

The Maronite Voice



A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA

Volume XI

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May 2015

The Gift of Motherhood



In the Catholic Church, the Month of May is dedicated to the Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary. It is a month when we come together as families and groups to honor Mary and to draw lessons from her life. On the second Sunday of May, we celebrate Mother's Day. It is a day when we honor our mother on Earth. Our mothers are the embodiment of love and dedication, and on Mother's Day we have the opportunity to show our appreciation for all they have done for us.

As Christian Catholics, we have two mothers, our birth mother who nurtured us in the womb and raised us and our heavenly mother, who nurtures our spirits and intercedes on our behalf to the Heavenly Father. Our birth mothers are an essential part of our lives. They are our anchors and our supporters. Our heavenly mother is as important as she holds a special place in our spiritual life. Like a mother who cares for every one of her children, so does the Blessed Mother who holds us dear to her heart and mind.

In one homily in January 2015, Pope Francis highlighted the maternity of Mary to the whole Church, "Mary's tactful maternal witness has accompanied the Church from the beginning. She, the Mother of God, is also the Mother of the Church, and through the Church, the mother of all men and women, and of every people." In fact, Christ commissioned her from the Cross: "Here is your son." Through John, he wanted all of us to have Mary as our Mother. There is also another mother we tend to forget. The Church is also our spiritual mother. The Church nurtures us and brings us closer to our faith. In Baptism, we become children of God and members of the Church. Our journey with the Church begins as babies and continues through each passage in our life until the end. We are blessed to be guided in our lives by our mothers.

When we want to express our love for our mothers we usually honor them with roses. The Rosary is the spiritual rose we bring to our Heavenly Mother as an expression of our love and admiration. The Rosary brings us closer to Christ and his plan of Salvation through the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries. In the various Mysteries, we meditate on the important events in the life of Jesus. Through the years, people have prayed the rosary and have sanctified their lives. Pope Saint Pius X said, "The

Rosary is the most beautiful and the most rich in graces of all prayers; it is the prayer that touches most the Heart of the Mother of God ... and if you wish peace to reign in your homes, recite the family Rosary."

(Continues on page 5)

Schedule of Bishop Elias Zaidan

May 1 - 3, 2015

Dedication of the new Assisted Living Center run by the Antonine Sisters, North Jackson, Ohio

May 4 - 6, 2015

Visit to St. John Maron Church, Orange, Calif., with the Mother Superior of the Maronite Sisters of the Holy Family

May 9 - 10, 2015

Pastoral Visit to St. George Maronite Church, San Antonio, Tex.

May 12, 2015

USCCB Meeting for the International Justice and Peace Committee, Washington, D.C.

May 15 - 17, 2015

Pastoral Visit to St. Rafka Church, Denver, Colo.

May 29 - 31, 2015

Pastoral Visit to Our Lady of the Rosary, Sacramento, Calif., and St. Sharbel Mission, Stockton, Calif.

June 2 - 26, 2015

Synod of the Maronite Bishops, Bkerke, Lebanon. ☐

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Maronite Convention 2015

Saint Maron Maronite Church

Cleveland, Ohio

July 1 - 5, 2015

For more information
contact the NAM office
at (914) 964-3070
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From the Book Shelf

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

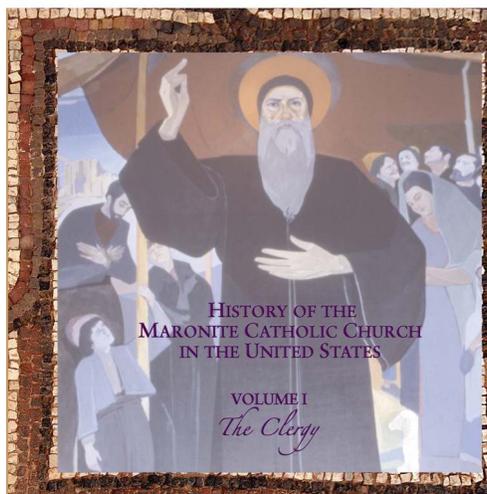
by Evelyn Karam Small

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

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

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

The Clergy will be available in June 2015 for \$30 plus \$7 shipping from Saint Maron Publications, 4611 Sadler Road, Glen Allen, Virginia 23060, www.stmaron.org. ☐





Eparchial Condolences

Monsignor Ignace Moawad Sadek passed into eternal life on April 14, 2015, while in the hospital in Dayton, Ohio. Monsignor was born to Sadek and Zmerod Hanna (Hokayem) Sadek on December 4, 1930 in *Batroun*, Lebanon. He was ordained on April 15, 1956, by His Excellency Bishop Antoine Khoreiche in Beirut, Lebanon.

