



# The Maronite Voice

A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA



Volume XI

Issue No. VII

July - August 2015

## Freedom: Gift and Responsibility

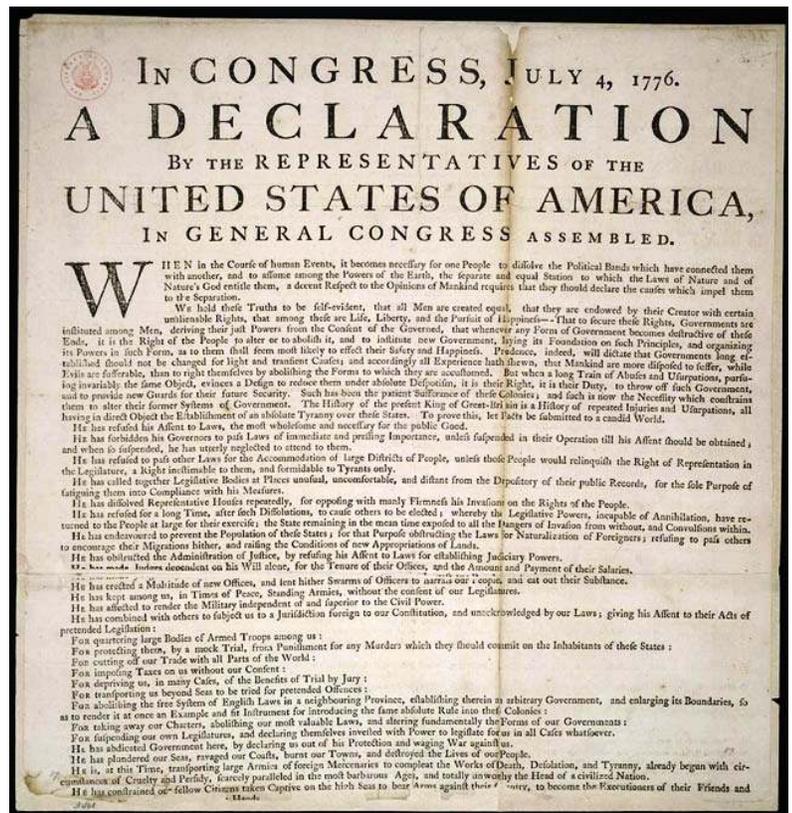
This year, on July 4<sup>th</sup>, our nation commemorates the 239<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. While this commemoration is not, strictly speaking, a "religious" holiday, there is a certain aspect of this event over 200 years ago that has religious overtones. The Declaration of Independence, along with our Constitution, form our nation's foundational documents. The Declaration itself is rooted in truths that we must always cherish and never forget. It is important to remember that the 13 colonies, that would become the United States, based their decision to declare independence from England on rights inherently enjoyed by all men and women. These rights found in the words of the Declaration are based on the "Laws of Nature and of Nature's God." Therefore, the Declaration's meaning transcends mere time and circumstances. They are true today as well.

If you have never read the Declaration of Independence or if it has been a long time since you have, I suggest you take it up.

The Declaration includes the following: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." This very bold acknowledgment of God and the recognition that our rights as human beings come directly from God is foundational to our liberty. It is not the government that grants us these rights; it is not a group of political elites that grant them. They are of divine origin; they are God-given to each of us.

In fact, we are created in the image of God; that means we are endowed with intelligence and freedom. Once the first Adam and Eve lost their freedom through the original sin, Christ redeemed us and freed us from the corruption of sin and death. We regained our status as Children of God.

As you know, in many parts of the world there is a lack of the basic freedoms that we, at times, take for granted. This is true even in some places that declare themselves to be "religious." The Declaration's statement that all human beings "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights" makes no distinction based on our religious belief, our ethnic heritage, our race or any other difference.



We are blessed in this great country to enjoy and cherish the basic rights and freedoms that other countries and people may not have. Just look around in the different parts of the world and it is obvious how many people are deprived of their basic rights of freedom of speech and worship.

However, we must always remember that my freedom desires the well being of others, society, and nature itself. My freedom should never intend to kill or hurt others (people and society) physically, socially, psychologically, or spiritually. This is my Christian responsibility that I support others in enjoying their personal freedom and to exercise their basic rights, to respect the laws of society and protect the environment, as Pope Francis has called upon in his new evangelical *Laudato si*, "I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet.

Continues on page 3

## Schedule of Bishop Elias Zaidan

**July 6 - 8, 2015**

MYO Workshop, Latrobe, Penn.

**July 10 - 12, 2015**

Pastoral Visit to Our Lady's Maronite Parish, Austin, Tex.

**July 16 - 18, 2015**

Telelumiére Board of Directors Meeting and Symposium on *Christianity in the Middle East*, Detroit, Mich.

**July 18 - 19, 2015**

Pastoral visit to St. Therese Church, Tulsa, Okla., and 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to the Priesthood of Father Elias Abi-Sarkis

**July 26, 2015**

Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon-St. Peter Cathedral, Los Angeles, Calif.

**August 1, 2015**

Celebration of Saint Anne Melkite Church as Co-Cathedral, North Hollywood, Calif.

**August 2, 2015**

Celebration of the transfer of the Armenian Catholic Eparchy, Glendale, Calif.

**August 9, 2015**

Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon-St. Peter Cathedral, Los Angeles, Calif.

**August 13 - 15, 2015**

Annual Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Lebanon Shrine, North Jackson, Ohio

**August 16, 2015**

Pastoral Visit to Our Lady of the Cedars, Fairlawn, Ohio; Ordination to the Diaconate of Subdeacon Alex Harb

**August 29, 2015**

Annual American Lebanese Cultural Festival, Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon-St. Peter Cathedral, Los Angeles, Calif.

**September 5 - 17, 2015**

Conference for new Bishops, Rome, Italy. □

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- Most Reverend Elias Zaidan, M.L.M.

**Editor** Msgr. George M. Sebaali

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### **Maronite Convention 2016**

Our Lady of Lebanon Church

**San Francisco, California**

**July 6 - 10, 2016**

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

## **History of the Maronite Catholic Church in the United States The Clergy**

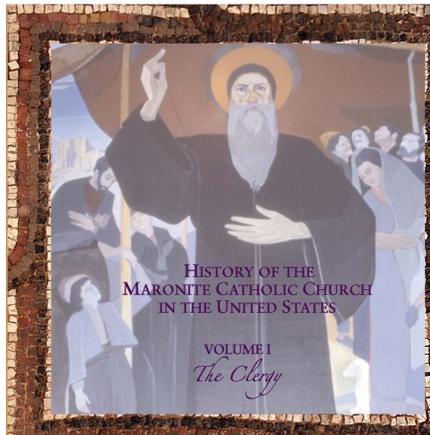
by Evelyn Karam Small

In 1890, the first assigned Maronite Catholic missionary arrived in New York City. Like many Lebanese immigrants, he brought with him his faith and the hope of building a better tomorrow.

