



# The Maronite Voice

A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA



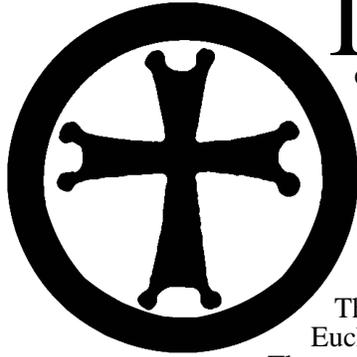
Volume IX

Issue No. VI

June 2013

## *The Divine Liturgy Is Our "Work" In Which We Offer To God Our Very Self, As Did Jesus At The Last Supper And Also At The Cross*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:



In November 2012, I wrote three letters on the new translation of our beautiful Maronite Liturgy (The Book of Offering). I wrote about the grace of having an Arabic-English text that welcomes everyone and that can be chanted in either language. I also wrote about the need to focus on that which we usually call the Divine Liturgy, so as to understand what is essential in our Christian life. Language, music, mystery, beauty and sincerity must be associated with the Divine Liturgy. In this letter, I would like to reflect on just what it is that we do when we gather for this sacred time of worship.

The Church uses different words to describe the celebration of the Eucharist. Each word adds something important to our understanding.

The word "Liturgy" is used by Greek speaking Christians and means "the work of the people." The Liturgy is in fact our "work", as we prepare and engage ourselves, but we also know that Liturgy is our response to God's saving work among us.

Syriac speaking Christians used the word "*Qorbono*" or "Offering," which reminds us that Jesus' sacrificial offering of Himself is our salvation, forgiveness, joy and thus the reason we generously offer ourselves in union with Him as His disciples.

Arabic speaking Christians have created an entirely new word, "*Quddas*", and it means "to make holy." It is not only a noun to describe the Eucharist, but also an active verb which describes our fullest engagement in what we call the *Quddas*, the Divine Liturgy.

Thus, these words describe aspects of the worship we give to God in Holy Eucharist. In other words, the Divine Liturgy is our "*work*" in which we *offer* to God our very self, as did Jesus at the Last Supper and also at the Cross. Our self-offering is made anew in the liturgy in union with the definitive and saving self-offering of Christ, which strengthens us to go into our world to *make holy* our lives.

I pray that the new translation of the Liturgy will help us even more actively to respond to God with love, faith and good hope.

Sincerely yours in Christ,  
+Gregory John Mansour  
Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

BOOK OF OFFERING

## Schedule of Bishop Robert Shaheen

**June 5 - 17, 2013**

Annual Maronite Bishops' Meeting, *Bkerke*, Lebanon

**June 17 -20, 2013**

Rome, Italy

**June 29, 2013**

Ordination Minor Orders. Saint Louis, Mo.

**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. □

*The Maronite Voice*

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- Most Reverend Bishop Gregory John Mansour

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### **Maronite Convention 2013**

Sts. Peter and Paul Maronite  
Church

**Tampa, Florida**

**July 3 - 7, 2013**

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

## **Eparchial Assignments**

**H**is Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, has made the following Eparchial appointments effective on June 1, 2013:

! **Father Gaby Hoyek** as Administrator of Our Lady of Mercy Church, Worcester, Massachusetts

! **Catherine George and her daughter, Kelly** of Saint Anthony Maronite Church, Glen Allen, Richmond, Va., appointed to assist Fr. Georges El Khalli, Eparchial Director of Religious Education, in helping Pastors, Directors of Religious Education, and Catechists to use *The Faith of the Mountain* series. □

## **Pope Expresses Sympathy for Oklahoma Tornado Victims**



**P**ope Francis sent a message via Twitter expressing his sympathy to the victims of the tornado that struck Oklahoma yesterday.

The death toll has reached fifty-one, including twenty children, when the nearly two mile wide tornado touched down in Oklahoma City. Local authorities stated that the death toll is expected to rise as search and rescue operations continue in the area.

In his tweet, the Holy Father stated: "I am close to the families of all who died in the Oklahoma tornado, especially those who lost young children. Join me in praying for them." □

May 21, 2013 (Zenit.org)

# Utica, New York A Shepherd's Visit

by Chorbishop John D. Faris

**B**ishop Gregory John Mansour made a pastoral visit to Saint Louis Gonzaga Church in Utica, New York, on the weekend of April 26 - 28, 2013. The visit was long-awaited; the last visit for the centenary celebration had to be canceled when Bishop Gregory was unexpectedly called to Rome to participate in a special session of the Synod of Bishops.

The visit began on Friday evening with a traditional Lebanese dinner at The Phoenician Restaurant for the new members of the Order of Saint Sharbel. The three perpetual members are Mrs. Sara Hanna, Mrs. Judith Hobaica and Mrs. Ann G. Koury. The eleven annual members are Dr. Naji El-Khoury, Mrs. Goldie Faris, Dr. Anthony Jadhon, Mr. Waddie Kalil, Esq., Mr. Albert Mazloom, Mrs. Mary Mazloom, Mr. Thomas J. Mitchell, Dr. Hamid J. Obeid, Hon. Anthony F. Shaheen, Mrs. Gloria Shaheen and Dr. Nancy Shaheen.

During the dinner, Bishop Gregory explained that Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary, founded in 1961, is the only Maronite seminary outside of Lebanon and is crucial to the future life of our Maronite Church in the United States. We are blessed to have four ordinations this year, the most since 1973. The seminary requires approximately \$250,000 per year to operate and the Order of Saint Sharbel, through annual membership dues and revenue from the permanent fund provides approximately \$120,000.

The next morning opened with a breakfast for the members and moderators of the Maronite Youth Organization, the directors and catechists in the Maronite Christian Formation program, and the parish house volunteers. There was a lively and open discussion about matters of faith and the role of Christians in today's world.

Bishop Gregory visited Fred and Mary Mazloom, the parents of Deacon Paul Salamy. Accompanied by Chorbishop John Faris and Father Miled Jreig, Bishop Gregory also visited John Lloyd and Father Joseph Shaheen, a senior priest of the Eparchy and native son of Utica.

At 4 p.m., Bishop Gregory presided at the scheduled Divine Liturgy and Father Miled gave the homily. The day closed with a most enjoyable dinner reception in the parish house for leaders and members of the various councils, committees, societies and programs of the parish. Bishop Gregory shared with the group some of the news of the Eparchy and responded to questions and comments regarding the life of the parish, the Eparchy and the Church.



Bishop Gregory Mansour with the children of Saint Louis Gonzaga Church

Sunday began with a breakfast shared by Bishop Gregory with Chorbishop John, Father Miled, Deacon Paul Salamy, Subdeacon Peter M. and Mrs. Judith Hobaica, James Salamy and George Mitchell.

Bishop Gregory met with all the students of the Maronite Christian Formation program in the church. The Bishop invited them to stand with him behind the altar and explained how Jesus, present in the Most Blessed Sacrament, is the most precious gift of God to the Church.

The high point of the visit was the pontifical celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The day was made special by the presence of three mothers of priests, Mrs. Helen Abdo, Mrs. Goldie Faris and Mrs. Agnes Rasi. Chorbishop Faris introduced Bishop Gregory to the parish community with a colorful comparison to a real shepherd and emphasized what a blessing it was to have a bishop who knew his flock and embraced their lives. Bishop Gregory gave an inspiring homily on how Jesus gently prodded Peter to be a good shepherd. During the Divine Liturgy, Bishop Gregory awarded Joshua Lewis with the Thomas J. Mitchell, II, Award for his dedicated service at the Altar of Saint Louis Gonzaga as an acolyte. Bishop Gregory then blessed the icon of Saint Louis Gonzaga that had been commissioned for the centenary celebration. It was an even greater blessing that the iconographer, Mrs. Judy Soma, and her husband, Dr. Joseph Soma, were present for the occasion. The new members of the Order of Saint Sharbel were then inducted into the Order.