He received degrees in Philosophy, Theology, French Literature and Physics and was fluent in five languages. From 1956 until 1988, he taught various subjects at three seminaries and three colleges in Lebanon and served as



pastor of a parish; he served on the Saint Sharbel Canonization Committee; and he was a preacher of the Patriarchal Diocese in Lebanon.

Father Sadek was appointed Pastor of Saint Anthony Maronite Church in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and served from 1988 until 1997. He was elevated to *Periodeut* with the title of Monsignor in 1996.

He was named Rector of Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y., in 1997 and was appointed to the Eparchial Presbyteral Council and College of Consultors serving from 1997 until 2002. He also served on the Priestly Formation Board from 1994 until 1997.

When the World Trade Center in New York City was attacked on September 11, 2001, Monsignor Sadek rushed from Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral to the Brooklyn Promenade where he saw nothing but clouds of smoke and debris caused by the falling towers. Many news articles described the image of him with hands raised, giving absolution to all those who lost their lives while also comforting the distraught people nearby. His trademark black suit and beret were covered with the white dust and debris that the wind carried across the East River to Brooklyn.

In relating Monsignor's actions that day, one newspaper article was even entitled, "Amid the Chaos, A Sign of Order." He was personally touched by the death of eight of the parishioners of the Cathedral for whom only memorial services could be performed since no bodies were recovered from the falling tower's tragedy.

Although Monsignor Sadek retired in 2007, he assisted the Rector at Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary, Washington, D.C., from 2007 until 2013 and then assisted both Eparchial Bishops with serving in special assignments in different parishes: Olean and Buffalo, N.Y.; Flint, Mich.; and lastly, Dayton, Ohio, where he served with much love and devotion.

He is survived by his beloved brother Youssef, many nieces and nephews, as well as many relatives and friends. He is predeceased by a brother Amine and a sister Julia. A memorial service was held at St. Ignatius of Antioch Maronite Church in Dayton, Ohio, on April 18, 2015, and at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral on April 22, 2015, before his

body was flown to Lebanon for burial. Final Funeral service and burial took place on April 26, 2015, in his hometown of *Zain/Batroun*.

Bishop Gregory Mansour along with the clergy and faithful of the Eparchy of Saint Maron and Bishop A. Elias Zaidan along with the clergy and faithful of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon extend their heartfelt sympathy and the promise of our prayers to Monsignor Sadek's family, loved ones and parishioners.

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

Mr. Semaan Abi Chedid, the father of Father Elie Abi Chedid, Pastor of Saint Maron Church in Jacksonville, Florida, passed away suddenly on April 17, 2015. He was preceded in death by both his parents, and by his five brothers, Hanna, Youssef, Kanaan, Elias and Akl, and his three sisters, Rose, Marie, and Victoria.

He is survived by his wife, Angel (Mrad), by his six sons, Michel, Joseph, Father Elie, Fadi, Raymond and Maroun, and by his two sisters, Therese and Aida. Father Elie was not able to go to Lebanon for the funeral, which was celebrated on April 18, presided by Bishop Michel Aoun, a longtime friend of Father Elie and the family.

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

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

Eparchial Appointment

His Beatitude Patriarch Bechara Peter Rai, at the request of His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, has granted the rank of *Periodeut* with the title of Monsignor to the Very Reverend Francis Marini, Judicial Vicar and Pastor of Saint Ann Maronite Church in Scranton, Penn., and to **Father Georges El-Khalli**, Pastor of Our Lady of the Cedars Maronite Church in Jamaica Plain [Boston], Mass. We congratulate Monsignor Marini and Monsignor El-Khalli on their appointment. □



Deadline for next month's issue of *The Maronite Voice* is May 25, 2015.

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

Eparchy of Saint Maron.

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. □

Brooklyn, New York Farewell Monsignor Sadek



Clergy of the Eparchy process with Monsignor Sadek's coffin three times around the altar while the farewell prayer to the altar is recited. (Photo by Samar Nader, Al Mohajer.com).

by Frances Jane Mourani

With a heavy heart, Maronite parishes across the Eparchy of Saint Maron announced the death April 14, 2015, of Msgr. Ignace Sadek, one of the longest-serving and much-loved spiritual shepherds of the Maronite faithful in the United States.

In the eulogy at his April 22, 2015, funeral services, held at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Lebanon in Brooklyn, N.Y., Bishop Gregory Mansour rightly said Monsignor "...left an indelible mark on the lives of those he served."

"I know of no other priest more loved and respected than our own Monsignor Sadek. He has brought dignity and distinction to the holy priesthood."