Now, modern-day parishioners can read about the complete history of the Maronite Church in America in a new book called *History of the Maronite Catholic Church in the United States, Volume I, The Clergy*. Five years of extensive research were needed to unearth never-before published documents and to translate historical records and correspondence from their original French or Arabic into English. To further understand the evolution of the Church, the authors also analyzed interviews conducted with parishioners and pastors over the past seventy years.

This 440-page book is an essential addition to the bookshelf of any Maronite curious about the contributions our Church has made over the last 125 years.

*The Clergy* is available for \$30 plus \$7 shipping from Saint Maron Publications, 4611 Sadler Road, Glen Allen, Virginia 23060, <http://stmaron.org/store>. Saint Maron Publications accepts Visa or Master Card. □



# North Jackson, Ohio

## 50th Assumption Pilgrimage



**A**ugust 13 - 16, 2015, mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in North Jackson, Ohio. "In July 2014 we received notification that the Shrine Church, named in honor of Christ the Prince of Peace, was raised to the great and awesome dignity of Minor Papal Basilica by His Holiness Pope Francis. This great news arrived just as the Shrine was preparing to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> jubilee of establishment. ... This great honor allows our Shrine to be one of only a few churches in the United States to share in this great dignity, and it also makes the Shrine a *special* church of our Holy Father," says Msgr. Anthony Spinosa, Rector.

### Thursday, August 13

7 p.m. Bishop George V. Murray, Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio, will celebrate a Roman Rite Mass. Candlelight procession and blessing with the Icon of Our Lady of Lebanon will follow.

### Friday, August 14

2 p.m. A Spiritual Conference by John Horvat II: "Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother, The Key to Bring America Back to Order."

7 p.m. Bishop Nicholas Samra, Eparchy of Newton, West Roxbury, Mass., will celebrate a Byzantine Divine Liturgy.

8 p.m. Msgr. George Appleyard will lead a procession to the Tomb and prayers for the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

### Saturday, August 15

*Feast of the Assumption*

10 a.m. Msgr. Anthony Spinosa, Rector, will celebrate *Tridentine Missa Cantata* High Mass. Schola Basilicorum and St. Cecilia Chorale Choirs will serve the Mass.

12 noon Maronite Divine Liturgy with Anointing of the Sick celebrated by Bishop Elias Zaidan, Bishop Robert Shaheen and Bishop Gregory Mansour

1 - 4 p.m. Rosary and Adoration in the Tower Chapel

2 p.m. Music: String Quartet in the Prince of Peace Basilica

4 p.m. "Mary Calls us to a Way-of-the-Cross," a spiritual conference by John Horvat II

5:30 p.m. Lowellville Band Concert in the Cedars Hall

7 p.m. Maronite Pontifical Liturgy celebrated by Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop Elias Zaidan and Bishop Robert Shaheen. Procession and blessing with the Icon of Our Lady of Lebanon will follow.

### Sunday, August 16

*Feast of Saint Rocco*

10 a.m. Maronite Divine Liturgy by Msgr. Anthony Spinosa, Rector, and procession with the statue of St. Rocco will follow.

The National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon will open all three days at 9 a.m. Confessions will be available all three days. 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). □

## *Freedom: Gift and Responsibility*

*Continued from page 1*

We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all."

Dear friends, let us thank God for this gift of freedom and let us live it honorably. □

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

## THE ORDER OF SAINT SHARBEL



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Cathedral, Los Angeles, Calif.*

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For more information about the  
Order ask your Pastor,  
or visit [www.orderstsharbel.org](http://www.orderstsharbel.org).

## Scranton, Pennsylvania *Periodeut Ordination*

Saturday, May 23, 2015, was a joyful day for the parishioners of Saint Ann Maronite Church in Scranton, Pennsylvania, as they welcomed His Excellency Bishop Gregory J. Mansour, Bishop of Saint Maron, to "the Electric City" for the ordination of their pastor to the dignity of *Periodeut*.

Bishop Mansour arrived in Scranton for a private luncheon in the parish rectory hosted by Father Marini and attended by Monsignor James A. Root, the Rector of Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn, N.Y., Subdeacon Said J. Douaihy and Subdeacon and Mrs. Robert G. Rade. The luncheon was prepared and served by Michelle and Isabelle Thomas, who traveled from Wilkes-Barre to assist in the celebration.

The Divine Liturgy of Ordination took place at 4:00 p.m. in the parish church, and was celebrated by Bishop Mansour and concelebrated by Monsignor Root, who both presented the candidate for ordination and served as Master of Ceremonies. His Excellency the Most Reverend James C. Timlin, Bishop *Emeritus* of Scranton, honored the parish with his presence. Other priests participating were Monsignor Vincent J. Grimalia, former Vicar General of the Diocese of Scranton, the Reverend Paul R. Tobin of the Diocese of Youngstown, Ohio, and the Reverend Martin Boylan, Pastor of neighboring Saint Patrick Roman Catholic Church. Deacon George Paulcivic and Subdeacons Douaihy and Rade served in their roles in the liturgy, and they were assisted by Maronite Seminarian DeAngelo and Senior Parish Altar Server Robert G. Rade, Jr. The music for the ordination was provided by the parish cantors and choir under the direction of Jeanette Soma Wagner and accompanied by Mary Ellen Nasser, parish organist. The new *Periodeut* was led in the ordination processions by Monsignors Root and Grimalia. The crosier presented to Monsignor Marini had originally belonged to Chorbishop Stephen El-Douaihy (1882-1959), who was the Maronite pastor in Scranton from 1921 to 1929.

A reception in the parish hall followed the ordination ceremony and featured traditional Lebanese cuisine prepared and served by the ladies of Our Lady Queen of Peace Sodality from recipes passed down from their ancestors who came to Scranton from *Zgharta*, North Lebanon, beginning in 1884. Special guests were Monsignor Marini's sisters, Mary Catherine Marini Mulinix and Anna Maria Marini Unkefer, who traveled from Ohio to attend the event. □



Msgr. Francis Marini

### *Summer Break*

**T**he *Maronite Voice* wishes its readers an enjoyable 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, 2015. □

## Dartmouth, Massachusetts Entrance Day at Maronite Servants



Fr. Jack Morrison, Pastor of Our Lady of Purgatory Church, New Bedford, Mass., blesses Petra Nakhoul.

