



# The Maronite Voice

A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA

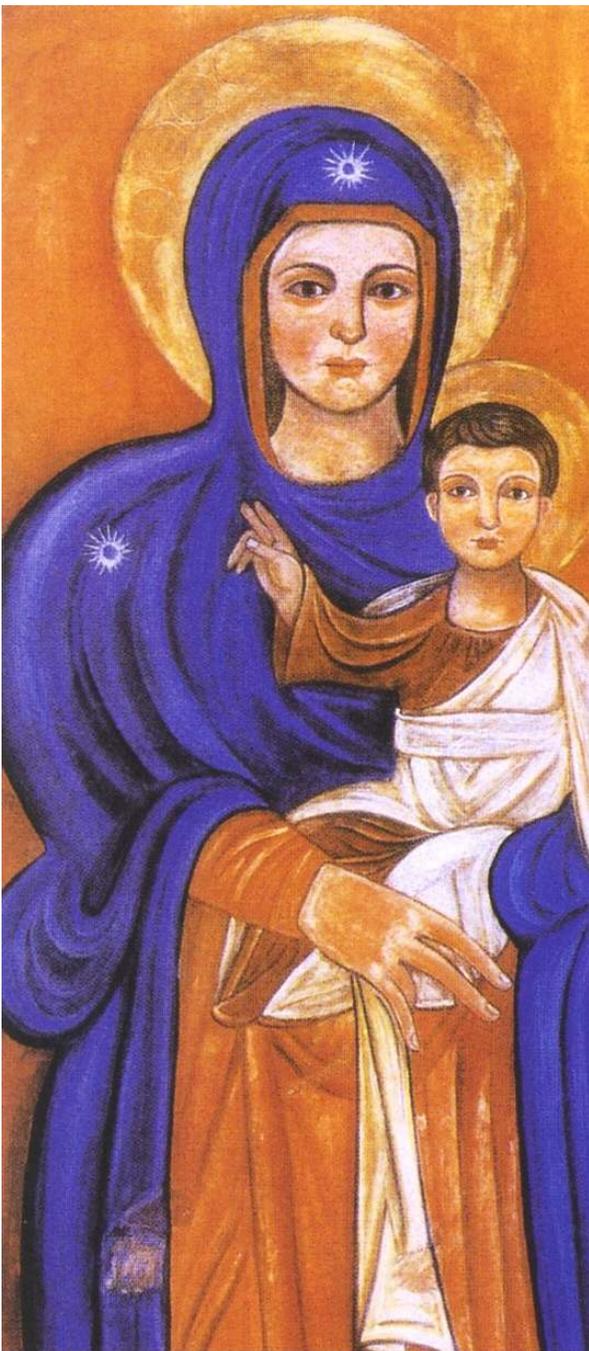


Volume IX

Issue No. VII

July - August 2013

## *Our Patriarch Has Consecrated Lebanon to Our Lady, as Mary Is Our Only Hope for the Future*



*Dear Friends,*

July is a special month for us because the family of *Beit Maroun* gathers at the National Convention. It's a great opportunity to renew old acquaintances, to share remembrances of the past and to truly speak of the hopes and visions for the future.

Since the first Convention in 1964, I have attended every Convention except one, and that was due to illness. Each one has been special and each one unique, reflecting the gifts of the local community. I am sure this Convention will also be a time of happiness and joy.

The month of July is also very special for all Americans. We celebrate on the Fourth with fireworks, parties and parades. We celebrate our freedom and our independence. Despite the problems we may have in this country, it is still the greatest place to live, and we should all thank God for our being Americans. I once asked our former Patriarch, "What is a way of being a good Maronite?" He replied: "By being a good American."

Our Lebanese culture and heritage are second to none, but it seems that political leaders do not work together to preserve that beautiful country. Pope John Paul II said, "Lebanon is more than a country, it is a message to the world." What happened?

Our Patriarch has just consecrated Lebanon again to Our Lady, as Mary is our only hope for the future.

Let us all pray to Our Lady that somehow all factions in Lebanon will learn the meaning of peace and love of neighbor.

Wishing all a great Convention experience and asking Our Lady of Lebanon to keep her children safe whether in this part of the world or in the Middle East.

Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July!

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
+Robert J. Shaheen,  
Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon

## Schedule of Bishop Robert Shaheen

**July 1 - 4, 2013**

Annual Clergy Meeting, Tampa, Fla.

**July 5, 2013**

Ordination of Deacon George el Hajj to the Priesthood, Tampa, Fla.

**July 5 - 7, 2013**

Annual Maronite Convention, Tampa, Fla.

**July 9, 2013**

Lecture at the Maronite Heritage Center, Saint Louis, Mo.

**July 11 - 12, 2013**

Meeting, Jefferson City, Indiana

**July 14 - 25, 2013**

Family Visit, Danbury, Conn.

**August 11, 2013**

Baptism at Saint Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

**August 13-16, 2013**

Assumption pilgrimage, Our Lady of Lebanon Shrine, North Jackson, Ohio

**August 18, 2013**

Family Memorial Liturgy, Danbury, Conn. ☐

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

**Editor** Msgr. George M. Sebaali  
**Consultor** Fr. Abdallah Zaidan, M.L.M.

### **Editing and proofreading**

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Printed in Richmond, Virginia.

## **Maronite Convention 2014**

Our Lady of Victory Maronite Church

**Pittsburgh, Penn.**

**July 2 - 6, 2014**

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

## **Sehiele, Lebanon Priestly Ordination**



On June 8, 2013, His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour ordained Raymond Khallouf a Priest for the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn at St. Rafka Maronite Church in *Sehiele*, Lebanon. On Sunday, June 9, 2013, Fr. Khallouf celebrated a Liturgy of Thanksgiving at the same Church. ☐

## THE ORDER OF SAINT SHARBEL



### Annual Members

#### ★ Charles Feghali

*Our Lady of Lebanon Church  
Washington, D.C.*

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

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

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

Or  
Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon  
Order of Saint Sharbel  
1021 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
St. Louis, MO 63104

## Easton, Pennsylvania *Priestly Ordination*



Bishop Gregory Mansour, assisted by Chorbishop Seely Beggiani, ordains Deacon Alex Joseph a priest at Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Easton, Penn. (Photo by Leila Vogel).

*by Naomi Karam Koerwitz*

"Let what you teach be nourishment for the people of God. Let the holiness of your lives be a delightful fragrance to Christ's faithful, so that by word and example you may build up the house which is God's Church."