The Cathedral service was especially poignant for Monsignor's brother priests as it came exactly four months to the day that another great shepherd of the Maronite church, Bishop Emeritus Stephen Hector Doueihy, was mourned in his December 22, 2014, funeral at the Cathedral. Without exception all of the priests, deacons and subdeacons who came to pay their respects to Monsignor had served alongside him in one capacity or another during his thirty years of service to the Eparchy of Saint Maron. Msgr. James Root, the current rector of the Cathedral, reflected their somber mood when he told a small group of us gathered in the church hall before the start of services, "I'm tired of burying my fellow priests." Seeing his red-rimmed eyes and hearing the crack in his softly-spoken words, we realized what a painful loss this was for him personally.

When Msgr. Sadek passed away in Dayton, Ohio, he was 84 years old, and just one day short of the anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood on April 15, 1956, where he would have completed his 59th year of service to the altar. He officially retired in 2007, after ten years as the Rector of Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn, and then promptly offered his services to Bishop Mansour, asking him, "Where do you want me?" and taking up the role of a "traveling priest" going to parishes that needed help and always, in the

words of the Bishop, "...every parish he went to, he brought it back to life."

Wearing his signature black beret, Monsignor also brought his devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Theresa the Little Flower and words of Pope Pius X to the all the Maronite communities where he served as pastor. He also brought his nicknames; how many of us remember his endearing greetings, "How are you *ya ayni*? Bless you, *ya roohee*."

Bishop Gregory described Monsignor as a modern "Renaissance Man," acknowledging that his many interests, talents and intellect made him a great asset to the Maronite priesthood. We all know of his love for music and that he wrote his own devotional hymns, but it was especially moving for us at the mercy meal in the Cathedral hall after the funeral to hear a tape recording of Monsignor's voice singing a song he had written in Arabic for his beloved mother. Bishop Mansour also acknowledged some special people in Monsignor's life: Bassam and Rema Zoghieb from his parish in Dayton, and his devoted niece, Zmroud.

Msgr. Ignace (named Mouawad) Sadek was born on December 4, 1930, in the village of *Zein/Batroun*, in North Lebanon. He served thirty-two years in Lebanon at the patriarchal seminary in *Ghazir*, while also teaching math, music and French literature at university. He left Lebanon in 1988 during the Civil War and was assigned to serve the Maronite parish of St. Anthony in Wilkes-Barre, Penn., until 1997 when he moved to Brooklyn to become the Rector of Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral.

All the parishes where he served were special to him, but in leaving Our Lady of Lebanon in Flint, Mich. (Bishop Mansour's hometown), Monsignor Sadek wrote a letter whose words, we all agreed with the Bishop, seem now to be somewhat prophetic:

"A farewell from an octogenarian person could be a real '*Adieu*', '*Adios*', in Latin, '*Ad Deum*,' which means 'to God,' it means a definitive parting with no hope for '*Au Revoir*,' 'See you again.' However, life is in the hands of God. We work as if we were to live forever, and we pray as if we were to die tomorrow. Anyhow, as long as I will be on earth, you will have my heart, or otherwise, you will have my intercessions. You must know that traditional prayer addressed to Mary, "*Wa in kana jismaki baheedan minna*," which means, 'Even if your body is far from us, your prayers will accompany us.' This is what I am intending to do."

Bishop Mansour concluded his moving eulogy with heartfelt gratitude for Monsignor's legacy: "Monsignor Sadek, for your life of faithfulness, your priestly zeal for souls, and for your personal desire for holiness and goodness, thank you. For your desire to be with us through prayer, even if your body is far away, thank you. For your good, tender, and merciful priestly presence among us, thank you."

"You have left an indelible mark on all of us. May God grant you eternal rest. Go in peace to Lebanon, our beloved Monsignor, to your final resting place in your hometown."

Monsignor Sadek's casket was carried from the church by fellow priests, in preparation for the body's transportation to Lebanon and his village of *Zein/Batroun*.

Bishop Mansour's Eulogy



On Wednesday, April 22, 2015, His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour presided at the Funeral service of Monsignor Ignace Sadek at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn, New York. (Photo by Samar Nader, Al Mohajer.com).

Monsignor Sadek has been an extraordinary gift for the Church. He has excelled in all of his assignments, the Seminary in Lebanon, Pastor in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, Pastor of the Cathedral Parish in Brooklyn, Priest in Residence at Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary and at our Parish in Washington, D.C., interim Pastor when needed in Olean, Buffalo, Flint and lastly, Dayton. Wherever he served, he has left an indelible mark on the lives of those he served. I know of no other priest who is more loved and respected than our own Monsignor Sadek. He has brought dignity and distinction to the holy priesthood.