**P**etra Nakhoul entered as a postulant of the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light in Dartmouth, Mass., on the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity on May 31, 2015. Mother Marla Marie welcomed Petra at the closing of the Liturgy at the parish of Our Lady of Purgatory in New Bedford, and Father Jack Morrison, Pastor, gave her a blessing.

Petra Nakhoul comes from Perth, Australia, and is the daughter of Sarkis and Georgette Nakhoul, parishioners of St. Charbel's Maronite parish. Please join us in praying for Petra and her family as she begins the journey of religious life.

The Maronite Servants of Christ the Light are a newly founded religious congregation in the Maronite Diocese of Saint Maron, and more information on their mission can be found at: [Maroniteservants.org](http://Maroniteservants.org) or on their Facebook fan page (Maronite Servants). □

## Warren, Michigan Armenian Patriarch's Visit

by Charlie Kadado

**O**n May 21, 2015, Consul General of Lebanon Mr. Bilal Kabalan gathered religious leaders in Detroit, Mich., to meet the head of the Armenian Apostolic Church His Holiness Aram I, during his visit to the U.S. during May and June.

Maronite clergymen Chorbishop Alfred Badawi,



Monsignor Louis Baz, Father John Paul Bassil, Father Nabil Habchi, and Father Paul Tarabay joined fifteen other religious clerics at the Consul's residence in Birmingham, Michigan.

Chorbishop Badawi of St. Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church in Warren discussed the current situation for Christians in the Middle East, including the longstanding unity between Christians and other religious sects in the region.

"The gathering of these diverse religious groups speaks volumes," Chorbishop Badawi said. "We are grateful for the chance to greet His Holiness and spread a message of religious unity."

Mr. Kabalan stressed the importance of religious pluralism as a symbol of Lebanon's message of peace and harmony among the country's eighteen religious communities. He also thanked His Holiness Aram I for building bridges between Armenian Catholics and Muslims in Lebanon.

For his part, His Holiness said he was a strong supporter of inter-religious dialogue. He also mentioned his efforts to build mutual confidence between Christian and Muslim communities during the most critical times of the Lebanese Civil War.

The *Catholicosate* of the Great House of Cilicia has been headquartered in *Antelias*, Lebanon, since 1930. His Holiness has since returned to Lebanon after touring the U.S. and Canada. □

## Scranton, Pennsylvania *May Crowning*

On Mothers Day, May 10, 2015, May Crowning was celebrated at Saint Ann Maronite Church in Scranton, Penn. May Queen Rebecca Abdo placed a crown of white flowers on the statue of the Virgin Mother to the singing of Marian hymns by the parish choir. The ceremony ended with the singing of "Ya Om Allah" and the blessing with the icon of Our Lady of Zgharta. Rebecca is pictured praying before the Blessed Mother's statue. □



## Uniontown, Pennsylvania *Annual Memorial Ceremony*



by Dr. Mabel George Howard

On May 17, 2015, the Ladies Guild of St. George Church in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, celebrated its annual memorial Liturgy honoring the deceased members of the Guild. The Ladies Guild has been in existence for seventy-five years, and the women have continued this beautiful tradition so that the spiritual, cultural and financial contributions of their loved ones are remembered for countless generations. The ladies began the celebration by reciting the rosary and attending liturgy together. Following the liturgy, a memorial ceremony was held in the church hall. The opening prayer was followed by a video presentation and the recitation of the deceased members' names as relatives lit candles to commemorate the memories of their loved ones. After a light luncheon, Saint

Rafka prayer cards and flowers were distributed, and many members chose to visit the Saint Rafka Grotto on church grounds. This was a wonderful opportunity for quiet individual prayer and reflection. The religious life of Saint Rafka, Maronite Lebanese Nun and Patroness of those who suffer, inspired the Ladies Guild organization to design, construct and dedicate the Saint Rafka Grotto to the deceased members of the Guild. Surrounded by nature, an impressive statue of Saint Rafka stands atop the Grotto preserving the memories of our parish ladies. The prayer Grotto contains an individually inscribed brick for each deceased member, commemorating her faith and commitment to the church. The annual Ladies Guild Memorial Ceremony pays tribute and appreciation to the legacy of many special women who not only served God and their church, but have touched our hearts forever. □

## Springfield, Massachusetts *Saint Anthony Feast Day*



Procession with the relics and statue of Saint Anthony of Padua prior to the Divine Liturgy.

by Kathy LaBella

St. Anthony Church in Springfield, Mass., celebrated the Feast of St. Anthony on Saturday, June 13, 2015. A year ago, as a result of Fr. George Zina's efforts to bring a first class relic of St. Anthony from Padua, Italy, the Franciscan fathers escorted the relic from the Basilica in Padua to Springfield, where a nine-day feast was held at the parish. As a result of the huge response of the people who attended, and the reverence shown for the relic, the Franciscan Fathers presented a first class relic to the church in Springfield to be displayed for veneration. Even though St. Anthony Church has been a vital part of the Springfield community for over one hundred years, many residents did not realize it was a Catholic Church. By bringing and sharing the relic of St. Anthony with the greater community, Fr. George Zina united the community and brought awareness to the church's identity. Every Tuesday, a liturgy and novena is said in honor of St. Anthony. In addition, an annual celebration was held on June 13, his feast day, which included several liturgies and veneration of the relic. A procession also took place with Bishop Mitchell Rozanski of

the Springfield Diocese, clergy, deacons, Knights of Columbus, Mayor Domenic Sarno, District Attorney Anthony Gulluni and community members, prior to the Bishop's Mass. In his sermon, Bishop Rozanski said, "We are really blessed in Western Massachusetts and New England to have a first class relic of St. Anthony. It has brought us all together as Eastern and Western rites in honor of St. Anthony." Throughout the day, people shared the Bread of St. Anthony, which represented the bread in the story of St. Anthony and the drowned child. ☐

## Cincinnati, Ohio 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Festival



Father George Hajj enjoys his first *Mahrajan* in Cincinnati, alongside Dr. Lina Anaissie, Entertainment Coordinator, and the MYO following their performance.