This was Pope Francis' message to future priests at an Ordination Mass in St. Peter's Basilica in April. One of our own young men was called upon to "build up" God's house on Saturday, May 25, 2013, in his hometown of Easton, Penn. Deacon Alexander Joseph, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Joseph, was ordained to the sacred priesthood by the Invocation of the Holy Spirit and the Imposition of Hands by the Most Reverend Gregory John Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn. The Ordination was followed by a reception in the Church Hall, attended by more than 400 friends and family members.

Bishop Gregory has said of Fr. Alex, "[He] brings to the holy priesthood a human touch and a love for others that will both comfort and encourage, at the same time. Getting to the holy priesthood was not easy for him, and so I think he will treasure every day he has as a priest of Jesus Christ."

The Ordination was part of a full weekend of events planned by Father Paul Damien, Deacon Anthony Koury and the Parish Community of Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Easton, Father Alex's home parish. Bishop Gregory, along with Chorbishop Seely Beggiani, Rector of Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary, Msgr. Maroun Asmar and many other spiritual leaders and seminarians, participated in community events such as Teen Night (at which the youth of the Parish witnessed some very fancy moves on the basketball court by our Bishop), and Theology on Tap, where many current topics were discussed.

On Sunday, May 26, Fr. Alex celebrated his First Liturgy of Thanksgiving, followed by a brunch in the Social Hall. □

# Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon

## *Eparchial Convocation*

by Shelly Vitale

The Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon in St. Louis, Mo., held its Eparchial Convocation April 4-7, 2013. The Most Reverend Bishop Robert J. Shaheen welcomed clergy and visitors who began arriving Thursday, April 4. After settling in, the group gathered together for *Ramsho* (Maronite Evening prayer) and reflection by Chorbishop John D. Faris, entitled "My Name is John and I will be Your Server" followed by dinner. On Friday, April 5, everyone assembled at the Maronite Heritage Institute for a very informative presentation given by Chorbishop Faris entitled "The Great Experiment." Participants in small group discussions talked about the Maronite Church and what is unique about its identity, what role ethnicity and culture play, the advantages a Maronite parish has, and the challenges a Maronite parish faces. Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Bishop Robert J. Shaheen. Another presentation was held by Chorbishop Faris titled "Christianity is a Movement" followed by more group discussions pertaining to what is needed to deepen one's faith and to go out and evangelize, the tools one has and the tools one needs. The evening concluded with dinner and informal discussions.

Saturday, April 6, the participants gathered at the Maronite Heritage Institute for a Panel Discussion titled "A Journey to 2113." Small group discussions followed giving the attendees the chance to talk about where the Maronite Church hopes to be in 2113, how to get there and what the challenges are. Afterwards, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated. A Town Hall meeting took place in the afternoon hosted by Bishop Robert Shaheen. The Bishop was very forthcoming and informative with questions and answers and summarizing the challenges facing a Maronite Bishop. In the evening dinner was served and a beautifully carved wooden cedar tree, crafted by Deacon George Karam, was presented to the Bishop to honor him for his years of service.

On the final day, Sunday, April 7, participants attended the Divine Liturgy at St. Raymond Cathedral followed by brunch at the Cedars. The convocation was very beneficial to all those attending. The participants left with a deeper understanding of their faith and heritage, and they had the opportunity to socialize and get acquainted with old and new friends. Thank you to Bishop Robert Shaheen, the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, and the St. Raymond Cathedral for their warm hospitality. Clergy attending included: The Most Reverend Robert J. Shaheen, Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon; The Most Reverend Gregory John Mansour, Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn; Chorbishop Faouzi Elia, Vicar General, Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, and Pastor of St. Sharbel Church, Peoria, Ill.; Chorbishop Alfred Badawi, St. Sharbel Church, Warren, Mich.; Chorbishop John Faris, St. Louis Gonzaga Church, Utica, N.Y.;



Chorbishop Michael Kail, St. Maron Church, Youngstown, Ohio; Chorbishop Richard Saad, St. Elias Church, Birmingham, Ala.; Monsignor Moussa Joseph, St. Raymond Maronite Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.; Monsignor Louis Baz, St. Maron Church, Detroit, Mich.; Monsignor Jibrán BouMerhi, St. Jude Church, Murray, Utah; Monsignor William Bonzcewski, Our Lady of the Cedars Church, Akron, Ohio; Monsignor Sharbel Maroun, St. Maron Church, Minneapolis, Minn.; Reverend Nabil Mouannes, Our Lady of the Rosary Mission, Sacramento, Calif., and St. Sharbel Mission, Stockton, Calif.; Reverend Antoine Bakh, St. John Maron Church, Orange, Calif.; Reverend Abdallah Zaidan, M.L.M., Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon-St. Peter's Cathedral, Los Angeles, Calif.; Reverend Assad El Basha, M.L.M., Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Lewisville, Tex.; Reverend Gary George, CSsR, Director of Youth Office, Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon; Reverend Andre' Mhanna, St. Rafka Church, Lakewood, Colo.; Reverend Charles Khachan, M.L.M., Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Lombard, Ill.; Reverend Ghassan Mattar, M.L.M., St. George Church, San Antonio, Tex.; Reverend Elias Abi Sarkis, St. Therese Child of Jesus Church, Tulsa, Okla.; Reverend Rodrigue Constantin, Holy family Church, Mendota Heights, Minn.; Reverend Pierre Bassil, St. Ignatius of Antioch Church, Dayton, Ohio; Deacon Dr. Lou Peters, St. Raymond Maronite Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.; Deacon Wissam Akiki, St. Raymond Maronite Cathedral; Deacon Albert Constantine, St. Peter and Paul Maronite Mission, Simi Valley, Calif.; Deacon John Sfire, Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Lombard, Ill.; Deacon Wadih Kaldawi, St. Sharbel Church, Portland, Ore.; Deacon Antoine Karam, St. Sharbel Church, Portland, Ore.; Deacon Sam Wehby, St. Elias Church, Birmingham, Ala.; (*Continues on page 10*)

## Dartmouth, Massachusetts *Women's Retreat*



by Natalie Salameh

The Maronite Servants of Christ the Light hosted a retreat at the Mother of Light Convent on May 31 - June 1, 2013, for the young women of the Maronite Church.

The focus was "Made in the image and likeness of God." I think we all often forget that we, as individual human beings, have a superior dignity; that it was God who formed us, created us from nothing, and who willed us into existence purely out of His unfathomable love for us. The Maronite Servants of Christ the Light reminded us of the superior dignity that we have of being children of an all-powerful and all-loving God.

The Retreat began with the Book of Genesis. Questions, which we all ask ourselves at one point in our lives, were discussed in great detail. "Who am I?" and "What am I?" The Sisters gave us the answers we all search for - we are beautiful because we are made in the image and likeness of God. We are made in His image not because of what we have done for Him, but because of what He has done for us, and not because of what He means to us, but because of what we mean to Him. This served as an excellent topic of meditation for our one hour of Eucharistic Adoration that followed.