Was he a saint? He would be the first to say no; but did he love God and seek to serve him and his people? Yes. And for this we thank God for him. I hope and pray that by the time I reach his age, I will have had the same zeal, stamina, love for Christ and desire for holiness that he has had. He is eternally young because of his love for Christ and His Church.

When I first came to Brooklyn as Bishop, one of the great blessings I experienced was to have Monsignor Sadek as Rector of the Cathedral. At every liturgical celebration with him I took away some lasting spiritual treasure. I will miss his homilies at Noon Liturgy. Each homily was like a mini-retreat, as he encouraged us to personal holiness. Who can forget his stories of the Holy Land (geography and culture) or of his favorite saints: Theresa the Little Flower, and Pius X (among others!).

In his farewell to the good people of Our Lady of Lebanon parish in Flint, Michigan, my hometown, he wrote this:

"Since my retirement in 2005, God gave me the joy of consecrating me as a traveling priest, filling my time with the consolation of preaching his name all over America. I visited a great number of parishes in both eparchies. I loved them all, but Our Lady of Lebanon in Flint, Michigan, left in my heart an indelible mark."

(I believe he would have said something like this also to our parish in Dayton, Ohio, who loved him so well, especially in the person of Bassam and Rema Zoghieb. And we may never forget how devoted his niece, Zmroud, was and is to him and we thank God for you.)

Then Monsignor concluded his letter to the Parish in Flint in this way:

"A farewell from an octogenarian person could be a real 'Adieu,' 'Adios,' in Latin, 'Ad Deum,' which means "to God," it means a definitive parting with no hope for "au revoir", "see you again." However, life is in the hands of God. We work as if we were to live forever, and we pray as if we were to die tomorrow. Anyhow, as long as I will be on earth, you will have my heart or otherwise you will have my intercessions. You must know the traditional prayer addressed to Mary, "*Wa in kana jismaki baheedan minna*" which means "Even if your body is far from us, your prayers will accompany us." This is what I am intending to do."

Monsignor Sadek, thank you for your life of faithfulness, your priestly zeal for souls, and for your personal desire for holiness and goodness. Thank you for your promise of prayer and love. Thank you for being a happy, holy and humble priest, throughout your entire life, even and especially in your retirement, in which you took on several assignments for me, and Bishops Shaheen and Zaidan. You have left an indelible mark on all of us. May God grant you eternal rest. And as you used to say ever since 9/11 here at the Cathedral after every Divine Liturgy: "May God bless you, and may God bless America."

Go in peace to Lebanon, our beloved Monsignor, to your final resting place in your beloved hometown of *Zain*, Lebanon. May the prayers of the Virgin Mary be with you. ☐

The Gift of Motherhood

Continued from page 1

In turn, pray the Rosary, get closer to Jesus and you will find peace with yourself, with God and with others.

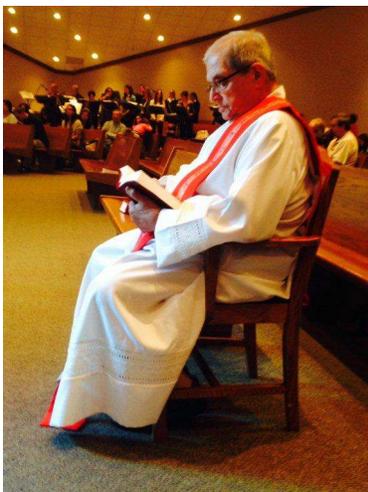
During this month, I invite you in a special way to honor all of your mothers. Remember that Mary is always pointing the way to her son, Jesus Christ. She wants us to listen to Him, to do "what He tells us" as she said to the servants at the Wedding at Cana when they had run out of wine. It is the same invitation for us today: "Do what he tells you." Let us try to accomplish God's will in our lives, in everyday activities. Let us take the time to thank our birth mother, our Heavenly Mother, and our mother Church. They are there to guide us and support us through life, through our joys and sorrows. ☐

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

Youngstown, Ohio Parish Mourns its Deacon

by Rose Sahyoun

Deacon Joseph Simon Nohra, 79, of St. Maron Parish, Youngstown, Ohio, greeted his Lord and Savior and joined his wife, Betty Claire (Barnum), on April 6, 2015. He spent his final days at home, resting peacefully surrounded by family and friends. He was born on November 18, 1935, in Youngstown, to a devout Lebanese Maronite family that he cherished. He was an outgoing personality who was generous with his time and talents. He was at every occasion living his faith and tending *his* flock, a testament to his vocation. Liturgy at St. Maron Church will not be the same without Deacon Joe.