by Linda Conour

On Sunday, June 14, 2015, St. Anthony of Padua Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, celebrated its 75th annual *Mahrajan*. Crowds of people came from all around the city to enjoy the homemade cuisine that the parishioners had spent months preparing in advance. The Parish's MYO provided entertainment throughout the day with traditional and modern dances and a fashion show, directed and coordinated by Dr. Lina Anaissie. Festival Chairmen Adel Chemaly and Dr. Jihad Rizkallah, along with their Festival Committee and many hard-working volunteers, came together to host a successful and fun-filled day. ☐

## Watervliet, New York Annual Festival

by Fr. Elias Khalil

Saturday, June 13, 2015, turned out to be a perfect day for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Food Festival at St. Ann Maronite Church in Watervliet [Troy], N.Y. Sunny skies and the aroma of parishioner-prepared Lebanese delicacies greeted visitors to Hudson Shores Park, where the festival was held. While guests enjoyed the food, the parish youth performed



the traditional *Dabke*. Members of the parish, both young and old, were on hand to serve food and beverages. St. Ann Parish continues to make its presence known in the local area through positive outreach and a welcoming community. ☐

## Worcester, Massachusetts Crafting Ministry

On Divine Mercy Sunday, April 12, 2015, the "Divine Blessings Crafting Ministry" at Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Worcester, Mass., had their recently knitted prayer shawls blessed by Fr. Gaby Hoyek during the Divine Liturgy. "Divine Blessings" is a ministry at the parish that began just over a year ago combining prayer and crafting with the intention to reach out to parishioners and the community as a way to express God's compassion. The shawls are knitted/crocheted while the person prays many blessings into their work with the purpose to provide comfort and spiritual support to the recipient, or to share in times of joy and celebration. The group meets on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of each month for planning and questions, and also as a devotion to St. Sharbel. The significance of the date is related to the miraculous healing of Nohad El Shami through the intercession of St. Sharbel. Members then return home to knit and crochet shawls, lap blankets, and baby blankets. As the shawls and blankets are finished, they are brought to the Church to be blessed by Father. The finished shawls are displayed in the entryway to the Church, and parishioners are then able to request one for someone in need.

The ministry began with parishioner Mimi Bou-Harb, who first learned to knit and crochet herself in preparation to form the ministry for the community. Once she was ready, Mimi soon found four other women to join her. The group continued to grow and now includes ten people. Most of the women did not know how to knit or crochet when they first joined the ministry, but this was not a problem! Mimi provided lessons and resources to help them begin. In total the ministry has knitted or crocheted forty shawls/blankets, and twenty-one so far have been given to parishioners, relatives in Lebanon, and friends in other parishes in the Eparchy and around the U.S. ☐

## Eparchial Condolences



**Chorbishop Bernard Khachan**, retired pastor of Saint Maron Church in Cleveland, Ohio, passed away in Lebanon on June 15, 2015.

Chorbishop Khachan was born in *Ebreen*, North Lebanon, on August 1, 1933. He was ordained to the priesthood in Lebanon in 1960. In 1965, he journeyed to South America to serve for one year. After his ministry there was complete, he returned to Lebanon. During that time, the Holy See had established the first Maronite Eparchy in the United States, Chorbishop Khachan was soon asked to serve as Pastor of St Anthony Maronite Church in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, where his relatives lived. With grace, dignity and an open heart, Chorbishop Khachan accepted the challenge of his new country, while always holding Lebanon alive in his life and close to his heart. Chorbishop Khachan also proudly embraced his new home in America. In 1972, Chorbishop Khachan became a citizen of the United States. In 1987, he was appointed Pastor of St. Maron Church of Cleveland, Ohio, where he served with kindness, guidance, support and compassion. In August 2005, he retired and went back to reside in Lebanon.

He is survived by his sister, Sister Alexine of the Nuns of the Maronite Order of the Holy Family, and by his brother Hanna (whose son is Fr. Charles Khachan, Pastor of Saint George Maronite Church in San Antonio, Tex.), and many nieces and nephews. Chorbishop Khachan's funeral took place in his hometown, *Ebreen*, Lebanon, at St. Sharbel Church, on Thursday, June 18, 2015. Condolences may be sent to Fr. Charles Khachan, c/o St. George Maronite Church, 6070 Babcock Road, San Antonio, TX 78240.

Bishop A. Elias Zaidan along with the clergy and faithful of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon and Bishop Gregory Mansour along with the clergy and faithful of the Eparchy of Saint Maron extend their heartfelt sympathy and the promise of our prayers to Chorbishop Khachan's family.

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

**Antoine Boutros Asmar**, the youngest sibling of Monsignor Maroun Asmar, retired pastor of Saint Sharbel Maronite Church in Somerset, N.J., passed away on May 29, 2015, in Lebanon, at the age of 63. He lived much of his life in the care of the Franciscan Sisters of the Cross. He is survived by his two brothers, Monsignor Maroun and Joseph; four sisters, Marie, Isabelle, Antoinette, and Rosette; and twenty-one nieces and nephews. He is predeceased by his parents, Boutrus and Turfa (Karam) Asmar.

The funeral service and burial took place in his home



town of *Jezzine*, Lebanon, on May 31. A Forty Day Memorial Liturgy will be offered at Saint Sharbel Church in Somerset [New Brunswick], N.J., on July 12, 2015. Condolences may be sent to Msgr. Maroun Asmar, 110 Topaz Drive, Franklin Park, NJ 08823.

Bishop Gregory Mansour along with the clergy and faithful of the Eparchy of Saint Maron extend their heartfelt sympathy and the promise of our prayers to Msgr. Maroun and his family.

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

### Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

#### July 6 - 8, 2015

Annual MYO Conference, Latrobe, Penn.

#### July 12, 2015

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

#### July 13, 2015

Ordination and Installation of Bishop Charles Malesic, Greensburg, Penn.

#### July 17 - 20, 2015

Detroit, Mich., for *Telemuniere* Board of Directors Meeting and Symposium on *Christianity in the Middle East* co-sponsored by CAMECT, IDC, the Detroit Chaldean Community and *Telemuniere*

#### July 26, 2015

Pastoral Visit to Our Lady Star of the East Mission, Pleasantville, N.J.

#### July 27 - August 4, 2015

Eight-day Silent Retreat, Morristown, N.J.

#### August 7 - 9, 2015

Family Wedding, Toronto, Canada

#### August 13 - 15, 2015

Annual Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Lebanon Shrine, North Jackson, Ohio

#### August 16, 2015

Pastoral Visit to St. George Church, Uniontown, Penn.