The evening was sealed with the watching of the movie "October Baby." This movie in itself focused on the great gift of God's love, the gift of children (particularly the unborn), and the healing power of God's love. This movie transmitted a really powerful message that in forgiveness, Christ sets us free from sin and death.

Sin was then the topic of the next morning's presentation, after the praying of the Maronite Saforo (morning prayer). What does sin do? It distorts and corrupts our image, which was made in God's likeness. The morning's presentation focused on original sin, which caused the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden and closed the gates of heaven. But God the Father Almighty, in His infinite mercy and compassion, sent us a Savior, His only begotten Son, to redeem us and re-open the gates of heaven. Christ Jesus, by

taking on our humanity, has united us to His divinity.

The Maronite Servants of Christ the Light reminded us that the greatest remedy for sin is the Holy Mystery of Penance (Confession). To that end, we had confessions with Fr. Jack Morrison from Our Lady of Purgatory Maronite Church in New Bedford, Mass., followed by the Divine Liturgy.

The third and final presentation spotlighted on the role that we women have in the conception and birth of new life (as biological mothers) and the tender love and care we have for all of God's children in the Holy Mother Church (as spiritual mothers).

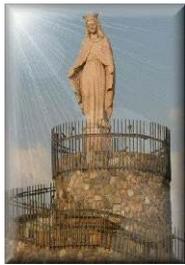
On a personal note, I shared my testimony of discernment with the other young ladies who attended the retreat. I have been discerning a religious vocation with the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light. I am originally from Sydney, Australia, but I made a special visit to the Maronite Servants to discern the voice and call of God. I ask for your prayers during this time of my discernment. □

## Dallas, Texas *Eucharistic Procession*



The parish community of Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Dallas, Texas, celebrated the Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (*Corpus Christi*) on June 2, 2013. In his homily, Fr. Assaad ElBasha, Pastor, stated that the Eucharist is God's love toward our human nature and Who remains with us on our faith journey to heaven.

The whole community joined Fr. ElBasha in procession with the Holy Eucharist around the property of the Church after Liturgy. The flower girls served as angels, making a carpet of rose petals to heaven. The hymns the choir and the parishioners sang were inspiring. The Altar boys assisted the Pastor in a reverent way. The parishioners following the Holy Eucharist were joyful and reverent. Before the Eucharist was reposed, the priest offered prayers to the Mother of the Eucharist to protect the Church and to teach us to love her son. □



## North Jackson, Ohio 48<sup>th</sup> Assumption Pilgrimage

August 13, 14, and 15, 2013, mark the 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in North Jackson, Ohio. "The years have passed quickly and many visitors and pilgrims have come to Mary's home for many reasons. All have left with God's blessings and graces," says Msgr. Anthony Spinoso, Rector.

### Tuesday, August 13

7 p.m. Fr. Gregory Maturi, O.P., Pastor of St. Dominic Church, Youngstown, Ohio, will celebrate a Roman Rite Mass. Candlelight procession and blessing with the Icon of Mary will follow.

### Wednesday, August 14

7 p.m. Archbishop William C. Skurla, Metropolitan Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, Penn., assisted by the Archeparchial Choir of Pittsburgh, will celebrate a Byzantine Liturgy.

8 p.m. Paraclesis to the Blessed Virgin Mary, which includes Procession and Falling Asleep of the Virgin, will be led by Monsignor George Appleyard of St. Peter and Paul, Carnegie, Penn., assisted by the Choir of St. Ann Ukrainian Church, Austintown, Ohio.

### Thursday, August 15 *Feast of the Assumption*

10 a.m. Maronite Divine Liturgy

2 p.m. Maronite Divine Liturgy with Anointing of the Sick celebrated by Bishop Robert Shaheen and Bishop Gregory Mansour

4 p.m. Presentation in Prince of Peace Chapel by Chorbishop John D. Faris, J.C.D. "And I Will Be Your Waiter," A reflection on relationships between a parish priest and his parishioners.

7 p.m. Maronite Pontifical Liturgy celebrated by Bishop Robert Shaheen and Bishop Gregory Mansour. Procession and blessing with the Icon of Mary 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). □

## Brooklyn, New York Confraternity Dinner



by Salma Vahdat

The end-of-year dinner for the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception is an event that the ladies of Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral always anticipates. This year was no exception. Thirty seven members were able to slip away from their families for an evening filled with camaraderie, a delicious dinner and an unexpected surprise in the person of Chorbishop Michael Thomas, Vicar General of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, who visits our community once per month from his pastoral duty in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

It was a "bittersweet" affair. On the one hand all were happy to share an evening with one another plus our Rector, Msgr. James Root, Chorbishop Michael, Fr. Geoffrey Abdallah and Subdeacon Norbert Vogl. On the other hand we were bidding *au revoir* to Fr. Geoffrey who will be leaving the Cathedral to assume his new duties as Rector of Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary in Washington, D.C. Fr. Geoffrey came to us as Director of Music for the Eparchy of Saint Maron from his home in Australia. He endeared himself to the community with his gentle manner, subtle humor and "strange" accent. Msgr. James often asked him to speak in Arabic so he could understand what he was saying. It really takes a while to tune one's ear to the Aussie twang! Nevertheless, he, and we, persevered and it is time to wish him well and, reluctantly, let him go. All of his work in revamping and translating the music of the Maronite Church has borne fruit. We will miss him but we know the Seminary will continue to thrive under his able direction.

Msgr. James thanked the ladies for their devotion to the Cathedral and for their unstinting support and untiring effort to contribute to all of the activities throughout the year. Our President, Marian Sahadi Ciaccia, energized us to follow her lead and inspired us to continue in our good works. Thoughtful as ever, Marian had a token gift prepared for each member...just to say, "thanks." Chorbishop Michael extended an invitation to all of us to "come on down" and visit his new church in Ft. Lauderdale.