Joe graduated from Youngstown State University in June of 1957 with a B.S. in Business Administration, majoring in Accounting and was one of only five who were awarded the Youngstown University Pin. He was employed by The Cafaro Company, a national mall developer, from October 1, 1956 through December 29, 2000, working his way up from accounting to the Company's VP of Finance and CFO, as well as a member of its Board of Directors. From 2009 - 2014 he served as Treasurer of JJC Investment Trust.

Joe married Betty on October 15, 1960, at St. Maron Church, and spent forty-five years with his "soul mate" until she passed away on August 1, 2006. Joe was ordained a permanent deacon on December 7, 1980 and served St. Maron Church for thirty-four years (and five Pastors) until his death. He also served at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel parish in Youngstown, and as Administrator of St. Maron Church from January 1, 2005 - August 2, 2008. Joe truly loved Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley, where he was involved in many committees and organizations, in an advisory position or on their boards. To name a few he was a founder, treasurer and permanent trustee of St. Maron Education Foundation, Advisory Board of the Antonine Sisters Adult Day Care, YSU Foundation, YSU Board of Trustees, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Education Foundation, Juvenile Justice Center, Youngstown Diocese Endowment Fund and more.

Deacon Joe received many awards for his dedication, service, leadership and knowledge as well as honorary degrees too numerous to mention. He was awarded the Gold Massabki Medal in 1981 for his distinguished service to the Maronites.

Deacon Joe had a strong faith in Christ and loved his immediate and extended family and friends. He cherished St. Maron Parish, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish, Ursuline High School and YSU. He was a loving and devoted father, grandfather, brother and friend who gave unconditional love and loyalty and was always willing to forgive.

Joe is survived by eight children: Mary Ann (James) McCann, Tabby (Albert) George, Jacquelyn (Robert) Duda, Attorney Jude (Becky) Nohra, Rebecca (Joseph) Caruso, Joseph (Ann Marie) Nohra, Joanne (Dr. Timothy) Wagner, all of Ohio, and Elizabeth of Arlington, Va., along with twenty-four grandchildren. He is survived by his sisters, Rose Thomas, Julie (John) Schiavone, Elizabeth Emch and sister-in-law, Carolyn Barnum. Besides his wife Betty, Deacon Joe was preceded in death by his parents Rizek and Mary (Galip) Nohra, and his brothers-in-law, Nasef Thomas and Kenneth Emch.

Bishop Gregory Mansour and Bishop A. Elias Zaidan both sent letters of sorrow and condolences to the family and parish expressing admiration, gratitude and love for Deacon Joe for all of his service to the Church. Rest In Peace, Faithful Servant of the Altar and the people of God. ☐

Massabki Award



Chorbishop Kail, Beverly Nard and Rose Sahyoun.

by Rose Sahyoun

Hosanna Sunday is a day of triumph and celebration, and the Church was full to carry palms and to welcome Jesus to begin Passion Week. Friends and relatives were all together At St. Maron Church and what better time to honor one of our very committed and hard-working members? As Secretary of NAM, I was honored, along with Chorbishop Michael Kail, Pastor, to recognize Ms. Beverly Mike Nard with the Silver Massabki Award. Beverly has been involved in her parish since she was a youth. She has been a CCD/MCF teacher, a member of the Parish Council and the festival committee, and she presently works with the Fish Fry committee. Beverly is also a great supporter of any event being held or any sale of tickets. Her time is not limited to only St. Maron Parosh, but she has also been involved with the National Shrine of our Lady of Lebanon in North Jackson, Ohio, and the Antonine Sisters for years. Moreover, she has worked on national levels as a dedicated Maronite. She is a lifetime member of NAM and has served as a past president of NAM and the Order of Saint Sharbel. She has accomplished all of this while she works as a nurse practitioner. Beverly was quite surprised and the congregation shared their overwhelming appreciation for her hard work. She is very deserving of this award. Congratulations!! ☐

Brooklyn, New York Holy Week

by Salma Vahdat

As Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y., bells tolled and summoned the faithful to witness and partake of the rituals and traditions of Holy Week, the mood was solemn and reverential. The Cathedral was filled to capacity on the three most important evenings of recollection of the Passion, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Savior.

Holy Thursday was the evening of the re-enactment of the Last Supper. Twelve men of the parish community processed to the sanctuary with Msgr. James Root, Rector, Subdeacons Norbert Vogl and Peter Frangie and the altar servers. The choir sang and narrated the Last Supper as Msgr. James washed the feet of the men depicting the disciples. Following the ritual the Divine Liturgy was celebrated and concluded with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until midnight. This was the night that Jesus foresaw His betrayal and offered us the Blessed Sacrament, His Sacrifice, to nourish us and bring us closer to Him in Glory.