#### August 23, 2015

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

#### August 24, 2015

Catholic Relief Services Meeting, Baltimore, Md.

#### August 30, 2015

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

#### September 6, 2015

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

#### September 11, 2015

In Defense of Christians Conference, Washington, D.C. □

## ***My Journey to Becoming a Deacon*** ***by*** ***Deacon Michel Touma***

**F**or the first forty years of my life I never thought I would be serving at the altar of the Lord, never mind becoming an ordained deacon. I was born in Lebanon shortly before the civil war began. We were a family of seven children (five boys and two girls). My father was a taxi driver and jack-of-all-trades, and my mother a seamstress; both worked very hard to put food on our table and send seven children to school.

We were raised Maronite with a very strong faith which lead us to always trust in God for all of our needs. Although a faithful family, no one in the family ever served as a priest,

deacon or subdeacon. The idea of a religious vocation was never something that the family discussed. As a matter of fact, growing up I dreamed of becoming a pilot, something I knew early on was not possible given the war, poverty, and lack of opportunities.

The family suffered through much of the Lebanese civil war, and we lost one of my brothers to the war. Despite the suffering, it seems that the angels and saints smiled upon us, I believe because of the persistent prayers by my mother. I call her the *Canaanite Woman* as she reminds me so much of the woman in the Gospel from *Tyre*. Her faith is so strong, and her prayers taught us the humility and humbleness necessary to live through good times and bad times. My mother suffered so much, but never asked for anything for herself, always praying to God to protect her children and lead them to a better life.

Her prayers were answered and rewarded when we were able to immigrate to the United States. It was a blessing to all of us as a family. We were able to live freely, learn, work hard and earn our share of the promises of this great country.

My calling came to me from my Pastor, Chorbishop Dominic F. Ashkar. One day, I think it was after a long confession, he asked me to consider becoming a subdeacon. Looking back at it, I thought this was his way of giving me penance. Months passed and I was very much immersed in the life of the wonderful parish of Our Lady of Lebanon in Washington, D.C. The Parish is blessed with the Seminary, and the seminarians call it home. Their example influenced me greatly and the more I listened to God's call, the more I believed that this was what God wanted me to do.

On the eve of my ordination, I was having dinner with my brother Tony and reminiscing about our childhood

and how far we have come. I started thinking about how only through God's Divine Providence that I lived to see the day of my ordination. Many times during my childhood I got into many very dangerous situations. Yet God always saved me and my family from harm. At age of nine months I dropped a heating iron on my head and lived. At age seven I lived despite snipers taking shots at us, bombs falling on our playgrounds and shootings starting while at the movies. At age fourteen, I was confronted by two armed men because of a car accident. It seemed like these close calls went on and on. It is clear to me that without God's Divine Providence surely no one could have survived all these life threatening events.

I now know that my vocation was not a penance, rather the answered prayers of my *canaanite* mother for one of her children to serve God and His Church. Now I strongly believe that all the prayers she prayed were directed toward us to serve the church and remain ever faithful to the Maronite faith.

I didn't take this journey toward becoming a deacon alone. My loving wife of twenty-one years, Ghada, has always been supportive in everything I do, and is instrumental in my role as a deacon. God has blessed me and my wife with three kids, Amanda, Charbel and Peter. They are the candles of our lives and I can honestly say that our lives have been so much better ever since I started studying and preparing for my ordination. I pray that they, too, find joy in the service of the church and remain grafted to the vine, Christ.

I ask for your prayers for God to give me the strength, wisdom and path to serve His Holy Church. May this be His Will through Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Amen. □



***If the Lord  
is Calling  
You,  
The  
Church  
Needs  
You!***

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

Fr. Gary George, Director  
Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon  
Office of Vocations  
1021 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
St. Louis, MO 63104

Or

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

Or

Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary  
7164 Alaska Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20012

# *The Holy Innocents: In Defense of the Unborn*

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you" (Jeremiah 1:5);  
"Upon You I was cast from birth; You have been my God from my mother's womb" (Psalm 22:10).

"Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life" (The Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2270).

## **Introduction**

The Catholic Church often finds itself alone in the United States and in the international community, in its defense of "Life" and the rights of the unborn. In the United States and Canada we find some of the most extreme legislation and judicial decisions, literally leaving the unborn child defenseless with no rights. Much like in the decision to defend slavery in the nineteenth century, long after most predominantly Christian nations had given up the practice, we may very well find ourselves on the wrong side of history in our lack of defense for the Right to Life of the unborn.

"*Roe v. Wade*<sup>1</sup> is the twentieth century equivalent of *Dred Scott v. Sanford* – the infamous decision holding that slaves and their descendants were not and could not be "citizens" of any American State for purposes of the Constitution. Conceptually, the *Roe* abortion rule is like slavery; it de-humanizes and treats as chattel a whole class of humanity. As *Dred Scott* held that Blacks were not persons entitled to constitutional protection, so *Roe* holds that unborn humans are not entitled to basic constitutional protection for their lives. As the Court in *Dred Scott* said that Black slaves are merely the property of their owners, so *Roe* said that an unborn human being is merely property belonging to her pregnant mother – which the woman can dispose of as she wishes. If, as Abraham Lincoln said at Cooper Union, the message of slavery is that a man is not a man if he is Black, the core message of *Roe* is that a human being is not a human being if she is in utero"

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<sup>1</sup> Norma Leah McCorvey (Jane Roe in the *Roe v. Wade* case) no longer supports legalized abortion and was received into the Catholic Church in 1998.

(CNSNews.com, Lynn Wardle, January 23, 2015).

The justice which the Catholic Church seeks for the unborn is part of the "seamless garment" of life, the association of life issues with the seamless cloak of Jesus that his executioners did not tear since it had no seam. This term was coined by the Catholic activist Eileen Egan (1912–2000) and further developed by the late Joseph Cardinal Bernardin (1928–1996), to promote the notion of a "consistent ethic of life" as concerns the issues of abortion, capital punishment, and euthanasia. Within the last hundred years we have witnessed the holocaust of the Jewish people at the hands of the Nazis, the holocaust of the Armenians by the crumbling Ottoman Empire and the holocaust of the unborn, which in length of years and numbers lost, is greater than all others.

## **The Right to Privacy**

The philosophical and judicial notion of a "right to privacy" has its roots in the philosophy of the seventeenth century British Empiricist philosopher John Locke, whose ideas on government greatly influenced Thomas Jefferson. Locke opposed the "divine right of kings" style of government, which was popular in France and other European countries of his day. He supported the deposing the last Catholic monarch of England, James II, and the installing of William and Mary to rule as limited monarchs. In his "Natural Rights Theory," he proposes that every person is born with a right to life, liberty and private property, in other words these three inalienable rights could not be taken away by any monarchy or parliament.