As summer extends its warm embrace the ladies of the Cathedral turn to their families for vacations, trips to Lebanon and to restore themselves for the efforts of the coming year. September is not far off! □



## Boston, Massachusetts *Time For Teenagers*



Has anyone seen our Maronite teenagers? Rev. Georges Y. El-Khalli, Ph.D., Pastor of Our Lady of Cedars of Lebanon Church, Jamaica Plain, Mass., asked this very same question. Today our teenagers' social calendars are filled with academics, sports and other activities. What little time they do have is usually filled with some other type of distraction, typically involving electronic devices. It seemed at best that Father Georges had a daunting task ahead of him. His vision was to form a teenage youth group (M.Y.O.), so as to impart to them the importance of the Lebanese culture through various activities. It was clear that he would need the assistance of their parents in order for this endeavor to be successful. Several phone calls and a few meetings later, the first group was formed. There have been many gatherings, which commence with the celebration of *Qurbano* [Divine Liturgy]. The M.Y.O. members have participated actively as a group, volunteering their time for the needy. The charitable entities have included my Brother's Keeper, the Boston Food Pantry and the Parish's festival. In addition, Father Georges continues to educate the teens about their heritage and the importance of sustaining their cultural roots. This M.Y.O. group has built a strong bond together by sharing common cultural activities such as food, music, and dance. When asked for advice to give to other parishes who are seeking to do the same, he suggests perseverance. Father Georges has the ability to connect with these children at their level; they sense his sincerity and genuine love for them. In a world competing for our children's time, Father Georges has been able to convey the importance of sharing the blessings that they have been given. When asked about future plans, Father Georges El-Khalli looks forward to the M.Y.O. membership flourishing and incorporating more community service along with cultural activities and growth in their Maronite faith.

### ***Book Signing***

by *Kenneth P. Nasif*

The weekend of June 8 - 9, 2013, was a special time for the Church and parishioners at Our Lady of the Cedars of Lebanon Church in Boston, Mass. The long-awaited and much anticipated book entitled "Whispering Treasures

-The Maronite Journey from Antioch to Boston" was made public and available to our Maronite community and the public at large.

The book was published and authored by our Pastor, the Reverend Georges Y. El-Khalli, Ph.D. Over the weekend, after the Saturday and Sunday Liturgies, Fr. Georges conducted a book-signing event for all of the parishioners who waited eagerly in line to obtain their copies which Fr. Georges signed with a special message for each of them.

The book unveils the almost hidden and moving story that is contained in the stained glass windows that surround the oldest existing Maronite Church in America, having been founded in 1898. The current Church was completed and dedicated in Boston's Jamaica Plain section in 1975. The late famed Maronite historian and artist, Saliba Al-Douaihy, was commissioned to design the stained glass windows for the Church.

Unknown by many until now, is that Saliba Al-Douaihy's artistic project was really more than just adorning the Church with stained glass windows in a traditional manner. As Fr. Georges mentions in his book ".....The church windows consist of sceneries, pictures and Aramaic inscriptions. Names of saints, key monasteries and schools, designated geographic locations, regions and towns, which contributed significantly to shape the history of the Maronite Church, are inscribed throughout these windows."

Upon his arrival in Boston as Pastor about three years ago, Fr. Georges examined the beautiful windows and discovered to his amazement that the windows contained a near-hidden message that was the story of the founding of the Maronite Church, its detailed glorious history over the centuries, and its ultimate spread to America with the founding of the Church in Boston in 1898. Because some of the parishioners were wondering about the significance of the windows, which were beginning to show some age and need repair, and because Fr. Georges discovered the hidden treasures in each of the windows after checking each and every inscription, thereby realizing the glorious chronicles they narrate, he decided to go about the task of writing this book which contains pictures of the windows.

Fr. Georges in part writes ".....Saliba Al-Douaihy beautifully arranged the windows and synchronized the inscription to fit perfectly the chronological order of Maronite history. With a few windows, he detailed this long journey of over sixteen hundred years, from its inception until today." In the lower section of the windows, the inscriptions take us out of Antioch, the birthplace of the Maronite Church, then through the centuries of Maronite saints and martyrs, the development of Maronite religious and monastic orders, the history, identities and contributions of notable Maronite priests, bishops and patriarchs, culminating in the development of the Maronite community in Boston in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with the founding of Our Lady of the Cedars of Lebanon Church.

Additional books are available and can be ordered at a cost of only \$15.00 each plus postage and handling. Income derived from sales will go to the upkeep and maintenance of the windows. To order a book, please contact the Church Rectory at 61 Rockwood St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130 or tel. 617-522-0225. □

## San Diego, California *Lebanese Festival*



This past Memorial Day Weekend May 24 - 26, 2013, brought the annual Lebanese Festival hosted by St. Ephrem Maronite Catholic Church to the San Diego, Calif., area. In its tenth year, the festival featured traditional Lebanese songs, dances and food. Record numbers of people came out to enjoy the weekend of heritage, traditional music, folkloric dance and delectable food. It was a great three days for the festival goers to sample the food, listen to the music, see spectacular performances throughout the day and to understand more of Lebanese culture. It was also a fun experience for the very young who had lots to keep them entertained with numerous carnival rides and games. The festival drew large crowds of people eager to immerse themselves in the culture or celebrate their own Lebanese heritage.

The event kicked off on Friday, with members of the St. Ephrem youth dance troupes as they welcomed and energized the festival goers with the traditional "Zahfe" followed by "Dabke" performances.

The beauty of the festival was that it really gave visitors an idea of what Lebanon is and who the Lebanese people are and it reaffirmed among our Lebanese youth their roots and their identity as Lebanese. □

*the Deadline is...* **Deadline for the next issue of *The Maronite Voice* is August 25, 2013.**  
*The Maronite Voice* is the official Newsletter of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon and of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn.

Send all changes of address, news, pictures and personal correspondence to:

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

## Newtown Square, Pennsylvania *Parish to Parish*



What a lovely time everyone had on Saturday, April 27, 2013. At times like these, we ask ourselves, "How come we never did this before?" Well, I guess we never before had Seminarian Toni Kairouz and Simona Elhallah from Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Washington, D.C., Fr. Paul Mouawad from St. Sharbel Church, Newtown square, Penn., and all the lovely parishioners of both churches to pull it together. The day was perfect, thanks be to God. Everyone introduced themselves and interacted very easily. The children were well behaved and everyone knew they were all having a good time, too.

It was our utmost pleasure to unite and share our church, prayer time, conversation and our humble meal. We are all children of God and members of His Church united together in love and faith. From what was witnessed at the picnic, there is no doubt our children will carry on admirably. God love you all and thank you for this opportunity to get to know the children until we next meet.

Fr. Paul welcomed everyone to St. Sharbel Church and the Hermitage. The first order of the day was the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Deacon Martin spoke on "What is the Church and who are its members" in such a way that was easily understood and engaged by the youth in question and answer format.

