognized also. So it was that Bishop Gregory Mansour invited his clergy to the Cathedral to celebrate the annual Chrism Liturgy on Wednesday, March 20, 2013. Before the consecration, the Ritual began. It was a ceremony to bless new Chrism for distribution to the parishes of the Eparchy. Oil from the previous year is kept as it has been for years, and is used for

continuity by pouring some into each of the oils used for baptism, anointing the sick and the chrism/*myron*. The blessed oils will be distributed to the Maronite parishes of the Eparchy for use in the new liturgical year.

Chorbishop Michael Thomas, Vicar General, assisted Bishop Mansour. His Excellency Bishop Stephen Hector Doueïhi, Bishop Emeritus, along with fifteen priests concelebrated. Two deacons and two subdeacons assisted. Laity from Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New Jersey and New York attended the inspiring ceremony steeped in holy tradition.

Following the Divine Liturgy, the clergy and laity were invited to a buffet Lenten luncheon prepared and served by the Cathedral housekeeper, Joan Napolitano, and the ladies of the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception. □

New Novice

Continued from page 18

Prior Jonathan Decker, M.M.J.M.J., accepted Brother John Michael for a year-long novitiate, after he petitioned the Prior and the Bishop for entry: "I ask to enter the Maronite Monks of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, with all my will, and with all eagerness, with the help of God and your prayers." The monks are most grateful to the Almighty Father for the gift of a new brother, to His Excellency Robert Shaheen for his blessings and support, and for the many blessings that have followed upon this most recent addition to the community, the first Maronite community of monks established west of the Mississippi River. For inquiries about the monastic vocation and life in the Pacific Northwest, please visit the Monks' website at www.mmjmj.com. □