It is this third right of Locke's theory, the right to private property, that had been employed by modern pro-choice

proponents to support their idea of a woman's right over her body as extending to even the unborn child. This of course was never the intention of Locke himself. His concern was to limit government search and seizures of property and to further an idea that the fruit of your labors was a part of your person.

Much of the attention the Supreme Court once lavished on a broad concept of property .... it now devotes to certain personal liberties that it has designated as "fundamental." Remarkably, the property paradigm, including the old language of absoluteness, broods over this developing jurisprudence of personal rights. The new right of privacy, like the old right of property, has been imagined by the Court and lawyers generally as marking off a protected sphere surrounding the individual.... (the right to privacy was) quite literally pulled from the hat of property (Mary Ann Glendon, *Rights Talk: The Impoverishment of Political Discourse*, 1991; pages 40, 50).

The Right to Privacy first emerged from the Right to Private Property in American Jurisprudence in 1890, but was concerned with the protection of private communication from unlawful use by the press and publications. It entered the realm of law as concerns human sexuality in 1965, when the Supreme Court struck down contraceptive restrictions legislated by the States in *Griswold versus Connecticut*. This decision was a nod by the Supreme Court towards Planned Parenthood and its contraceptive programs<sup>2</sup>. This fallacious extension of the Right to Private Property to a Right to Privacy, along with the usurping of State's Rights by the Supreme Court, reached its pinnacle in the landmark decision of *Roe v. Wade* in 1973.

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<sup>2</sup> See, *The Right to Privacy*, by Janet E. Smith, Ignatius Press.

Ironically part of the argument for legalized abortion was the "bad science" being taught at the time, that it was impossible to say when human life begins, or when the fetus feels pain or has viability outside the womb. All these arguments have been debunked by science today, so much so that the feminist Naomi Wolf has declared that abortion is the taking of a human life, but that women should be allowed to do so (Naomi Wolf, "Our Bodies, Our Souls," New Republic, 1995).

With *Roe v. Wade*, the constitutional rights of the unborn, which had existed since the ratification of the United States Constitution, ceased to exist.

### *Evangelium Vitae*

Blessed Paul VI, in 1968, had clearly upheld the Catholic Church's teaching on the protection of the unborn's right to life:

Therefore We base Our words on the first principles of a human and Christian doctrine of marriage when We are obliged once more to declare that the direct interruption of the generative process already begun and, above all, all direct abortion, even for therapeutic reasons, are to be absolutely excluded as lawful means of regulating the number of children (Pope Paul VI, *Humane Vitae*, July 25, 1968, no.14).

Saint John Paul II, further explained Catholic teaching on life in his encyclical letter, *Evangelium Vitae* of 1995, which was written to proclaim that "The Gospel of life is at the heart of Jesus' message. Lovingly received day after day by the Church, it is to be preached with dauntless fidelity as "good news" to the people of every age and culture" (*Evangelium Vitae*, no.1).

John Paul II points to the confusion of culture today, the devaluation of life and the violence against the poor, elderly, women, the handicapped, and the unborn. He names this the "culture of death," which violates the sacredness of human life. He writes:

"In fact, while the climate of widespread moral uncertainty can in some way be explained by the multiplicity and gravity of today's social problems,...it is no less true that we are confronted by an even larger

reality, which can be described as a veritable structure of sin. This reality is characterized by the emergence of a culture which denies solidarity and in many cases takes the form of a veritable "culture of death." This culture is actively fostered by powerful cultural, economic and political currents which encourage an idea of society excessively concerned with efficiency... In this way a kind of "conspiracy against life" is unleashed.

"In order to facilitate the spread of abortion, enormous sums of money have been invested and continue to be invested in the production of pharmaceutical products which make it possible to kill the fetus in the mother's womb without recourse to medical assistance. On this point, scientific research itself seems to be almost exclusively preoccupied with developing products which are ever more simple and effective in suppressing life and which at the same time are capable of removing abortion from any kind of control or social responsibility" (*Evangelium Vitae*, no. 12-13).

Reflecting on Sacred Scripture in Jeremiah, Job, Psalms, and the meeting of the Virgin Mary and Elizabeth in Luke, John Paul II writes, "How can anyone think that even a single moment of this marvelous process of the unfolding of life could be separated from the wise and loving work of the Creator, and left prey to human caprice?"

### *Conclusion*

While St. Stephen is counted as being the first Christian martyr, the Holy Innocents were the first to be martyred because Christ had entered into the world. The selfish pursuit of power and unwillingness to be open to the Truth led Herod to slaughter the Holy Innocents in hope that one of them would be the baby Jesus. Unfortunately, in our culture the pursuit of personal wealth, power, and extreme individualism coupled with a secular-agnosticism as regards Truth has produced a new group of Holy Innocents, again in hope of removing Jesus, the Lord of Life from our world.

Just as an individual is judged not so much by the way he or she treats his or

her peers, but by how they treat those they have an advantage over, so shall our society be judged by how we treat those who are least powerful and in the greatest need of our protection. Our Lady and the Holy Innocents, pray for us! ☐



(Rev.) David A. Fisher  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
e-mail: david\_andrew1@mac.com

### *Pontifical Act*

On Saturday, June 20, 2015, His Holiness Pope Francis gave his assent to the canonical election by the Synod of Bishops of the Maronite Patriarchal Church of Fr. Abata Hanna Rahme, O.L.M., as eparchial bishop of *Baalbek – Deir El-Ahmar*, (Catholics 66,050, priests 19, permanent deacons 1, religious 39), Lebanon. The bishop-elect was born in *Aynata*, Lebanon, in 1960, pronounced his solemn vows in 1989 and was ordained a priest in 1990. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy and Theology from the Sorbonne University, Paris, France, where he was also conferred a Doctorate degree in History of Religions and Religious Anthropology. Within the Lebanese Maronite Order he has also served as Superior of the St. Sharbel Convent in *Bekaa-Kafra*, Director of schools of the Order, member of the Secretariat General of the Catholic Schools of Lebanon, and professor at the "St. Esprit" University of Kaslik. He is currently Protosyncellus of the Eparchy of *Baalbek – Deir El-Ahmar*. ☐