The visit closed with a Luncheon with Bishop Gregory for about two hundred guests at the Radisson Hotel. Bishop Gregory commented on several occasions about the good spirit of the parish, its unity, maturity and good order - and the warm welcome given by the parishioners. □

## Chicago, Illinois *First Benefit Dinner*

*Francis Cardinal George, OMI, Archbishop of Chicago,  
Endorses Giving to the Eparchy and  
Affirms Friendship with Maronite Catholics,*



Cardinal George addressing the First Benefit Dinner in the Chicago Area.

**M**aronite Catholics and friends from the greater Chicago area attended the First Benefit Dinner in the Greater Chicago Area for the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon at the Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center Hotel on Saturday, April 27, 2013. The keynote speaker was Francis Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago, who delivered an inspirational address to the crowd. Bishop Daniel Conlon of the Diocese of Joliet was present and delivered the Invocation. Bishop Robert Shaheen, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, expressed his gratitude to everyone who attended the Benefit Dinner or made a contribution.

Father Charles Khachan, M.L.M., the Pastor of Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Parish, hosted the event with a local committee of parishioners. Father Khachan delivered remarks, as did Committee Chairman Dr. Raymond Daou. Deacon John Sfire from Our Lady of Lebanon Parish was Master of Ceremonies. The Closing Prayer was offered by Father Peter Jarosz, Pastor of Christ the King Parish in Lombard, Illinois.

Cardinal George discussed the contributions made by the Eastern Catholic Churches to the Catholic Church worldwide and his personal esteem for Maronite traditions. He spoke about the financial needs felt by every diocese, including Eastern Catholic dioceses, and asked people to be generous in supporting the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon.

Among the distinguished guests in attendance were Congressman Peter Roskam, State Senator Michael Connelly, Lake County Sheriff Mark Curran, and a dozen members of the local clergy.

Proceeds from the Benefit Dinner will be applied to the Eparchy's financial needs including paying for the education

of seminarians; supporting new parishes; providing more services to the faithful; and supporting retired priests. Donations are being accepted until May 31. Checks may be made payable to "Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon" and designated for the "Eparchial Benefit Dinner," and may be sent to 950 N. Grace St., Lombard, IL 60148. Donations may also be made online at [www.ollfriends.com](http://www.ollfriends.com). □

## New Bedford, Massachusetts *Marian Devotion*



**T**he children in Faith Formation and their parents offered a prayer service and Crowning of Mary on May 18, 2013, coordinated by the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light and Father Jack Morrison, Pastor of Our Lady of Purgatory in New Bedford, Mass. During the devotion, a decade of the rosary was prayed and each child offered Mary a flower as a symbol of honor. Traditional Maronite Marian hymns were sung and a Gospel reading was proclaimed as the participants gathered around a statue of Mary set up outdoors. In July, the Maronite Servants will also offer a one week summer vacation Bible camp at their convent to area Maronite parishes for children ages 5-12. Please contact the Sisters for more information at 508/996-1753. □



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

*The Maronite Voice* is the official newsletter of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon and of the

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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). □

## Excerpts from Cardinal Francis George's Keynote Address to the First Benefit Dinner for the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon



Cardinal Francis George delivers the keynote address at the first benefit dinner in Chicago for the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon. (Photo by Tony Abboud).

On April 27, 2013, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago delivered the keynote address at the first-ever Benefit Dinner in Chicago for the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon. The Cardinal discussed the recent Papal Conclave, the importance of the Maronite Church, and each person's call to be a good steward. Here are excerpts from his talk.

"...I hope you have a sense from what I've said tonight about the Conclave of what stewardship is all about. You are stewards of the Eparchy that is yours - the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon.

"You are stewards, and so you have obligations. You have to see to it that the Eparchy flourishes. And someday you will hand it on, just as the Cardinals handed on the Papal office.

"What is an Eparchy? It is a "local church." Your "local church" is not your parish - that's a Eucharistic Community. Only a diocese is a "local church" because only a diocese has all the gifts, including episcopal authority, that are necessary in a local Church.

"Episcopal authority is the capstone of governance in the local Church. Each pastor is responsible to the bishop, who is also a pastor - the pastor of the diocese.

"There is a particular importance of the Eastern Catholic Churches in the fullness of Catholic Communion. Without the Eastern Catholic Churches in Catholic Communion we would not have the diversity of history and worship and mission that makes the Catholic Church what she is. The Lebanese people and their very unique church, the Maronite Church, are something that is necessary for us to understand who we are as Catholics.

"When I went to Lebanon, I remember assisting many times in the Liturgy of the Maronite Church and being tremendously moved by the way it is celebrated and the way the consecration takes place. Because of my experience there,

I celebrate Mass in the Latin Rite differently.

"We share our gifts. The churches that comprise the Catholic Church are built by sharing diverse gifts in a unity of love that strengthens each of them, both as particular churches and as part of the Universal Church.

"So this - this Eparchy - is yours. It's up to you to see it flourish and see it continue. Sometimes you have the help of others and sometimes not. But always you have the assurance that Christ governs His Church. God's Providence keeps us going in very difficult circumstances. He gives us the confidence to go on. He promised to Peter, and He promises to us: "I will be with you until the end of the Age." Thank you for allowing me to be with you tonight. God bless you and your Eparchy and your Bishop. Please keep me in your prayers. You will be in mine." □

### Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

#### June 8, 2013

Ordination to Priesthood of Raymond Khallouf, St. Rafka Church, *Sehiele*, Lebanon

#### June 9, 2013

Liturgy of Thanksgiving of the New Priest, Fr. Raymond Khallouf, St. Rafka Church, *Sehiele*, Lebanon

#### June 9 - 21, 2013

Annual Maronite Bishops' Synod and Post Synodal Meetings, *Bkerke*, Lebanon

#### June 22, 2013

Syriac Symposium at Rutgers *University/Beth Madutho* Library

#### June 23, 2013

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

#### June 30, 2013

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

#### 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 □

### Food For Thought

"The 'door of faith' (Acts 14:27) is always open for us, ushering us into the life of communion with God and offering entry into His Church. It is possible to cross that threshold when the Word of God is proclaimed and the heart allows itself to be shaped by transforming grace. To enter through that door is to set out on a journey that lasts a lifetime."

*Pope Benedict XVI, Porta Fidei*

## THE ORDER OF SAINT SHARBEL



### Annual Members

★ **Mrs. Adele D. Lam**  
*St. Maron Church,  
Philadelphia, Penn.*

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

For more information about the Order ask your pastor or write to:

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

Or

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

## Eparchy Of Our Lady of Lebanon *An Invitation to Join the Order of Saint Sharbel*

June 2013

*Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

**W**ould you consider joining the Order of Saint Sharbel this year? Since 1980, Members of the Order of Saint Sharbel have provided much-needed support to educate the Maronite Church's seminarians so that we have qualified men serve as priests in America. I, together with Bishop Gregory, am grateful to the Members of the Order for this service.

There are two types of Membership in the Order: Annual Membership and Perpetual Membership. Annual Membership dues are \$500 per year. Perpetual Membership is a one-time gift of \$5,000. Perpetual Membership dues are placed into the Order of Saint Sharbel's Endowment Fund, the interest on which is used to support seminarians each year. There is also a spiritual component to the Order: all Members pledge to pray for our seminarians each year.

We now have more seminarians than ever before for our Church in America. This is a blessing because it means we will have priests to serve in our parishes in the future, but it is a financial burden because it costs about \$40,000 per year to educate and maintain each seminarian. The interest on the Order's Endowment Fund does not cover even half of this cost now because of the increase in seminarians. We must therefore increase the Endowment.

We have an opportunity to do this in 2013 because Catholic Extension Society will make a grant of \$25,000 to the Order's Endowment Fund in each Eparchy if \$50,000 is donated to the Endowment in each Eparchy by December 31, 2013. We have already had several people enroll as Members in each Eparchy this year, but we need more members to reach this goal.

Would you consider joining the Order of Saint Sharbel this year, as an Annual Member or a Perpetual Member? Or perhaps there is someone you know who might be interested in joining the Order? Or someone for whom membership in the Order would be a nice gift?

An application is available at your local parish, online at [www.orderstsharbel.org](http://www.orderstsharbel.org), or by writing to me [at 1021 S. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, St. Louis, MO 63104, telephone no. 314-231-1021 or by fax 314-231-1418] or to Bishop Gregory [109 Remsen Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201].