After the Liturgy, everyone enjoyed a picnic lunch prepared by the Ladies Guild of The Immaculate Conception and other parishioners, and everyone had a chance to sit, talk and get to know one another. It was a pleasure to see the children play so well together and upon leaving there were shouts of "See you next time and thanks for such a great day calling each other by name." Fr. Paul even gave all the kids a ride to the "Hermitage" on his vintage tractor. □

## *Summer Break*

*The Maronite Voice* wishes its readers an enjoyable, safe and God-filled summer. *The Maronite Voice* will not be published in August. It will appear again in September. The deadline for the September issue is August 25, 2013. □

## St. Louis, Missouri *First Communion*



**J**ames Antoni, Andrew Nassif, Perla Akiki, Connor Jones and Mike Elking received their First Holy Communion at Saint Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo., on May 5, 2013. □

## Warren, Michigan *May Procession*

by Sara Achkar

**O**n Friday, May 31, 2013, following the Liturgy, the Parishioners of St. Sharbel Maronite Church honored the Blessed Virgin Mary by having an outdoor procession led by Chorbishop Alfred Badawi, Pastor, and Subdeacon Michael Magyar. Together with the parishioners, all recited the Rosary. Beautiful songs and readings were done to honor the Blessed Mother. The children presented bouquets of flowers during the service. Following the Liturgy, a potluck dinner was served in the Social Hall. □

## North Jackson, Ohio *St. Joseph Feast Day*

**O**n Tuesday, March 19, 2013, the National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon, North Jackson, Ohio, celebrated the closing of the Annual Saint Joseph Novena with the Divine Liturgy and the traditional Saint Joseph's Table.

The procession with the statue of Saint Joseph took place from the Prince of Peace Chapel to the Cedars Hall where the volunteers and benefactors prepared a St. Joseph's Table laden with foods and beverages.

The celebration of Saint Joseph's Feast has become an important part of the spiritual and devotional life of the Shrine. The Shrine has placed for many years, great confidence in Saint Joseph as the protector and provider of the Church. The faithful are seen daily in the Saint Joseph's Garden praying for their personal needs as well as the temporal and practical needs of the Shrine. □

## Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

**July 1 - 4, 2013**

Annual Maronite Clergy Conference, Tampa, Fla.

**July 4 - 8, 2013**

Annual Maronite (NAM) Convention, Tampa, Fla.

**July 12 - 19, 2013**

Family Visit

**July 21, 2013**

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

**July 22, 2013**

Meeting with Sex Abuse Auditors, The Chancery, Brooklyn, N.Y.

**July 26, 2013**

Meeting with the MYA of Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

**July 28, 2013**

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

**August 4, 2013**

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

**August 6, 2013**

Final Vows of Sister Mariam Caritas, Sister of Life

**August 11 - 12, 2013**

Pastoral Visit to Our Lady of Victory, Pittsburgh, Penn., and to Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Maronite Mission, Aliquippa, Penn.

**August 12 - 13, 2013**

Pastoral Visit to St. John the Baptist Church, New Castle, Penn.

**August 13 - 15, 2013**

Feast of the Assumption, Our Lady of Lebanon Shrine, North Jackson, Ohio

**August 16 - 18, 2013**

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

**August 25, 2013**

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

**August 26 - September 4, 2013**

Personal Silent Retreat, Gloucester, Mass.

**September 4, 2013**

Divine Liturgy for the Gloucester, Mass., Community

**September 8 - 11, 2013**

Monastic Chapter, Petersham, Mass.

**September 12, 2013**

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

## Minneapolis, Minnesota *110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*



Bishop Shaheen installs ten new members into the Order of Saint Sharbel.

On the weekend of May 10 - 12, 2013, the Parish of St. Maron of Minneapolis, Minn., welcomed His Excellency Bishop Robert Shaheen for a very special visit on the occasion of the 110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Parish. The event started on Friday night with a joint event between the Parish of Holy Family of Mendota Heights and St. Maron of Minneapolis. This special dinner was held for the parish leadership and potential members of the Order of Saint Sharbel.

On Sunday, May 12, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in thanksgiving for the 110 years of existence and blessings in Minneapolis. During the liturgy Bishop Robert installed ten new members of the Order of Saint Sharbel, and an additional four were absent. The liturgy was followed by a brunch in the Cedars Hall.

Bishop Robert was overwhelmed with the kind hospitality of the people and dedication and support of all the members of the parish. Although this could be the last visit that Bishop Shaheen makes to Minneapolis as the current Bishop, he knows that he has a special place in our hearts and that he can come visit us any time in the future. □

## *Eparchial Convocation*

*Continued from page 4*

Deacon George Karam, St. Sharbel Mission, El Paso, Tex.; Subdeacon Mark Floyd, St. Anthony of Padua Church, Cincinnati, Ohio; and Subdeacon Tom Simon, St. Anthony of Padua Church, Cincinnati, Ohio. Along with the clergy, many lay people attended from various parts of the United States; everyone's participation was greatly appreciated. □



## Glen Allen, Virginia *Bible Camp*



*by Cathy George*

The children at Saint Anthony Maronite Church in Glen Allen, Virginia, took a Western adventure during Bible Camp this June 24 through 28, 2013. Sixty children followed the stories of Moses in the book of Exodus as God used him to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. The children discussed how God cared about the Israelites and sent Moses to help them, just as God sent Jesus to all of us. The children loved the stories of baby Moses in the Nile, the burning bush, the Passover, manna in the desert, and the ten Commandments. They compared the Old Testament verses to New Testament connections about Jesus.

Saint Anthony's Bible Camp was twenty years old this year and offered a restructured program. Parents had requested a shorter program. The children, in four groups, rotated around four centers, music, arts and crafts, religion, and science and nature games.

Since the theme was SonWest Roundup, they loved learning about western towns and animals. Many parents and teens assisted by supervising the groups and teaching in the centers. Along with camp songs, the children learned several new Maronite hymns for their prayer service on Friday. The oldest group participated in the readings for the service while all the children sang their Maronite hymns. After the prayer service, they performed their camp songs for their parents. □

## **Food For Thought**

I would like to ask you a question: how many of you pray to the Holy Spirit every day? Probably few, but we must satisfy this desire of Jesus and pray every day to the Holy Spirit, so that he opens our heart towards Jesus.

*Pope Francis, General Audience, May 15, 2013. □*

## The Joy of Priesthood

by Fr. Vincent Farhat,  
St. Maron Church, Philadelphia, Penn.

It has been three years since my ordination to the priesthood and I look back on this journey with joy and contentment. My first assignment took me to St. Anthony in Lawrence, Mass., where I was assigned as the Parochial Vicar to Msgr. Peter Azar. It was a wonderful 18 months and I was able to immerse myself in the community and organizations. I was then assigned to St. Maron Church in Philadelphia, PA, as Administrator and now as Pastor. Being newly ordained, I really never knew what to expect in my ministry because everything was new. Every situation is different and every person unique in their needs.