Vatican Information Service (VIS),  
June 22, 2015

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

### **Lawrence, Massachusetts**



**M**ia Abou-Ezzi, Anthony Anastassi, Kaya Asmar, Elizabeth Becht, Samuel Becht, Charbel Daher, Elie El-Hachem, Aivah Gonzalez, Jason Haddad, Robin Hakimian, Caleb Hassan, McKenna Jesionowski, Chloe Khoury, Gage Lanoue, Mia Mastrangelo, Joe Msaddi, Maya Owaida, Jack Rached, Jacob Saab, Serena Sader, Angelica Swenson, Joseph Tavares and Charbel Zaarour received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2015, at St. Anthony Maronite Church in Lawrence, Mass. □

### **Williamsville, New York**



**G**eorge Jreige, Anthony Honeine, Christopher Sebaali, Christopher Harris, Dominic Chayban, Aimee Kabalan, Natalia Behlok and Christie Jaoude received their First Holy Eucharist on May 3, 2015, at St. John Maron Church in Williamsville [Buffalo], N.Y. □

### **Torrington, Connecticut**



**Y**andri Cardenas, Andy Cartagena, Jennylet Cartagena, Arnold Chimbo, Celmi Chimbo, Nicholas Coury, Thomas Crowe, Alexis Gousby, Julisa Guaraca, Rocio Guaraca, Mario Jadan, Liam Rosenfield, Isabella Viscariello, and Lema Widenson received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2015, at St. Maron Church in Torrington, Conn. □

### **Scranton, Pennsylvania**



**L**uciana Angelina Valvano and Nicholas Joseph Petrewski received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2015, at St. Ann Maronite Church in Scranton, Penn. □

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

## Houston, Texas



**B**renda Brax, Danny Saliby, Liam Maksoud, Marissa Ramy, Isabella Guajardo, John Rickert, Jana-Maria Atallah, Julian Saoma, Linda Karam, Andrew Reaidy, Majd Fadi, Elena Ghossoub, Elie Merhi, Nicole Felefle, Natalie Dow, Peter Hajjar, Julianna Ghafari, Celine Shami, Angeline Saba, Mary-Joe Estephan, Andrew Mourad, Mario Kareem, Dia Dagher, Leya Iskandar, Lara Iskandar, Isabella Hage and Elvis Saoma (not pictured) received their First Holy Communion at Our Lady of the Cedars Maronite Church in Houston, Tex. □

## Minneapolis, Minnesota



**N**ico Vizcaino, Marie Abou Mourad, Paul Ziade, Stephanie Nazareth, Anthony Suhyoun, Michael Sipahimalani, Christian Maalouf and Rebecca Younes received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2015, at St. Maron Church in Minneapolis, Minn. □



## San Antonio, Texas



**L**auren Danielle Barksdale, Joseph Hanna, Diego Jose Medina, Kalila Elizabeth Mery, Zenaida Carolina Sanchez, Cloe Nader, Kayla Asia Alhaj and Lisette Harb received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2015, at St. George Maronite Church in San Antonio, Tex. □

## Lewisville, Texas



**K**ylie Naaman, Nadine Al-Shami, Anastasia Vazquez, Adrian Kheir, Gracie Black, Cillian Smith, Jolie Namaan and Thomas Tabbah received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2015, at Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Dallas, Tex. Marianna Haddad and Mia Vasquez served as “angels.” □

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

## **Easton, Pennsylvania**



**M**ario Khoury, Diego Khoury, Megan Elias, Michael Assise, Mallory Elias, Alexander Salim, Christelle Waked, Nasr Karam, George Elie Boudaher, Sandra Atileh, Marc Karam, Miranda Koorie, Christian Ahad, Retalee Jaoude and Autel Boulos received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2015, at Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Easton, Penn. □

## **Orlando, Florida**



**L**uca Awad, Maria DeSouza, Derek Freitas, Ethan Freitas, Nicholas Gaspard, Mariel Gomez, Sandy Hovhanessian, Mario JeBailey, Angelina Maroun, Noah Marzouk, Olivia McGarvey, Madeline Parkhill, Sophia Periera, Rachael Reece, Delmy Sofia Rickert, Miguel Rojas, Brunno Rosa, and Klaudia Stolarz received their First Holy Communion on May 2, 2015, at St. Jude Maronite Church in Orlando, Fla. □

## **Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania**



**A**iden Thomas and Rachel Lewis received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2015, at St. Anthony/St. George Maronite Church in Wilkes-Barre, Penn. Following the Liturgy the First Communicants crowned the Blessed Mother. □

## **Fort Lauderdale, Florida**



**S**erena Aslou, Diana Haddad, Sebastian Woodruff, and Celine Yacoub received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2015, at Heart of Jesus Maronite Mission in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. □



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

## San Francisco, California



**E**nham Baqain, Sebastian Bou Harb, Senna Goins, Jonathan Tarabay, Roxana Khoury Hanna, Christian Perez, Maya Eidson, Tala Fadlallah, Andrew Wehbeh, Eliana Makhoul, Joy AbiNadre, Alex Perez and Amal Baqain received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2015, at Our Lady of Lebanon Church in San Francisco, Calif. □

## West Covina, California



Emelie Alfata, James Awabdy, Maya Hamaty, Michael Hamaty, Jizelle Hashem, Joelle Hashem, Maya Mansour, Jacob Mayor, Lorenzo Mourad and Christa Srour received their First Holy Communion on May 2, 2015, at St. Jude Maronite Church in West Covina, Calif. □

## San Diego, California



**A**nthony Ghoussain, Asal Hindy, Liza Jameel, Ramiz Kamal, Christian Mansour, Laith Naber, Shadi Naber, Mirna Salem, Salem Salem, Gia Sawaya, Elizabeth Tovey and Mariam Tovey received their First Holy Communion on May 2, 2015, at St. Ephrem Maronite Church in San Diego, Calif. □

## Tulsa, Oklahoma



**I**smael Zuniga, Ernesto Zuniga, Liliana Zuniga, Lanita Mouchantaf, José Martinez, Saul Zuniga and Miguel Zuniga received their First Holy Communion on May 10, 2015, at St. Thérèse Maronite Church in Tulsa, Okla. □



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

## **Glen Allen, Virginia**



**J**ason Abou Assi, Mona Abou Assi, George Beasley, Jeannine Bourret, Nuela Dailey, Elizabeth Davis, Mary Frances Davis, Kyle Dermesropian, Claire Fahed, Bridget George, Hope Karnes, Erin Shaia, Madison Shibley, Megan Shibley and Zachary Shulleeta received their First Holy Communion on May 10, 2015, at St. Anthony Maronite Church in Glen Allen [Richmond], Va. ☐