Thank you for your dedication to the Church, and for considering our invitation.

Gratefully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert J. Shaheen'.

+ Robert J. Shaheen, D.D.  
Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon

## Youngstown, Ohio *Subdeacon Ordination*



Msgr. Michael Kail (left), Subdeacon Albert Dohar, and Bishop Robert Shaheen.

by Amelia Yazbek

On the weekend of May 18 - 19, 2013, St. Maron Church, Youngstown, Ohio, was privileged to have a visit from His Excellency Bishop Robert Shaheen, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon.

On Saturday, May 18, Bishop Shaheen blessed and broke ground for the Antonine Sisters' Assisted Living and Acute Care Wings. On Sunday, May 19, His Excellency presided at the ordination of Mr. Albert Dohar to the Orders of Cantor, Lector and Subdeacon. Subdeacon Dohar's wife, Barbara, and children, Marie Elizabeth and John, along with family and friends filled the church for the Liturgy and imposition of hands.

Bishop Shaheen thanked Albert for answering the call to serve along with Deacons Joseph Nohra and William George and Subdeacon James Essad. During his homily, the Bishop stressed the need for continued commitment as Maronites in the church in the United States.

After the Liturgy, a luncheon and dessert tables were provided by the Church members. □

## Warren, Michigan *Memorial Weekend Remembrances*

by Rachel McNamara

During the weekend of May 25 - 26, 2013, St. Sharbel parishioners of Warren, Mich., remembered more than deceased veterans who served in our wars. The weekend liturgies celebrated by Chorbishop Alfred Badawi, Pastor, held special remembrances for the deceased ushers of the Parish. At each service, the names of the ushers were recited throughout the Liturgy along with a special blessing and presentation of rosaries given to the families of the deceased. Chorbishop Badawi acknowledged their often



Chorbishop Alfred Badawi blesses the ushers of St. Sharbel Church in Warren, Mich. (Photo by Isaac McNamara).

unseen and unmentioned dedication to the Church. The ushers remembered include: Matthew Bellomo, John Farrar, Joe Ferris, Michael Gabriel, John Hejjawi, Leon Joseph, John Lewis, Adeb Maksud, John Matthew, Toni Nader, Ralph Peters, and Tony Yapur. □

## Fairlawn, Ohio *Eagle Scout Honored*



Altar Server and High School Senior Mitchell Koellner received his Eagle Scout Award on Saturday, March 30, 2013, and was honored by Our Lady of the Cedars Maronite Parish, Fairlawn [Akron], Ohio, on Sunday, April 7, 2013. We extend our congratulations to his Parents, Bruce and Janel, and to his sister, Katherine and brother, Seth.

Eagle Scout Mitchell will graduate from Copley High School in June and will report to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in July. □

## Watervliet, New York *Re-Dedication of the Church*

by Mrs. Beverly Traa

Saturday, May 18, 2013, was awash in warm sunshine as the Pontifical Consecration and Dedication of the new Saint Ann Maronite Catholic Church in Watervliet, New York, began, presided over by His Excellency Bishop Gregory John Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron. He was assisted by Chorbishop Joseph Kaddo (native son and former Associate Pastor of Saint Ann Church, 1972 – 1973), current Pastor Rev. Georges Bouchaaya, M.L.M., Msgr. David George, Rev. Jean Younes, Rev. Joseph Khoueiry, Rev. Miled Jreige, and local priests from the Catholic Diocese of Albany, N.Y., Rev. David Berberian, Rev. James Vaughn, Rev. John Yanas, and Rev. George Fleming. Bishop Gregory led the procession of assembled clergy and altar servers from the adjoining rectory, blessed the main door of the Church and then processed to the Altar. After his homily, the bishop proceeded to bless the interior of the Church, decorated in flowers and candles. He sprinkled holy water, anointed with Holy Chrism and incensed the worship space. Appointed priests assisted by lay persons draped red ribbon around all the interior walls, indicating that it had been consecrated to God. A *tableet* [a stone tablet], containing relics of saints, was enshrined in the Altar, which was then incensed and anointed with Holy Chrism and dressed with three linens.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, an official dedication portrait of the attending clergy, religious and congregation was taken in front of the altar, followed by the unveiling and dedication of a plaque in the main foyer of the Church commemorating the event. At the luncheon at the Hilton Garden Inn, the Bishop and all attendees watched the children of the parish perform traditional Lebanese dances. During the festivities, Mr. Mike Naber, Executive Director of the National Apostolate of Maronites (NAM), presented Father Georges and the Parish with an icon of the Blessed Massabki Martyrs in honor of the occasion. The afternoon continued



Assisted by Father Bouchaaya, Bishop Mansour knocks at the door of the Church.

with Bishop Mansour, Chorbishop Kaddo and Father Bouchaaya, along with some parishioners, visiting the graves of former pastors of St. Ann: Fathers Paul Korkemaz and Joseph Keyrouze, and the parents of Chorbishop Kaddo, to honor their memory in prayer. It concluded with a visit to hospitalized parishioners.

With the day drawing to a close, Bishop Gregory celebrated *Ramsho*, evening prayer, which was attended by His Excellency Bishop Howard Hubbard, Roman Catholic Bishop of Albany, several clergy, religious and laity. Following the *Ramsho*, a reception was held in the new church hall featuring Lebanese food prepared by members of the parish. A slide show, prepared by parishioner Rosemary Patnode, was presented chronicling the hundred year history of St. Ann Parish.

On Sunday, Pentecost Day, Bishop Mansour offered a Liturgy of Thanksgiving, noting especially the

dedication and support given by the St. Ann Church Parish Pastoral and Financial Councils, the Building Committee, the special Dedication Committee co-chaired by Richard Thornton, Sr., and Rosemary Patnode, the Daughters of St. Ann and St. Maron Men's Society, Sr. Florence Flaherty, and parishioners. Bishop Mansour commended current Pastor, Father Georges Bouchaaya M.L.M., for completing the vision of the former Pastor, Father Elie Kairouz, and dedicating himself to this goal over the past three years. He especially noted the graceful transition in guiding the parish relocation from its former site in Troy, across the Hudson River to Watervliet, New York.

*(Continues on page 11)*

## Houston, Texas *Christians in the Middle East*



Dr. Abounohra and Fr. Milad Yaghi.

by Alberto Tohmé

For the past several centuries, the Christians in the Middle East have struggled for liberty under political and religious oppression by many civilizations. The socio-political nuances and roots of their struggles, successes, and failures are not easy to decipher and cannot be examined readily in history books. In addition, these historical struggles are surprisingly similar to modern day interreligious strife, conflict and oppression affecting all Christians in the Middle East.

Dr. Joseph Abounohra, Professor and former Dean of Studies at the Lebanese University in Beirut, Lebanon, and subject matter expert, delivered a lecture on this topic at Our Lady of the Cedars Maronite Church in Houston, Texas, on May 14, 2013. In his lecture, which was based largely on his personal and professional research, Dr. Abounohra focused on the evolution of socio-political and legal rights of Christians during the Ottoman Empire (16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century) until modern times. He mentioned some notable differences in power and clout between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches in the region and also noted some regional and local struggles between these churches during that period. The lecture also covered the status of the Maronite Church and its multiple struggles before achieving socio-political recognition in the 1920s after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

This lecture made it clear to us that the strife for liberty of Christians in the Middle East is as active today as it was in the past several hundred years. The Parish of Our Lady of the Cedars in Houston, Texas, was privileged and honored to host Dr. Abounohra, who is the father of one of our parishioners, Ziad Abounohra, and a former university teacher of our own Pastor, Fr. Milad Yaghi. □

## Tulsa, Oklahoma *Silver Massabki Award*



Jan and Mike Bailey received the Silver Massabki Award from Father Elias Abi Sarkis, Pastor, and Amine T. Harb, President of NAM, on April 21, 2013, at St. Thérèse Parish, Tulsa.