I was always close to the Church and I served in many different capacities. I always admired the priesthood and the ministry they provided for the faithful people. But I never realized what the priesthood entailed until I was assigned. A priest not only offers Divine Liturgy for his community but he offers much more than that. He is a comforter, a consoler, a family member, and a referee. He is the first person to welcome a new baby to the Church and the last one to bless those who have passed on from this life. He is a motivator for the young and a source of comfort to the old. He is administrator, spiritual leader, and an example of Christ.

This is my life as a priest and one that I embrace with joy and fulfillment and, yes, at times some difficulties. But the joys outweigh all of the setbacks and obstacles that a priest may encounter with the grace of God's help. Some people think that a priest has one role--to offer sacrifice at the altar of God. But there is so much more to the priesthood than that. Nothing can fully prepare you with the ministry of the Church. When I came to Philadelphia, I followed a beloved priest who had been part of the fabric of St. Maron for over 35 years. My greatest fear was, "How am I going to fill the shoes of Msgr. Sharbel?" I learned early on that this was not a possibility nor did I want to fill these shoes. Instead, I brought myself to the people and slowly began to show them who I was and what I had to offer. I also insisted that they show me all that they had to offer.

Bringing a community together is a daunting task when you are newly assigned to a parish. But with mutual respect and a firm challenge to the people, a community begins to take shape and everyone begins to understand that by working together great things can happen. By working together a community begins to grow. By working together the spiritual life of a community begins to flourish. This is the greatest reward of a parish priest.

To see the church filled with young and old, to see the catechism program grow, to see the people respond to the needs of the community, and to feel the work of the Holy Spirit permeate the fabric of a community--this is the reward of a parish priest. People say that the priest gives up so much in order to serve the Church. I submit that the priest gains so much more by the joys he receives from the people he serves and from the love he receives from the people he shepherds. To make a difference in the life of just one person outweighs the sacrifices we give up by being a priest for Jesus Christ.

My journey over the past three years can only be compared to the words of St. Luke. "To those who have been given much, much will be expected; to those who have been given more, much will be demanded." Jesus demands much from His priests that He has entrusted to His flock. When these demands are met there is no better joy knowing that our work is for the greater glory of God. And only then, when we meet Almighty God, will we hear His words to us "job well done my good and faithful servant." □

### *Prayer to Our Lady of Lebanon*

O Mary, you who are called "the Cedar of Lebanon," look down upon your children who today and always beg your guiding hand.

Grant us the faith to withstand the sweeping blows of life as the Cedar stands straight against the wind.

Develop in us the hope, the hope of Resurrection, that what we believe as your Divine Son has revealed it to us; we may appreciate the joy that should be ours.

Dear Mother, increase our love, the love we should have for the Blessed Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; our filial love for you, and to the perfection of this love: to love our neighbor not in theory but in solid prayer and practice.

We now kneel at your feet, Dear Lady, begging for your blessing and beseeching your intercession to your Divine Son for all our Church and Government authorities, for ourselves, all our relatives and friends, especially (request).

Our Lady, Queen of Lebanon, America, and the Universe – Pray for us. Amen. □

*An Indulgence Prayer  
Imprimatur: Bishop Francis M. Zayek  
Diocese of Saint Maron -USA*

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

## **Brooklyn, New York**



**L**eonardo Argudo, Nida Chacar, Michele Chahwan, Christiana Chaya, Gabriel Chiha, Lorianna ElAdem, Pio El Gemayel, Kate Farhat, Kristen Farhat, Aya Hayek, George Elias Maroun, Sammy Nassour, Andrew Saade, Anthony Saade, Jonathan Safi and Teaney Sarkis received their First Holy Communion on April 28, 2013, at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y. □

## **Scranton, Pennsylvania**



**J**ames Daniel Bestrycki, Jr., Lena Maria Ligorio and Noah Christopher Petrewski received their First Holy Communion on May 5, 2013, at St. Ann Maronite Church, Scranton, Penn. □

## **Atlanta, Georgia**



**M**athew Mansour, Sam George Yousif, Luke Zogby, Meagan Nocheherly, Brandley Wilkendorf and John Smeen received their First Holy Communion at St. Joseph Maronite Church, Atlanta, Ga., on May 11, 2013. □

## **Fort Lauderdale, Florida**



**J**on Lahoud, Sarah Elkhail and Kevin Kiderchah received their First Holy Communion at Heart of Jesus Maronite Mission, Fort Lauderdale, Fla., on May 5, 2013. □



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

## Phoenix, Arizona



**A**lfred Estephan, Christian Estephan, Carly El Ghoul, Amanda Ortega, Victor Fatoohi, Akram Hindosh, Yazin Hindosh, Abraham Istanbouly and George Ashkar received their First Holy Communion at St. Joseph Maronite Church, Phoenix, Ariz., on May 5, 2013. □

## Houston, Texas



**A**lessa El Kareh, Matthew Mekha, Nicole Chberi, Nicholas Stevens, Maria Abounahra, Yousif Shammas, Valentina Chelala, Mary-Jo Harb, Mari Jo Abi Aad, Kevin Choufani, Sam Farah, Joya Moufarrej, Grace Wakim, Amri Srouji, Aiden Bousleiman, Anthony Azzi, Richard Haouila, Sarah Hage, Elias Abdo, Gabriella Yammine, Joseph Abounahra, Georgina Nemri, Paul Moubarak, Lawrence Obeid, Salam Shammas, received their First Holy Communion at Our Lady of the Cedars Maronite Church, Houston, Tex., on May 18, 2013. □

## Detroit, Michigan



**C**herele Moubarak and Rita Shemmai received their First Holy Communion at St. Maron Church, Detroit, Mich., on May 19, 2013. □

## San Francisco, California



Anastacia Ababseh, Tatiana Abboud, Matthew AbiEzzi, Sarah AbiEzzi, Giselle Awad, Marc Boudames, Hannah Boufarhat, George Chuchrallah, Charbel ElKhoury, Melissa Haddad, Sterling Hammack, Karlie Makhoul, Luna Fadlallah, Eli Sabbagh, Christine Sulieman, Peter Tayar, Charles Turk and Hannah Wehbeh received their First Holy Communion at Our Lady of Lebanon Church, San Francisco Bay area on May 5, 2013. □

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

## **Lawrence, Massachusetts**



**A**nthony Sadek, Antonio Hbaiter, Chloe Archambault, Linda Pelletier, Mark Harb, Matthew Pappalardo, Mia Hassan, Ryan El Khoury, Sophie Azzi, Logan Sfeir, Kyle Bishop, Giorgio Abou Nasr, Stephanie Chamoun, Adrian Acevedo, Muriel Merheb, Antonio Monaco and Lea Saab received their First Holy Communion at St. Anthony Maronite Church, Lawrence, Mass., on May 5, 2013. □