Great Friday again brought the community together for the most solemn devotion of all. Parishioners brought flowers for the tomb. The Cathedral was filled to capacity. I wondered... 'Where did all these Maronites materialize from?' Our community is scattered far and wide from the Cathedral, but Holy Week manages to bring them home to pray and reflect on the Passion and Resurrection. Accompanied by the soulful chanting of our choir, Bishop Gregory, Msgr. James, the subdeacons and altar servers completed the ritual of removing Jesus from the cross and placing Him in the casket. It was borne by the Knights of St. Maron pallbearers, who processed with the clergy, subdeacons, altar servers and the entire Cathedral outside on a four-block procession, incensing the casket and chanting. The men held the casket at the door of the Cathedral for the parishioners to walk under for a blessing. The service was completed with the burial of Jesus in the tomb. The milling crowds then exited the Cathedral in a somber mood. The symbolism of the Maronite tradition is so profound one cannot help but be moved by it.

The Divine Liturgy of the Resurrection was celebrated at Midnight on Saturday, April 12, 2015, by many ages: Babies and children sleeping on their parents' shoulders, elderly and the young and everyone in between. This was the joyous night for which we had prepared ourselves. Our salvation! The Cathedral was ablaze with light and the smiles and greetings of the parishioners. The Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Bishop Gregory and Msgr. James, assisted by our subdeacons and the altar servers. The altar was prepared by the Daughters of Mary, who tend to it faithfully. The Bishop and Msgr. James conducted the incensing of the tomb and retrieved the resurrection crucifix from the casket and processed around the Cathedral with it. Following the procession, the Liturgy was concluded and cries of *Al Massih kam, Hak in kam* [Christ is risen, He is truly risen] echoed through the Community. As the parishioners gathered to kiss the cross, the flowers from the tomb were distributed to them. We had observed, participated and exulted in the Season of Resurrection once again. The parish then adjourned to the Social Hall for the traditional Easter breakfast, which has

been donated by the Tabet family for the last forty years. It was a week to remember!

MYA Retreat

Spring is the season of renewal in many cultures and no less in our own. Coming out of the brutal winter freeze our young adults at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y., undertook a spiritual thawing and renewal for 2015.

The membership is usually comprised of young adults in the eighteen to twenty-seven year old range. However, for this event, the participants ranged up into their thirties with some coming from Easton, Penn., and Somerset, N.J., and it turned out to be a wonderful experience for all!

On March 21, the group, thirty strong, made their way to the Shrine of St. Joseph in Stirling, N.J., a beautiful rural and serene location. The retreat master was Msgr. James Root. The theme of the retreat was "Filling Your Cup of Life."

In addition to prayers and discussions on "What is life?" and "How do we fill our cup of life?" an arts and crafts activity was offered. The group was given blank coffee mugs and special colorful markers. They were asked to think of a person in their life whose cup of life might be bleak or empty right now and be in need of filling. With that person in mind, the group was instructed to decorate the mug with quotes, images or sayings that would uplift the spirit of the person they had in mind. Once this was done the mugs were baked in an oven to ensure the permanence of the markers. Then the group was tasked with filling each others mugs with little strips of paper with positive, uplifting quotes or bible verses written on them. Each person promised to give their mug to the individual they thought of at the beginning of that exercise.

We completed a day of spiritual discussion and bonding which was further enhanced by the Divine Mercy prayer in the Shrine's beautiful chapel. We left, feeling complete. Not only had we enriched our own spirit but also, hopefully, a friend who needed the comfort.

Feast of St. Joseph

Sunday, March 22, 2015, marked the celebration of the Feast of St. Joseph at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn, N.Y. It is an annual event sponsored by the Knights of St. Maron to highlight the role of the father of the family in Christian life. Like St. Joseph, spouse of Mary and earthly father of Jesus, faithful and supportive, the men of the parish keep St. Joseph as an example to emulate in their daily lives.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Msgr. James Root, assisted by subdeacons Norbert Vogl and Peter Frangie. The readings and gifts were offered by the Knights. Following the Liturgy a devotion with the icon of the saint was venerated. Following the service the community of faith adjourned to the Social Hall to share the St. Joseph Day Breakfast prepared and served by the Knights.