Mike and Jan Bailey had just returned from Rome, where they celebrated their 40th Wedding Anniversary with a pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles. The next Sunday they were surprised to receive the Silver Massabki Award for 2012 at their parish, St. Thérèse in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Adding to the joy was that the award was presented during the spring Board meeting of the National Apostolate of Maronites, and the Board members were present at the Divine Liturgy offered by Father Elias Abi Sarkis, the pastor of St. Thérèse. After Communion, NAM President Amine T. Harb and Father Elias presented the award to the Baileys.

Mike, a court reporter for nearly forty years, admits that about ten years ago he re-prioritized his energies from volunteering for court reporting associations to working for the Church. He says, "I really feel like I'm making up for lost time in trying to support my parish." The big reward is that working for the Church makes him feel that he is doing what God wants him to do and that he is not just going through the motions of being a Catholic. Jan is a recent convert to the Catholic Faith who joins her husband in a life of service.

Mike has been President of the Men's Club at St. Thérèse the last few years. He feels especially honored that the women in the parish let him in the kitchen on occasion to assist in cooking for parish events.

Father Elias, who nominated Mike and Jan, says that they deserved the nomination because of their dedication of time and talent to the parish. Mike is a help in every event in the parish and doesn't know how to refuse a request. Father Elias said that St. Thérèse parish is honored to have them as parishioners. Their work for the Church is exemplified by the proverb "A brick plus a brick built a parish" and is in the tradition of the Blessed Massabki Brothers for whom the award is named. □

# ... And I Will Be Your Waiter \* Reflections on the Relationship between a Pastor and Parishioners

by Chorbishop John D. Faris

**D**uring the month of March [2013], we were all glued to our televisions watching the drama of the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI, of cardinals gathering in Rome to elect his successor, and the smokestack gushing black and eventually white smoke to announce to the world the election of Pope Francis. (It is interesting that the news was transmitted electronically all over the world, but that the original notification was by smoke signal - the Church can do such things unapologetically.)

We need to recall that while this drama was unfolding – with or without a pope – our community life as a Church continued. We conferred Baptism and celebrated the Eucharist, we had weddings and funerals. Our real experience of Church is in the life of a parish. A former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tip O'Neill, coined the phrase, "All politics is local." This same phrase can be applied to the Church: we can read about the universal Church, the missions, the Vatican, the election of the pope, all well and good. But our experience of the Church is local, in our own parish. Anyone who wants to understand the Church, to renew the life of the Church, must be attentive to the relationships existing within the parish. I would like to reflect for a few moments on the relationship between the faithful and their parish priest - and to do so, I am going to use the image of a waiter.

A few years ago, I was having dinner in a nice restaurant with a friend. Unfortunately, everything was going wrong: I don't know if it was us or him, but we were just not communicating well. To further complicate the matter, the waiter was blaming all the mistakes

on us. He insisted that we had ordered something that we didn't want. The waiter was rather elderly and my friend - uncharitably - remarked that the waiter was arrogant because he had served the meal at the Last Supper.

I chuckled then, but later that evening, I reflected that - at least for the most important part of the Last Supper, the institution of the Eucharist - there were no waiters. Jesus Himself washed the feet of the invited guests, "His loved ones, those He called His own." Jesus served the meal and, finally, at the end shared with his fellow diners His own Body and Blood. In today's Church, it is the priests who are the waiters. Quite often priestly work is described as "ministry," but I think that this somehow obscures the role of one who is called upon to wash the feet of others. Waiter or servant is much more apt.

First of all we note, the relationship between the waiter and the restaurant diners is not usually one that either of them sought out. Fate brought them together.

## ***What Can We Learn From This Waiter - Diner Relationship?***

The waiter is not part of the group of people dining at the table. He is the servant - always outside the group. He might be our favorite waiter in our favorite restaurant. We might exchange pleasantries, inquire about his family and joke with him, but he is still the waiter. He will come and go. He will serve not only our table, but also enter into similar relationships with other diners at other tables. So it is with the priest. It is most likely that neither the parishioners nor the parish priest chose each other. Precisely, it is the bishop who made the dinner reservations. The

priest serves families; he shares in their joys, their sadness, their problems, their secrets; he provides support and guidance, but he is not part of the family. He moves on to other families, to other parishes.

## ***The Waiter's Role***

The waiter's role is two-fold. He is to take the orders and to bring the food.

**1) Taking the Order.** This sounds basic and easy, but there is a great deal to it. First of all the waiter must be familiar with what is on the menu. He must know what the restaurant can and cannot serve. This degree of familiarity does not mean that he rattles off a list of plates, but that he knows the ingredients and how they are prepared. In taking the order, the waiter needs to be patient with the diners. They may not be familiar with the menu; they may have a difficult time in making decisions. The waiter needs to listen patiently without interrupting. The waiter should respond to the questions with respect, clarity and sincerity. The waiter cannot dictate to the people what they should order to eat, nor can he force them to eat the food if they don't want. He must treat the diners with respect. He must not be intrusive or obnoxious, drawing attention to himself.

Again, we reflect that this is the role of the priest. The priest needs to understand and appreciate the mysteries, the sacraments of the Church. He needs to understand and be able to explain the Word of God. The priest cannot force the parishioners to accept these gifts or even to appreciate them. He can simply offer them in the best way that he knows. Perhaps an even greater challenge is for the priest to listen to his people and respond with patience, respect and charity.

The diners must understand that they are not the only concern of the waiter. He has other tables to serve and other tasks to perform that go unnoticed - until they are not done. The requests of the diners must be reasonable; they

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\* A version of this reflection was given by Chorbishop John at the Eparchial Convocation of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon at Saint Raymond Co-Cathedral in St. Louis, Mo., on April 4, 2013.

cannot expect Chinese food in an Italian restaurant. The waiter must be treated with respect. The faithful take into consideration the many responsibilities of the priest, accept what the priest can and cannot do for them and treat him with respect.

**2) Bringing the Order.** The second part of the waiter's job is to bring the food to the table. It is not his food; he did not prepare it. He just brings to us what he has been given. And this is like the role of the priest. The priest is not bringing to us something that is his. He hands over what he has been given. The Church has entrusted the priest with the most precious gifts of Word and Sacrament - and the priest shares these gifts with us.

The task of the waiter does not end after the food has been put on the table. It is the common practice for the waiter to return to the table after a few minutes to see if the diners require anything else. The waiter might also be called upon at any moment to fill a water glass or bring more bread, or replace a spoon for a child who has dropped three others. The waiter is wearing a uniform for a reason: to indicate in a visible manner his availability. So, with the priest, the requests can come at any time or in any form. We also dress in a certain way, thereby indicating to everyone our willingness to stop and help.

Throughout the evening, the waiter is on call. People are looking at him. To be crude, if he is picking his nose, someone will notice and comment. The priest, too, must realize that while he has a personal life, he really does not have a private life. His behavior and words are observed and noted.

Diners, however, need to realize that the waiter is not simply at their beck and call. He may be taking the order of another table, delivering food or cleaning off plates. The diners need to be patient, realizing that the waiter will address their needs as soon as possible. The application to parish life is obvious.

Things do not always go right in a restaurant and in a parish. The waiter must realize that if the diners are not happy with something, he is the only person the diners have to voice their complaints. Again, he must be patient

and do everything he can to rectify things. Likewise, the priest is the "face of the Church." In most cases, he is the only person parishioners have to express their concerns and, yes, complaints. He must again listen with patience, respect and understanding and be willing to change the things that he can change.

The waiter should not expect too much praise. He just brought the food. So, if he gets a nice tip and perhaps a kind word of thanks, that is enough. He would be foolish to expect a statue in his honor for the meals he served. So too must the priest be modest in his expectations for recognition, accolades or rewards. In the end, we priests should expect nothing more than the words spoken by the master of the good servant in the parable, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful..." (Matthew 25:23).

Lastly, let us recall that we have all been taught how to treat waiters. Abusive and unreasonable demands are uncalled for. Even when things don't go as one would expect, let us be patient and appreciate at least the good will of the waiter. The great majorities of priests have served with grace-filled dedication; let us remember that on the day they offered themselves for priestly ordination, it was because they want to serve us. This should count for a great deal with us - it does with God. □

## About the Author

*Former Vicar General of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, Chorbishop John D. Faris, J.C.O.D., is the Pastor of Saint Louis Gonzaga Maronite Church in Utica, New York. He is also a professor of Eastern Canon Law at Catholic University of America (CUA) in Washington., D.C.*



## Re-Dedication of the Church

*Continued from page 8*



St. Ann Church and Rectory.