## **Pleasantville, New Jersey**



Bryan Rodriguez, Nelson Rodriguez, Bryan Caminero, Daniela Rodriguez, Angela Caminero, Luis Aladez, Franny Rodriguez, Marguerita Nammour, Rachelle Alevizos, Alexander Bentancourt, Anderson Ulerio, Esmeralda Gonzalez, Gerardo Cruz, Numa Rodriguez, Ariel Martinez, Alonda Valadez, Mariela Cholula, Allison Ulerio, Eric Caminero, Hugo Alvarado, Luz Alvarado, David Pelaez, Michael Nammour, Alianna Ulerio, Samuel Gonzalez, Jasmine Reales, Janelly Martinez, Grisel Ruiz and Michelle Betancourt received their First Holy Communion at Our Lady, Star of the East Maronite Mission, Pleasantville, N.J., on May 19, 2013. □

## **Utica, New York**



**P**atrick Corridori, Julia Mitchell, Kaeden Wood, M'ryah Noti, Cameron Ionta, Alexander Whiteman, Matthew Hanna and George Makarri received their First Holy Communion at St. Louis Gonzaga Church, Utica, N.Y., on May 5, 2013. □

## **Buffalo, New York**



**J**oseph Hayek, Emil Jreige, Michael Newcomb, Elias Mansour, Jr., Sebastian Sayers, Maria Al Mekhtifi, Danielle Behlok, Dominique Khoury, Mary El Khoury, Kylie Badawy, Alex Sebaali, Vincenzo Parlato, Marcus Ibrahim, Philippe Armstrong and Peter Haddad received their First Holy Eucharist at St. John Maron Church in Williamsville, N.Y., on May 5, 2013. □

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

## **Lewisville, Texas**



**Z**achary Tebcherany, Kristina Boulos, Alexander Tabbah, Chloe Moubarak, Isaac Black, Isabella Anderson, Nicholas Richa, Natalie Wood, Michael Henke, Ariel Tebcherany, Mario Zaki and Kaitlyn Said received their First Holy Communion at Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Lewisville (Dallas), Tex., on May 1, 2013. □

## **Chicago, Illinois**



**D**aniella Christina Ripamonti, Luke Joseph Allegretti, Leah Barakat-Diab, Anthony Jazaerlian, Reiana Marie Awad, Tony Zayek, Lea Michelle Khawaja, Edgar Duenas, Cassandra Jeannine Chamoun and Seth Skamara received their First Holy Communion at Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Chicago, Ill., on May 4, 2013. □

## **Youngstown, Ohio**



**J**amie Collard, Jon Michael Chahine, Carson Essad, Brooke Ghossain, Zachary Karas, Chloe Khoury, Antonio Maroun, Tristan Maroun, Dominic Marzano, Ava Nohra, Carter Sargent, Clayton Sargent, Maria Sargent and Isabella Zimmerman received their First Holy Communion at St. Maron Church, Youngstown, Ohio, on May 5, 2013. □

## **Olean, New York**



**A**dele Dwaileebe and Ellison Ash-West received their First Holy Communion at St. Joseph Maronite Church, Olean, N.Y., on May 19, 2013. □



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

### **Glen Allen, Virginia**



**M**ichael Abou Assi, Chloe Aboujaoude, Lara Bouhaidar, Julian Chaoul, AJ Conclin, Bella Dailey, Faith Daniel, Rasha Dermesropian, Tracy Dermesropian, Stephanie Greco, Sloan Householder, Vince Nadder, Natalie Roberts, Chloe Saad, Christy Saad, Noor Shaia, Mason Shibley, Maria Shibley, Hunter Stanley and Connie Yesbeck received their First Holy Communion at St. Anthony Maronite Church, Glen Allen [Richmond], Va., on May 12, 2013. □

### **Worcester, Massachusetts**



**C**assandra Jreis, Tiana Jreis, Alfred Gabriel, Isabella Gabriel and Mia Zoghbi received their First Holy Communion at Our Lady of Mercy Maronite Church, Worcester, Mass., on May 5, 2013. □

### **West Palm Beach, Florida**



**Y**vette Chamoun received her First Holy Communion at Mary, Mother of the Light Maronite Mission, Greenacres [Palm Beach], Fla., on May 26, 2013. □

### **Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**



**C**hristopher Ashkar, Maryam Bousamra, Adriana Najjar and Tessa Romah received their First Holy Communion at Our Lady of Victory Maronite Church, Carnegie [Pittsburgh], Penn., on May 5, 2013. □



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

## **Springfield, Massachusetts**



**G**eorge Matta, Morgan Wright, Elaena Yusuf, Samuel Stevens, Gabriella Frangie, Victoria Frangie, John DaFonseca, Maroun Matta, Alexander Frangie and Alexis Blaine received their First Holy Communion at St. Anthony's Maronite Church in Springfield, Mass., on May 5, 2013. □

## **Newtown Square, Pennsylvania**



**O**live Karam and Kiana Sakr received their First Holy Communion at St. Sharbel Maronite Church, Newtown Square, Penn., on May 12, 2013. □

## **Portland, Oregon**



**M**ikena Ellingson, John Paul Ishac, Emile Shashati, Yasmeen Karam, Ryan Torker, Georges Karam and Jude Mesa (not pictured) received their First Holy Communion at St. Sharbel Maronite Church, Portland, Ore., on April 7, 2013. □

## **Cleveland, Ohio**



**T**anya ElAsmar, Alyssa Lahoud, Charbel Nakhle, Madeline Ramsey, Naji El-Hayek, Angela Nahra, Juliana Nader, Justin Chamoun, Elie Rida, Joseph Estephan, Naya Alsouss, Alex Merheb, Rebecca M. Elkhouri, Joice Salloum, Djini Salloum, Andrew Chamoun, Elie Jo Chamoun, Zoey Daher and Charbel Maroun received their First Holy Communion at St. Maron Church, Cleveland, Ohio, on May 5, 2013. □



## ***Patriarch Rai Consecrates Lebanon to the Immaculate Heart of Mary***

**H**is Beatitude Patriarch Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai, Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and the Whole East, consecrated Lebanon and the entire Middle East to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, praying that all the peoples of the region are freed "from the sins that lead to divisions, aggression and violence." The solemn Act of Consecration took place on Sunday, June 16, 2013, with the recitation of a prayer during the Eucharist