## **Springfield, Massachusetts**



**J**oseph Malkoon, Amani Kashouh, Mackenzie DaFonseca, Samantha Hamilton, Mia Shibley, Joseph Elias, John Ackourey, Matthew Rowe, Hanna Longtin, Arianna Clarke, Jordan Rowe and Michael Elias received their First Holy Communion on May 17, 2015, at St. Anthony Maronite Church in Springfield, Mass. ☐

## **Fayetteville, North Carolina**



**C**laire Chapman, Zara Gonzalez, Cid Guerrero, Ishod Nesbitt and Hope Weiser received their First Holy Communion on May 10, 2015, at St. Michael the Archangel Maronite Church in Fayetteville, N.C. Earlier this year Matt Chapman, Mason Chapman and Andrew Bayouth received the Sacrament of the Eucharist at separate divine liturgies. ☐

## **Troy, New York**



**R**hea Frangieh, Leah Rafka Akiki, John Floyd Merrifield Jr., received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2015, at St. Ann Maronite Church in Watervliet [Troy], N.Y. Following the Liturgy, Rhea Frangieh crowned the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. ☐

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

## **Brooklyn, New York**



**S**elena Afif, Theophorus Charbel Barakat, Emmanuelle Noel Chiha, Michael Nicholas Elsayegh, Chloe Wissam Hoyek, Anthony Rabih Nemr, Declan Georges O'Sullivan, Lila Grace Pfitzer, Andrea Safi and James Joseph Sahadi received their First Holy Communion on May 16, 2015, at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn, N.Y. □

## **Livonia, Michigan**



**N**icholas Andraos, Angelina Hallis, Miriam Dalou, Anthony Bodagh, Grace Khandji, Karen Khandji, John Paul Daher, Rony Korab, Thea Najm, Mariana Matar, Georgio Gerges, Lucas Younes, Tamer Deaibes, Angel Saade and Elie Alam received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2015, at St. Rafka Maronite Church in Livonia, Mich. □

## **Detroit, Michigan**



**E**lie Shemmai received his First Holy Communion on May 24, 2015, at Saint Maron Church in Detroit, Mich. □

## **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**



**G**iovanni Piscitelli, Nicholas Dib, Sophia Boufadel, Eva Boufadel, Jozeph Muaddi, Angelo Homs, Solaine Salloum, Anthony Labbad and Maria Topalian received their First Holy Communion on April 26, 2015, at St. Maron Church in Philadelphia, Penn. □

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

## Saint Louis, Missouri



**A**lex Putzel Bauer, Lucas Hurley, Isabella Richardson and Elissa Hamad received their First Holy Communion on April 26, 2015, at St. Raymond Cathedral in Saint Louis, Mo. □

## Youngstown, Ohio



**A**dam Ghossain, Kaitlyn Greenaway, Nicholas Joseph, Palmer Mason, Luke Rohan and Tad Sassya received their First Holy Communion on April 19, 2015, at St. Maron Church in Youngstown, Ohio. □

## Portland, Oregon



**R**achael Mariam Marina Redmond, Luna Husam Sefo, Larin Husam Sefo, Nicholas Colin Daniel Pipes and Elizabeth Ensaf Rita Pipes received their First Holy Communion on Sunday of the Glorious Resurrection, April 5, 2015, at St. Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church in Portland, Ore. □

## Norman, Oklahoma



**G**abriel Mondalak received his First Holy Communion on May 17, 2015, at Our Lady of Lebanon Mission in Norman, Okla. Gabriel became the first person to receive First Holy Communion at the Oklahoma mission. □



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

## **Uniontown, Pennsylvania**



**C**ameron Ferris, Addison Nicholson, Sydney Hudock and Matthew Schwertfeger received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2015, at St. George Maronite Church in Uniontown, Penn. □

## **Cranston, Rhode Island**



**J**ulian Jack Mourad, Vasilios Giovanis, Hanna Marie Ghazal, Liliana Marie El Khoury, Jaden E. Youssef and Gianni Elias Farhat received their First Holy Communion on April 26, 2015, at St. George Maronite Church in Cranston [Providence], R.I. □

## **New Bedford, Massachusetts**



**D**aniel Yazbek, Rafael Yazbek, Annica Dupre and Jacob Dupre received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2015, at Our Lady of Purgatory Church in New Bedford, Mass. □

## **Tequesta, Florida**



**E**nzo Matta received his First Holy Communion on May 3, 2015, at Mary Mother of the Light Maronite Mission in Tequesta [Palm Beach], Fla. □

## Tequesta, Florida *Preschool Dedication*



Bishop Gregory Mansour blesses Mary, Mother of the Light Academy on February 22, 2015.

by Pierre E. Azzi, Esq., Finance Committee Chairman

**O**n Monday, August 17, 2015, Mary, Mother of the Light Church in Tequesta, Florida, will open the first Catholic preschool in North Palm Beach County, Florida. Bishop Gregory Mansour dedicated the preschool just after he consecrated the new church on Sunday, February 22, 2015.

The preschool is called Mary, Mother of the Light Academy and can serve a maximum of fifty children. The school will be an extended day preschool open from 7:30am to 6:30pm, Monday through Friday. As of mid-June, there were twenty-four children enrolled for the Fall.

Thanks to the leadership of our young pastor and many devoted parishioners over the past two years, Mary, Mother of the Light Church took the many steps required to start a preschool and renovate the school building, playground and the parking lot. Recently \$40,000 were raised through the Cedars Fundraising Campaign to help offset the cost of

renovating and starting the preschool. We thank God for blessing our small parish, and we pray that by seeking His will, we may be able to continue to flourish.

If you are or will be in the Palm Beach area, we invite you to celebrate the Divine Liturgy with us. For details about Mary, Mother of Light Church, please visit: [www.marymotherofthelight.com](http://www.marymotherofthelight.com) or email [mmolchurch@gmail.com](mailto:mmolchurch@gmail.com). ☐

## Utica, New York *First Holy Communion*



**A**iden Charbel and Nathan Hanna received their First Holy Communion on April 26, 2015, at Saint Louis Gonzaga in Utica, N.Y. ☐

## *Appeal from Caritas Lebanon*

**C**hristians in Lebanon are suffering! If you are able to relieve some of the suffering, please visit Caritas Lebanon at <http://www.caritas.org.lb>. Thank you for your consideration. ☐