Bishop Gregory graciously accepted the new vestments designed and fashioned in a rich shade of red with gold embroidery specially made for him in Lebanon as a gift of gratitude from the members of the St. Ann Parish. He graciously and generously entrusted them to St. Ann Church so that they may be worn here on special occasions and by visiting clergy.

Following the Liturgy, parishioners enjoyed a coffee hour. His Excellency Bishop Mansour shared his time and his wisdom with young and old alike. A time capsule was placed in the newly erected sign of Saint Ann Church, and a Cedar of Lebanon tree (*Cedrus libani*) was planted to further commemorate the dedication of the Church.

The Bishop gave some final words of encouragement and support to a group of parish leaders at a brief wine and cheese gathering in the rectory before his departure. □



*The Cedar of Lebanon*

## **Discernment**

### **Who Does God Want Me to Be?**

**W**hen discerning a vocation there is always confusion and uncertainty. The decision-making process is a complicated matter as there are many "layers" of decisions that must be looked at. However, God does give us some clues or "signs" along the way:

- Finding one's place
- Being fulfilled
- Understanding the deeper meaning
- Having a peaceful heart

Are these things you long for? These are all a part of good discernment in life. When you are truly fulfilled and are at peace with your place in life, you can be rather certain that you are doing God's work. Peace and fulfillment are God's way of letting us know that we are on the right road.

Discernment is not just about deciding what to do with your life. Discernment is about making decisions and choosing a path in life that God calls us to.

"Who does God want me to be?" and not "What do I want to do with my life?" is the basic question in discernment. In answering that basic question you need to address: the activities and work of life, the values and attitudes you hold in your heart, and the choice to love that you make.

Christian discernment implies a life of faith and a sense of one's relationship with God in Christ. Discernment requires a heart ready to listen and respond in prayer and reflection. Discernment also requires a head prepared to learn about options and carefully select those choices which will bring greater joy to God, self, and world.

There is often uncertainty in the discernment process. At any one point in time we see only partial glimpses, not the whole picture; therefore uncertainty exists. In discernment, your

"Each of you has a special mission in life, and you are each called to be a disciple of Christ. Many of you will serve God in the vocation of Christian married life; some of you will serve him as dedicated single persons; some as priests and religious. But all of you must be the light of the world. To those of you who think that Christ may be inviting you to follow him in the priesthood or the consecrated life I make this personal appeal: I ask you to open your hearts generously to Him; do not delay your response. The Lord will help you to know His will; He will help you to follow your vocation courageously."

*Pope John Paul II Youth Gathering, St. Louis, 1999*

decision will always meet a certain amount of inner resistance. Resistance is a good sign. There is always risk when a person makes significant decisions in his life. A person must have sufficient love in his heart to take a significant risk.

When discerning your vocation, the road ahead will always remain a bit foggy. You probably will not know with absolute certainty what lies ahead. The future will always remain a bit hidden. Mystery and the unknown are part of everyone's future.

If you are being called by the Lord, may God give you a courageous spirit and generous heart to answer His Call!

### **Questions For The Discernment Process**

#### **Does the Proposal I'm Considering Conform to God's Revealed Will?**

- Does it seem to go against any of the Commandments?
- Does it seem to be supported by Church teaching?
- Will it prevent me from fulfilling legitimate commitments?
- Does it go against any other "call" that I've already responded to?
- Does it hinder a spirit of submission and obedience to God and His Church?

#### **Does It Encourage Conversion?**

- Will it lead me to a closer union with God?
- Will it lead to a more faithful discharge of my primary responsibilities?
- Does it involve any unnecessary occasion of sin?
- Does it foster a spirit that says "Go for holiness?"

#### **Is It Consistent?**

- Is it consistent with God's earlier calls in my life?
- Are people involved who have helped me find God's will before?
- Has the call felt stronger at times when I might expect it (times of prayer, retreat, after receiving the sacraments)?
- Is the cost of making this choice (including possible negative effects) consistent with my established priority of values?

#### **How Is The Choice Being Confirmed?**

- Is it being confirmed by people who are involved in the proposal?
- Are there any signs being given which seem miraculous or spiritual?
- Is it being confirmed by people who know you and are in a position to give any kind of spiritual guidance?
- Is it being confirmed by either extraordinary or ordinary circumstances which are making the decision possible?
- Are there any other signs that seem to confirm or deny that this is from God? (*Continues on page 20*)

## Tampa, Florida Ordination of Deacon George Hajj



God entrusts each of His creation a mission to fulfill in His name. With faith, trust, and love Deacon George Hajj is entrusted a vocation to the priesthood.

Deacon George Hajj is from *Maad*, Lebanon, where he spent the first twenty-five years of his life and where the seed of

his vocation was planted. In his family, he is the eighth person over five generations to consecrate his life to the service of the Church. His great aunt is mother Ursula Doumet, who with her brother Chorbishop Ignace, built the monastery of St. Joseph - *Jrabta*, Lebanon, during the life of Saint Rafka.

Deacon George accompanied his grandfather to daily liturgy and was an altar server from a young age; he counts how he used to celebrate a para-liturgy in the house, with his friends and family. He studied in Lebanon and graduated from College Saint Joseph - *Aintoura*, and received a master's degree in archeology at the Lebanese University. His research was on the subject of mural paintings in the medieval Maronite churches of Mount Lebanon.

In 2001, he came to the United States, where he studied business management and worked with his family in Michigan. But that seed and that calling to the consecrated life was growing and always echoing in his heart. After becoming a permanent resident of the United States, and after a serious discernment, he joined the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, and was accepted at Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary in Washington D.C., in 2008. He received the courses in philosophy at the Dominican House of Studies, then a Master of Divinity from The Catholic University of America in 2013. Deacon George published a book in Lebanon.

After five years of formation, The Maronite Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, the Maronite Seminary, and Mr. and Mrs. Charbel and Naameh Hajj, joyfully announce the Ordination of their son, Deacon George Hajj to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ, on July fifth, 2013, through the Imposition of Hands and the Invocation of the Holy Spirit by His Excellency the Most Reverend Robert J. Shaheen, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, at the Maronite Convention, hosted by the Parish of Sts. Peter and Paul in Tampa, Fla., and sponsored by the National Apostolate of Maronites (NAM), on its fiftieth anniversary. Bishop Shaheen is the first alumnus of the Maronite Seminary in Washington D.C., and he was ordained at the first Maronite Convention in Washington D.C., in 1964. Today as he enters his golden sacerdotal jubilee he is passing on the grace of God and the many talents which he has received and multiplied to the Maronite Church which was entrusted to him as Bishop. □

## Scranton, Pennsylvania May Crowning



From left: Anna Ligorio, Rebecca Abdo, Lena Ligorio, May Queen Sarah Nicole Wheeler, Angelina Wheeler, and Father Francis Marini.

On Mother's Day, Sunday, May 12, 2013, the Daughters of Saint Ann of Saint Ann Maronite Church in Scranton, Penn., performed the May Crowning of the Blessed Mother of us all.

The May Queen was Prefect Sarah Nicole Wheeler, who wore a long white gown, a blue satin cape and carried a bouquet of Madonna Lilies and white roses. Vice-Prefect Rebecca Abdo carried a bouquet of pink and green roses. The green roses symbolize that the Blessed Mother is also Queen on earth as well as in Heaven.