The Cathedral community is fortunate to have the dedicated members of the Knights of St. Maron who are willing to give of "time and treasure." This year they will offer two \$500 scholarships to students of high school and college. □

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania *Silver Massabki Award*



by Amal Kouyoumdji

On January 31, 2015, during the Mid-Atlantic East Regional NAM Convention, the parishioners of St. Maron Church and their guests came together for an evening of music, dance, and fellowship, but for one of the attendees, the evening brought something more, a surprise that left her speechless. His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour and Father Vincent Farhat, Pastor, presented Miss Barbara Dahdah-Anderson with the Silver Massabki Award.

A few days later, I sat down with Barbara to talk about this event. Within just the first few minutes of our time together, Barbara had used the word "family" more than a handful of times. Remarkable, but not surprising! For over 125 years, Barbara's family has been part of the Church, or maybe I should say that the Church has been part of Barbara's family. The limits between Church and family seem to be blurred in this case, and what a blessing that is! This is why all matters pertaining to the parish are and will always be deeply personal to Miss Dahdah-Anderson. As a NAM representative, she continues to work diligently on bringing to St. Maron updated directions from the National Apostolate of Maronites, on helping to set up new formats of discussion, and on spreading awareness about the mission of NAM and its full array of programs and activities. "I have never seen the Church this vibrant," shared Barbara proudly. To say that the Massabki award meant a lot to her would certainly be an understatement. The honor that she received in recognition of the positive change that her commitment brings to the community ended up changing her, she said, making her more alert and more grateful to what she called "little spurts of miracles." This is Barbara's way of describing the moments in life when we gather the strength and the humility to reach beyond our comfort zones in order to connect with our fellow human beings so we may "consider to spur one another toward love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, [...] but encouraging one another, and all the more as we see the Day drawing near" (Hebrews 10:24-25). Congratulations, Barbara! □

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania *Scout Recognition*



Back Row: Maya BouSamra, Louis BouSamra, Fr. Wakim, Nick Kassouf. Middle Row: Marwan Sadaka, Sharbel Sadaka, Nadine Sadaka, Tony BouSamra, George Kassouf, Shelly BouSamra. Back Row: Mary BouSamra, Eliana BouSamra, Randieh Kassouf.

by Shelly BouSamra

The Scout Leaders and parents at Our Lady of Victory Church, Carnegie [Pittsburgh], Penn., with the help of Fr. Rodolph Wakim, Pastor, organized a special recognition Liturgy for active Scouts in the parish. Scouts representing American Heritage Girls, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts and Trail Life USA were in full uniform on March 22, 2015, to participate in the Liturgy. The Scouts served the Liturgy by doing the reading, writing their own intercessory prayers and presenting the Gifts. Even the littlest Scouts helped by handing out church bulletins after the Liturgy. Afterwards cake and refreshments were served in the social hall. The group plans to make this a yearly event.

Though small, this group of Scouts is active, having earned numerous Catholic Scouting religious recognition awards, including the Marian Medal, The Spirit Alive Award, The Family of God Award and the I Live My Faith Award, in addition to various patches related to the Holy Rosary and the lives of saints. In 2013, a Boy Scout was awarded the Light of Life Medal by Bishop Mansour and Fr. Wakim. This is currently the only Eastern Catholic Award available to Scouts.

Many of the Scouts also assist the Church in various ways. They serve as altar boys and readers, assist with parish festivals and lenten meals, represent the church in the Children's Dabke group, and perform musically and vocally with the choir. Two American Heritage Girls have dedicated service projects to the church, which included a fundraising bake sale for the building fund and a landscaping day during which volunteers beautified the shrine of the Virgin Mary and mulched part of the church grounds. Two Eagle Scouts have planned projects, one to assist the MCF program by painting and outfitting rooms for new classes and another to landscape and build shrines to Saints Sharbel, Nematullah and Rafka. □

Watervliet, New York New Sunday Luncheon



Parish families and friends of St. Ann Church, Watervliet [Troy], N.Y., gathered after the Divine Liturgy on April 12, 2015, to share a pot luck lunch. New Sunday also spotlighted gifted youth who participated in a Talent Show. Attendees were regaled with music, dance, athletics, humor and even a magic act! □

New Bedford, Massachusetts Holy Thursday



On Thursday, April 2, 2015, the parishioners of Our Lady of Purgatory Church, New Bedford, Mass., joined their Pastor, Fr. Jack Morrison, and Fr. Nicholas Hebert, a frequent visitor at Our Lady of Purgatory, to celebrate the Thursday of Mysteries Liturgy. During the Rite of the Washing of the Feet, Fr. Jack and Fr. Nick

reenacted Jesus washing His Disciples feet at the Last Supper. This year, OLOP revived an old Parish tradition, and most of the young men who had their feet washed were between the ages of seven and twelve. Fr. Nick spoke of St. Jerome, who translated the Bible from Ancient Greek into Latin, and reminded the faithful that Jesus had said to St. Jerome, "Give Me your sins. That is what I came for - I came to take away your sin. Give Me your sin." Following the Liturgy, Fr. Jack led the congregation in the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. □

Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

May 1, 2015

Pastoral Visit to St. Theresa of Calcutta Maronite Mission, Darlington, Penn.