Liturgy presided by the Patriarch in the National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in Harissa, in the presence of Lebanese President Michel Sleiman and designated Prime Minister Tammam Salam. A multitude of believers gathered around the Basilica to implore that the Country of the Cedars is not overwhelmed by the contagion of sectarian conflict that is afflicting Syria. During the homily, His Beatitude Rai recalled that Lebanon is the only Country where the Solemnity of the Annunciation, on March 25, is celebrated by Christians and Muslims together as a national holiday. The Patriarch also reiterated the urgent need for reconciliation between the political forces and in particular between the two opposing coalitions – that on March 8<sup>th</sup> and March 14 - which he stigmatized for having compromised "the image of Lebanon and its co-existence," crippling institutions and pushing the Lebanese people to get involved in the Syrian conflict. The Head of the Maronite Church also reiterated his full support to President Sleiman and described the regular Lebanese army as the only legitimate "protector" of Lebanon. □

*Fides.org, June 17, 2013*

## ***Pope Francis Encourages Christians in Middle East to Never Lose Hope***

*by Junno Arocho Esteves*

**O**n Thursday, June 20, 2013, Pope Francis met with the Reunion of Aid Agencies for the Oriental Churches (ROACO) at the conclusion of their 86<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly. ROACO is a committee of funding agencies from around the world that provides various forms of assistance to areas in need ranging from worship buildings to health care facilities.

The Holy Father began his address by thanking the organization for the work they have carried, particularly for the Eastern Churches.



"As my predecessors, I wish to encourage and support you in the

exercise of charity, which is the only reason to boast for the disciples of Jesus," the Holy Father said. "This charity flows from the love of God in Christ: the Cross is the summit, luminous sign of the mercy and charity of God towards all, which was poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit."

Emphasizing the importance of charity, the Pope called on the members of ROACO to join him in "the task of joining faith to charity." The Holy Father also reminded them that their work will only be effective if it is "rooted in faith, nourished by prayer, especially by the Holy Eucharist" which he described as a "Sacrament of faith and charity".

The Pope also encouraged the organization to carry out their work while never forgetting that the projects they work on are a profession of the love of God.

### ***Concern for the Middle East***

During the audience, Pope Francis expressed his concern for the current situation in various parts of the Middle East, particularly in Syria where violence continues to surge between the government forces of President Bashir Al-Assad and rebel forces. The 76 year old Pontiff said that the current situation revived in him an "intense ecclesial concern for the condition of so many brothers and sisters who live in a situation of insecurity and violence" that does not spare the weak and the innocent.

"Requested of us believers is constant and confident prayer, that the Lord may grant the longed-for peace, unity in sharing and concrete solidarity," the Holy Father said. "I would like to address again from the depth of my heart an appeal to the leaders of peoples and the international organizations, to believers of every religion and to men and women of good will, so that an end will be brought to all sorrow, all violence, all religious, cultural and social discrimination."

"May the clash that sows death give way to the encounter and reconciliation that brings life. To all those who are suffering I say forcefully: never lose hope! The Church is on your side, she supports and sustains you!"

Concluding his address, Pope Francis asked the ROACO to do everything possible to relieve the needs of those affected by violence, especially those effected by the situation in Syria. "Saint Ignatius of Antioch," the Pope reminded them, "asked the Christians of Rome: remember in your prayer the Church of Syria ... Jesus Christ will watch over her and your charity."

"I entrust to the Lord of life the innumerable victims and I implore the Most Holy Mother of God for all those who are in the "great tribulation." □

June 21, 2013 (Zenit.org)



# Effective Ways You Can Help Your Eparchy!

Please consider the following ways in which you can help the Maronite Church!

## **Planned Giving: Consider Your Legacy**

This is a creative way to support the Church. Planned giving can involve contributing through your *will, insurance policy, or retirement assets.*

You can get a tax deduction today and provide yourself with a steady source of income in future years through a *charitable trust.*

## **How to Remember Your Church in Your Will**

Suggested wording for a bequest to the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn:

*"I give and bequeath to the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn \_\_\_\_\_% of the residue of my estate [or: the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_]."*

Suggested wording for a bequest to the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon:

*"I give and bequeath to the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles \_\_\_\_\_% of the residue of my estate [or: the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_]."*

## **Tax-Smart Giving of Appreciated Stock or other Assets**

The gift of an asset such as *common stock or mutual fund shares* is a smart way to make a contribution and receive maximum tax benefits based on the value of the asset.

Gifts of other *appreciated assets* such as land, antiques, and homes, can also be utilized as potential gifts with valuable tax benefits.

Gifts of these assets should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

For more information on any of these options, please contact Stewardship Director John F. Kurey, Esq., MBA, at 718-237-9913 or 314-231-1021; or by e-mail at [saintmaron@yahoo.com](mailto:saintmaron@yahoo.com) or [maroniteswest@yahoo.com](mailto:maroniteswest@yahoo.com).

## Houston, Texas Graduates Recognized



First row from left: Cynthia Rouhana\*, Samantha Georges\*, Patrick Abou Nassif\*, Bashir Abboud\*, Julia Abboud\*, John Ghosen\*, Noor Nemry, Maya Ramy, Andrew Carrum, Marc Ghosen, Dustin Jaoude, Judy Eid and, Ferial Coutani (\*College Graduates). Back row: Fr. Milad Yaghi, Pastor; Fr. Pierre El Khoury, Associate Pastor; and Melanie Tannous, Youth Director. Not pictured: Timothy Hachem, Bashar Nemri and Jacqueline Al-Nemri. □

On Sunday, May 19, 2013, Our Lady of the Cedars recognized high school and college graduates of the Parish. The high school graduates were recognized by the announcement of their names, the high schools from which they graduated and the college or university they will be attending. The college graduates were also recognized by the announcement of their names, their college or university, the degrees they received, and future plans. All graduates were presented with a gift from the parish. □



## North Jackson, Ohio Divine Mercy Sunday

On Sunday, April 7, 2013, Our Lady of Lebanon National Shrine, North Jackson, Ohio, observed the Feast of the Divine Mercy. Father Shannon Collins of the Fathers of Mercy preached the Feast Day Liturgies.



Father Collins has preached at the Shrine for the past three years, and many requested that he come back every year for Divine Mercy. His preaching is always very well received and very much appreciated by the many visitors who come on that day.

Father Collins emphasized how the concept of Divine Mercy is present in the Liturgies of the East and the West. It is an integral part of our understanding of Redemption as given to us by the Lord Jesus.

The day consisted of the regular schedule of Liturgies as well as conferences and the special Liturgy at 2 p.m. followed by the singing of the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. A dinner prepared by the Shrine Rosary Group and volunteers was served afterwards. □