The May Court included; Rebecca Abdo, Lena Ligorio, Anna Ligorio and Angelina Wheeler. Each girl wore a white dress and a crown of white flowers. The youngest member and First Communicant, Lena Ligorio, carried the crown of roses for the Blessed Mother on a blue satin pillow. □

## Fayetteville, North Carolina Catholicism Series

A multi-generational group of members at St. Michael the Archangel Church in Fayetteville, N.C., has recently completed a study of the Catholic faith using Fr. Robert Barron's *Catholicism* series on DVD. The group began meeting on Wednesday evenings starting last October. The format was such that they watched one of the ten DVDs one week and then met the next week to discuss the prepared questions relating to the subject presented in the video. At that rate, the study lasted about twenty weeks with some breaks for the holidays. In the discussion session after the video concerning the liturgy, our pastor, Father Sam Najjar, gave a helpful explanation about the differences between the Latin and Maronite liturgies. The study was facilitated by Subdeacon Ron Foster and the Youth Advisor, Marie VanHeusen. □

# Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

## Policy on Sexual Abuse of Minors *By Priests or Deacons*

*The Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn publishes its Policy on Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons. The same policy is also available online at [http://www.stmaron.org/policy\\_sexual\\_abuse.html](http://www.stmaron.org/policy_sexual_abuse.html). The Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon has its own policy and it is also available online at <http://www.usamaronite.org/statement.html>.*

**A**s Christians and Maronites we consider the welfare and protection of our children a sacred responsibility. We hereby promulgate the following Eparchial norms as an implementation of Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons approved by the Congregation for Bishops on December 8, 2002.

### **Definition**

Sexual Abuse of a minor includes sexual molestation or sexual exploitation of a minor and other behavior by which an adult uses a minor as an object of sexual gratification. The norm to be considered in assessing an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor is whether conduct or interaction with a minor qualifies as an external, objectively grave violation of the sixth commandment.

### **Response**

- The healing of victims, their families and their community from the effects of sexual abuse by church leaders begins when the allegations of such abuse are received. When victims decide to disclose the abuse, it is important that the response they receive is compassionate and non-judgmental.
- Anyone receiving an allegation of abuse will respond in a pastoral, supportive manner, leaving investigative concerns to those who serve in that role.
- An allegation will be received without initial judgment as to the truth of the complaint. No intimation of blame will be made by the initial recipient of information.
- Individuals making allegations will be supported positively in their decision to disclose.
- The Eparchial Bishop will designate a competent person to coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who claim to have been sexually abused when they were minors by priests or deacons. This "Assistance Coordinator" will assess and respond to the immediate and long term needs of the alleged victim and family, the alleged offender, parish communities and others that are affected by the disclosure of sex abuse.
- The Assistance Coordinator will serve as a consultant to the Eparchial Bishop and the Review Board regarding the treatment needs of clients.

### **Review Board**

The Review Board is a predominantly lay board composed of a variety of professionals duly appointed to assist the Bishop in a strictly confidential consultative capacity. It will have no final, decision-making authority, which authority will continue to reside exclusively with the Bishop.

### **Board Functions**

1. To advise the Eparchial Bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of suitability for ministry;
2. To review eparchial policies for dealing with sexual abuse of minors;
3. To offer advice on all aspects of sexual abuse cases, whether retrospectively or prospectively.

### **Membership**

The Review Board, established by the Eparchial Bishop, will be composed of five members of outstanding integrity and good judgment in full communion with the Church. The majority of the board will be lay persons who are not in the employ of the Eparchy. These will include:

- ★ a person with particular expertise in the treatment of sexual abuse of minors;
- ★ a parent;
- ★ a parish priest;
- ★ an attorney; and
- ★ an individual with investigative experience.

The Bishop may deem it desirable that the Promoter of Justice participate in the meetings of the Review Board.

### **Appointment**

Members appointed by the Eparchial Bishop will serve a five year term. All board members will adhere to the rules of strict confidentiality with regard to all deliberations and information received.

### **Reporting**

In all cases of alleged or suspected or known child abuse committed by a cleric, the Eparchy will comply with all applicable civil laws in respect to reporting the allegations and will cooperate with civil authorities in the investigation.

Any cleric who knows from the external forum that a minor has been sexually abused is required to report that knowledge or suspicion to the Eparchial Bishop and to the civil authorities in accordance with the norms of canon law.

## ***Investigation***

- When an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a priest or deacon is received, a preliminary investigation in harmony with canon law will be initiated and conducted promptly and objectively (Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches [CCEO], c. 1468). The purpose of the eparchial investigation is to ensure that the Bishop has a complete, thorough, and accurate report of the alleged incident. The investigation will be conducted by an investigator appointed by the Review Board. The investigator will report his findings in writing to the Eparchial Bishop and to the Review Board.
- The accused will immediately be called by the Eparchial Bishop and made aware of the allegation against him and the identity of the accuser. The accused will remain in his position until the initial investigation is completed, which is to be done as expeditiously as possible. All appropriate steps shall be taken to protect the reputation of the accused and the accuser during the investigation. The accused will be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel and will be promptly notified of the results of the investigation.
- When there is sufficient evidence that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred, the Eparchial Bishop will notify the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. The Eparchial Bishop shall then apply the precautionary measures mentioned in CCEO, c. 1473 -- that is, remove the alleged offender from the sacred ministry or from any ecclesiastical office or function. The Bishop may impose or prohibit residence in a given place or territory, and prohibit the public participation in the Most Holy Eucharist pending the outcome of the process.
- In every case involving canonical penalties, the processes provided for in canon law will be observed, and the various provisions of canon law will be considered. (1) Unless the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, having been notified, calls the case to itself because of special circumstances, the Eparchial Bishop will follow the directions of the Congregation on how to proceed. (2) If the case would otherwise be barred by prescription, because sexual abuse of a minor is a grave offense, the Eparchial Bishop shall apply to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for a dispensation from the prescription, while indicating appropriate pastoral reasons.
- For the sake of due process, the accused is encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel. When necessary, the Eparchy will supply canonical counsel to the cleric.
- The Eparchy will conduct a judicial process of the case according to the appropriate canons and practice of the Church.

- The alleged offender may be requested to seek, and may be urged voluntarily to comply with, an appropriate medical and psychological evaluation at a facility mutually acceptable to the Eparchy and the accused.
- In every instance, the Eparchy will advise and support a person's right to make a report to public authorities.

## ***Ministry/Service***

- No cleric removed from an eparchial position for allegations of sexual abuse of a minor will return to ministry or service before his case is assessed and fitness is determined by the Eparchial Bishop in consultation with the Review Board. The safety of children is the paramount consideration governing the formation of recommendations regarding the future ministry of one accused of abuse.
- An allegation of sexual abuse of a minor made against a cleric will be deemed established if, with due respect for the provisions of canon law:
  - The accused individual admits to conduct defined by this policy as sexual abuse; or
  - A civil court of criminal law finds the accused guilty of a crime that consists of conduct defined by this policy as sexual abuse, or the accused pleads guilty or no contest to a crime that consists of conduct defined by this policy as sexual abuse; or
  - The appropriate church tribunal finds the accused guilty of the crime.
- When an act of sexual abuse by a priest or deacon is admitted or is established after an appropriate process in accord with canon law, the offending priest or deacon will be removed from ecclesiastical ministry, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state, if the case so warrants.
- If the penalty of dismissal from the clerical state has not been applied (e.g., for reasons of advanced age or infirmity), the offender ought to lead a life of prayer and penance. He will not be permitted to celebrate the Divine Liturgy publicly or to administer the mysteries. He will be instructed not to wear clerical garb, or present himself publicly as a priest.
- At all times, the Eparchial Bishop has the executive power of clerical governance, through an administrative act, to remove an offending cleric from office, to remove or restrict his faculties, and to limit his exercise of priestly ministry. For the sake of the common good and observing the provisions of canon law, the Eparchial Bishop shall exercise this power of governance to ensure that any priest who has committed an act of sexual abuse of a minor as described above shall not continue in the active ministry.
- The priest or deacon may at any time request a dispensation from the obligations of the clerical state. In exceptional cases, the Eparchial Bishop may request of the

Holy Father the dismissal of the priest or deacon from the clerical state ex officio, even without the consent of the priest or deacon.

- Care will always be taken to protect the rights of all parties involved, particularly those of the person claiming to have been sexually abused and the person against whom the charge has been made. When an accusation has proved to be unfounded, every step possible will be taken by the Bishop to restore the good name of the priest or deacon falsely accused.
- No priest or deacon who has committed an act of sexual abuse of a minor will be transferred for ministerial assignment to another eparchy/diocese or religious province.
- Before a priest or deacon is transferred for residence to another eparchy/diocese or religious province, the Eparchial Bishop shall forward, in a confidential manner, to the local eparch/bishop or religious ordinary of the proposed place of residence any and all information concerning any act of sexual abuse of a minor and any other information indicating that he has been or may be a danger to children or young people.
- The Eparchial Bishop will not consider receiving a priest or deacon into the Eparchy from another jurisdiction without previously obtaining the necessary information regarding the moral and civil record of the priest or deacon in question.

### ***Prevention***

The Eparchy of Saint Maron will publish a code of ethics and integrity in ministry to be adhered to by all the clergy and persons in positions of trust in the Eparchy.

All eparchial programs designed to certify clerics, eparchial employees, and volunteers who serve children on a regular basis will include segments that address child sexual abuse. The training curriculum will include information concerning: signs and symptoms, dynamics of child abuse, impact of child abuse, intervention strategies, reporting requirements and community resources.

### ***Screening***

The Eparchy will study the psychological screening currently undertaken to assess all potential candidates for the priesthood and diaconate. The tests given will be reviewed from the perspective of identifying, to the extent possible, potential problems in the area of sexuality. Problem candidates will be disqualified.

A protocol or procedure, including a psychological evaluation, is to be developed to screen clerical personnel from outside the Eparchy before an assignment is given or confirmed by the Eparchial Bishop to minister within the Eparchy of Saint Maron.

## **Supplement**

### ***Policy on Sexual Abuse of Minors by Seminarians, Religious, Eparchial Employees or Regular Volunteers***

The Norms listed above regarding sexual abuse of minors by priests or deacons, with the exception of those that deal specifically with priests or deacons according to canon law, are also to be applied to seminarians, religious, eparchial employees and regular volunteers of the Eparchy. In addition, there are these following norms.

### ***Reporting***

In all cases of alleged or suspected or known child abuse committed by a seminarian, religious, eparchial employee or volunteer of the Eparchy, the Eparchy will comply with all applicable civil laws in respect to reporting the allegations and will cooperate with civil authorities in the investigation.

### ***Investigation***

Besides any actions taken by the civil authorities, the Eparchy will conduct its own investigation of the alleged abuse.

Based on the results of the civil disposition, the Eparchy's own investigation, and the advice of the Review Board, the Eparchial Bishop will determine the continued working relationship of the accused with the Eparchy.

During the investigation, the accused will be relieved from his or her responsibilities, and removed from any contact with minors.

### ***Screening***

The background of all eparchial and parish personnel who have regular contact with minors will be evaluated. Administrators must take due precautions to assure that only persons who are psychologically and temperamentally suited are chosen to work with children.

No applicant with a history of a felony or misdemeanor sex offense conviction will be considered for placement or hire.

Applicants for employment or to volunteer in a position with children contact in parishes and institutions of the eparchy must provide the hiring agent personal information adequate to assess their suitability for contact with minors. They must sign a waiver to conduct a criminal background check. They must supply names of three references, at least one from the most recent employer and none from close friends or relatives. And they must complete the screening interview process.

Hiring agents and/or volunteer coordinators must speak with all references provided by applicants for employment and examine and verify the employment history. The hiring agent

is to conduct a criminal records check of any person seeking employment or to volunteer at their facility. Any applicant who has not lived continuously for five years in the state of the eparchial parish or institution must also provide an FBI identification record or a waiver allowing the hiring agent to obtain it.

Pastors will require that any person or group who is hired through a third party contract, and who will have responsibility for the care, custody, or control of a child, must provide proof of a criminal background check.

Each parish or institution of the Eparchy must establish procedures for gathering the information and completing the reference checks mentioned above. All information gathered will be retained in a confidential file at the location of employment for as long as legally required.

## *Code of Ethics and Integrity*

### **General Norms**

- Church personnel<sup>1</sup> will exhibit the highest Christian ethical standards and personal integrity.
- Church personnel will conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the discipline and teaching of the Catholic Church.
- Church personnel will not physically, sexually or emotionally abuse a minor or an adult.
- Church personnel will not engage in physical, psychological, written or verbal harassment of employees, volunteers, or parishioners and will not tolerate such harassment by other Church personnel.
- Church personnel shall provide a professional work environment that is free from physical, psychological, written, or verbal intimidation or harassment.
- Church personnel shall not engage in sexual intimacies with the persons they counsel. This includes consensual contact, forced physical contact and sexually explicit conversations not related to counseling issues.
- Church personnel assume the full burden for setting and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all counseling and counseling-related relationships.
- No counseling sessions should be conducted in private living quarters.

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<sup>1</sup>Church personnel includes priests, religious, permanent and transitional deacons, seminarians, all paid and volunteer personnel who are employed by or work in eparchial parishes or institutions.

- Church personnel will share concerns about suspicious or inappropriate behavior with their pastor, the Vicar-General of the Eparchy, or the Eparchial Bishop.
- Church personnel will report any suspected abuse to the proper civil authorities.
- Church personnel will accept their personal responsibility to protect minors and adults from all forms of abuse.
- Houses used for residences of priests and religious are exclusively for the use of the religious. With the exception of occasional visits from immediate family members, minors are not permitted to be overnight guests in the residence of a priest or a religious.

## **Eparchial Review Board**

### *Members of the Eparchial Review Board*

- Dr. Martha Rashed (Psychologist, Washington, D.C.)
- Fr. Bassam Saade, St. Jude Maronite Church, Orlando, Florida
- Attorney Richard Hibey, Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Church, Washington, D.C.
- Anthony J. Shaia, MD, St. Anthony Maronite Church, Glen Allen (Richmond), Virginia
- Lieutenant Michael Zohab, St. Anthony Maronite Church, Glen Allen (Richmond), Virginia.

### **Victim Assistance Coordinator**

**Roseanne C. Solomon**

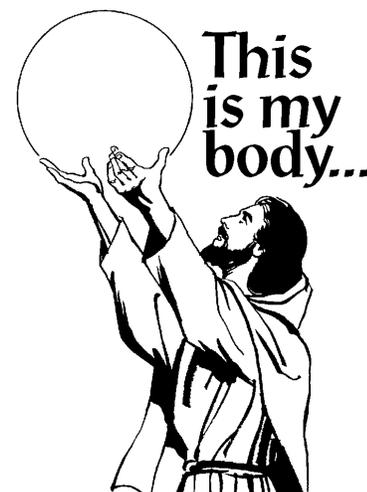
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## Springfield, Massachusetts *May Crowning*



On May 12, 2013, Mother's Day, St. Anthony's Maronite Church in Springfield, Mass., held a crowning ceremony for the Blessed Virgin Mary. This year's First Holy Communion class processed to the altar with roses, which were placed at Mary's feet. Marie Rahan then crowned Mary with a floral arrangement. □

## Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania *Living Stations*



First row from left: Jordan Tucker, Peter Khoudary, Ray Joseph, Jillian Tucker, Cienna Tohme, Marie Andrews, Gianna Martinelli, Luke Richards, Rachel Lewis, Theresa Khoudary. Second row: Christina Kaspar, William Andrews, Sarah Chekan, Nicole Joseph, Kurtis Nordmark, Julia Lewis, Mrs. Malak Khoudary. Third row: Miss Leanne Tabit, Maria Khoudary, Anthony Khoudary, Ryan Tabit, Aaron Tohme, Teri Andrews, Nicolas Chekan, Mark Chekan, and Mrs. Lina Chekan.

The members of the Maronite Religious Education (MRE) and The Maronite Youth Organization (MYO) of St. Anthony/St. George Maronite Church in Wilkes-Barre, Penn., presented the Living Stations of the Cross on Friday, March 21, 2013. It was a great way to prepare for Holy Week and the Easter celebration. □

## Minneapolis, Minnesota *Parish Awards*



The Parish of St. Maron of Minneapolis, Minn., recognized some of its parishioners with awards for their outstanding work for the years of 2011-2012.

### Silver Massabki Award

- Mr. George Ghreichi (2011)
- Mrs. Elena Elkhoury (2012)

### The Faith of the Mountain Award

- Ms. Gabrielle Awaijane (2011)
- Mr. Joseph Zerka (2012)

### The Parish Award

- Mrs. Almera Moses (2011)
- and Subdeacon James Farhat (2012)

### The Ladies Award

- Mrs. Darlene Rice (2011)
- Mrs. Joanne George (2012). □

## Williamsville, New York *Lebanese Festival*

St. John Maron Maronite Church, Williamsville, N.Y., is celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Lebanese Festival on Friday, July 26, from 5:00 - 11:00 p.m., Saturday, July 27, from 2:00 - 11:00 p.m., and Sunday, July 28, from noon - 5:00 p.m. The festival continues to provide the greater Western New York community with authentic Lebanese cuisine, Lebanese culture and the Maronite Catholic tradition and it will also feature music, dancing, a gift shop, games and a raffle. A special attraction this year is a Lebanese cooking demonstration presented by Julie Tabouli, host of a PBS syndicated show, on July 27 at 7:00 p.m.



The Divine Liturgy will be celebrated during the festival at 5:00 p.m. Saturday and 11:00 a.m. Sunday. For further information and directions, visit the Church's website at: [www.stjohnmaron.com](http://www.stjohnmaron.com) or email [stjmaron@gmail.com](mailto:stjmaron@gmail.com). □

## Glen Allen, Virginia 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Lebanese Festival



© Dylan Patterson

*Zalabia* is made fresh every day at the festival.

by Chet Wade

Visitors come from far and wide for St. Anthony's Lebanese Food Festival. They came from as far away as Washington, D.C., and beyond to attend the 29<sup>th</sup> annual Lebanese Food Festival hosted by St. Anthony Maronite Catholic Church in Glen Allen, Va.

The festival is regularly rated as one of central Virginia's best food events and this year was no exception. As many as 20,000 guests attended the festival, which was held on the church grounds May 17-19, 2013. This was despite threatening weather that resulted in rain and cooler-than-normal temperatures.

"Our guests know that the show - and the food - goes on rain or shine," said Monsignor George M. Sebaali, St. Anthony's Pastor. "We were prepared and, as always, God blessed us with the opportunity to share our culture, heritage and faith through food, music and dance. It's not the weather that matters, but the joy in the faces of each person who is there."

Cooking lunch or dinner for 20,000 people takes a lot of work and preparation. As is tradition, preparations began

with a kick-off meeting in January. Cooking started in February with items that could be frozen.

Teams of parishioners gathered in the kitchen of the social hall each Tuesday and Thursday - with some other days sprinkled in between - as the festival approached. Regular updates from Parish Council President Cathy George helped promote a competition between the Tuesday and Thursday cooking teams.

"Every year we learn from the previous festival, finding ways to make our event even better for our guests and being more efficient on how we prepare," Monsignor Sebaali said. "We stayed on schedule and sometimes finished ahead of time, which is a testament to the dedication of the parishioners."

For example, parishioners made [27,000] meat, spinach, cheese and cheese & spinach pies this year. The pie booth is typically one of the most-popular at the festival.

Other popular items included stuffed grape leaves, stuffed squash, cabbage rolls, *shawirma*, roasted lamb and chicken, shrimp and beef shish-kabob, *falafel*, *homus bi tahini*, *tabouli*, *bubbaghanooge*, and *loubiyeh* served over rice pilaf.

While much of the food can be prepared ahead, some items need to be made in the week of the festival. That final cooking - along with preparing the grounds, setting up the tents and food booths, and other preparations - results in a near-round-the-clock activity at the church in the final days.

Desserts were popular, as always. Patrons watched wide-eyed as *zalabia* and three types of *katayif* were made fresh in front of them. They also enjoyed a large selection of Lebanese pastries. Lebanese beer and wine also were popular.

The first guests arrived each morning even before the 10 a.m. opening time. By noon each day, crowds spread out across St. Anthony's 15-acre complex. Most enjoyed making their selections ala carte, then sitting at the pavilion or in other outdoor seating. Still others opted for sit-down dinners served in the social hall.

More than ninety parishioners - including pre-schoolers participating in their first festival - performed traditional Lebanese folk dances throughout each day of the festival. Dancers rehearsed weekly for three months to get ready.

Live Lebanese music was performed all three days by the Mazloom Family band, made up of one family from St. Anthony's parish.

Hundreds of other parishioners staffed the kitchen, food and drink booths and dining room, and handled other logistics. Each of the three daily shifts at the festival required at least ninety parishioners to work.

"Over the years, families have 'adopted' certain duties or booths," Monsignor Sebaali said. "The families share in the work and enjoy the time together. They pass on the tradition to their children and grandchildren as they become old enough. It is the kind of event they hold dear to them as part of their family history."

Preparations already are underway for the 30<sup>th</sup> Lebanese Food Festival in 2014.

"We are looking back at what we learned this year and making plans for next year," Monsignor Sebaali said. "You can never rest on your laurels. Every year the festival needs to be better than the previous one because that is what our guests have come to expect. We don't plan to disappoint them." □

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## *Discernment*

Continued from page 11

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### **What Is My Heart Telling Me?**

- Do you sense a very high degree of probability that this decision is right, even if you can't demonstrate it as a certainty?
- Do you believe in your heart that this is the right thing to do?
- Do you feel paralyzed with difficulties or uncertainties and therefore have to appeal to other principles or guidance from others?

In every age God calls men and women to serve His people. The Church needs healthy, strong and holy priests to bring Christ to a culture starving for His presence. The Church needs women and men religious on fire with the charisms of their founders to do the works of the Kingdom in the modern world. Could God be calling you to the priesthood or religious life? **What are you doing to find out?** ☐

If you feel God is calling you, please get in touch with Fr. Dominique Hanna, Director of Vocations, Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, c/o St. Joseph Church, 502 Seminole Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30307, (404) 525-2504, or by email at [sjmcc@sjmcc.org](mailto:sjmcc@sjmcc.org); or Msgr. sharbel Maroun, Director of Vocations, Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon in St. Louis, c/o St. Maron Church, 219 6th Avenue, N. E., Minneapolis, MN 55413, (612) 379-2758, or by email: [abouna@stmaron.com](mailto:abouna@stmaron.com).

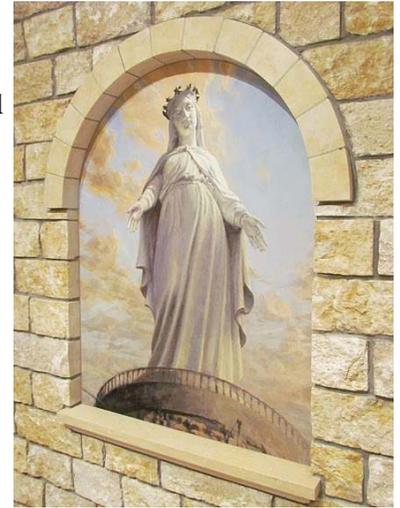
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*The article on Discernment was taken from the Office of Priestly and Religious Vocations of the Diocese of Wilmington and was reprinted with permission. The questions for the discernment process were adapted from Father Michael Scanlan, What Does God Want? ☐*

## *Pilgrimage to the New Maronite Chapel in Washington D.C.*

by *Monsignor William Bonczewski*

**S**ome beautiful things happen when we ask God to put us in the right place at the right time. The Pastor of Our Lady of the Cedars in Fairlawn, Ohio, Monsignor William Bonczewski, who was previously assigned to St. Jude Maronite Parish in Utah, was with some old friends from his previous parish. They



wanted to take a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Chapel at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

Richard, his wife, Pamela, daughter Jenny and her three daughters participated in this Providential pilgrimage. They saw all sorts of things on their trip, but what affected them the most was their experience in this beautiful and unique Maronite Chapel.

During Liturgy many pilgrims passed by the Chapel peeking into the mystical-looking sacred place, but there was one family that felt drawn in. This family from East Asia had a very sick daughter with them. She was only in her 20s but was seriously afflicted with cancer. They stayed for the Liturgy, received Holy Communion and received a special blessing by Monsignor afterwards. Everyone there saw that this was a very meaningful moment for her.

Yes, Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Chapel at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., certainly is a very special place, and those who visit her are often in the right place at the right time! ☐