May 2, 2015

Dedication of the Antonine Sisters New Chapel, North Jackson, Ohio; and Pastoral Visit to Our Lady of Victory Parish, Carnegie (Pittsburgh), Penn.

May 3, 2015

Dedication of the Antonine Sisters' New Adult Care Facilities, North Jackson, Ohio; and Pastoral Visit to St. John the Baptist Church, New Castle, Penn.

May 7, 2015

Symposium on Christians of the Middle East with Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Manhattan, N.Y.

May 10, 2015

Mother's Day, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

May 11, 2015

LAU Banquet, Manhattan, N.Y.

May 12, 2015

Pastoral Visit to Our Lady Star of the East Mission, Pleasantville [Atlantic City], N.J.

May 14, 2015

Catholic Relief Services Meetings

May 15, 2015

Visit with the Maronite Sisters of Christ the Light, Dartmouth, Mass.

May 16 - 17, 2015

Ordination of Monsignor George El-Khali to *Periodeut*, Jamaica Plain [Boston], Mass.

May 19, 2015

Caritas-Lebanon Meeting, Saint Louis, Mo.

May 22, 2015

Catholic Relief Services Meetings

May 23, 2015

Ordination of Monsignor Francis Marini to *Periodeut*, Scranton, Penn.

May 24, 2015

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

May 28 - June 2, 2015

Family Visit, Flint, Mich.

June 4, 2015

Annual Synod of Maronite Bishops, *Bkerke*, Lebanon. □

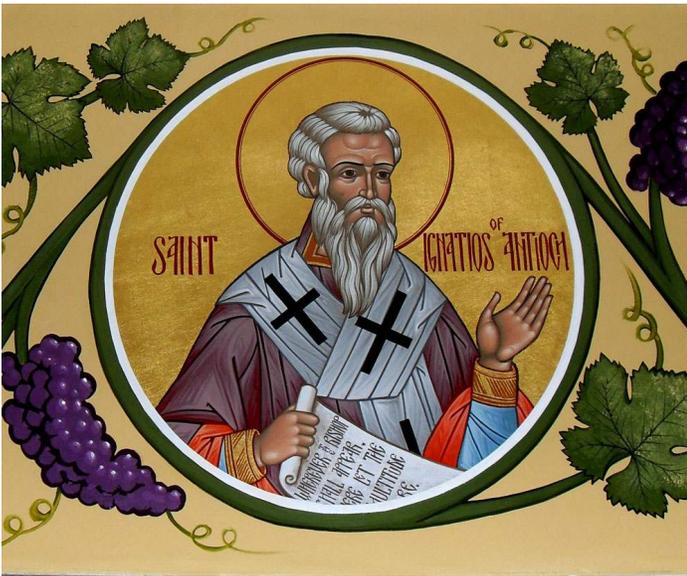
A Brief Introduction of St. Ignatius and St. Ephrem on The Mother of God

Introduction

Mary the Blessed Virgin, proclaimed the "God-Bearer" (Mother of God) by the Council of Ephesus¹, is significant throughout the theology of the period of the Fathers of the Church. As noted by Chorbishop Seely Joseph Beggiani in his book *Early Syriac Theology*, "It was natural for Syriac writers to see Mary as the fulfillment of Old Testament types and a symbol of the future church."²

What must be kept in mind is that the Fathers, often were confronted with heresies that challenged the Church's doctrinal understanding of the Triune nature of God, and the unity of the "divine" and "human" natures in the Son of God made Man, Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore, theological writings on Mary in the Patristic Era are more often than not a defense of the truth of the Incarnation, and a safeguard of the actual humanity of Christ. We find these teachings in doctrinal proclamations, liturgical documents, apologetic arguments defending the "true faith," theological tomes, and in the case of St. Ephrem and others in the Syriac tradition - poetry.

St. Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop and Martyr



St. Ignatius was the second successor of St. Peter as the Bishop of Antioch. He was born in Syria sometime around

¹"The Holy Fathers do not hesitate to call the holy Virgin Theotókos, ...he took his holy body, gifted with a rational soul, from her." From, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church*, by Luigi Gambrel, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1999. p.237.

² *Early Syriac Theology: With Special Reference to the Maronite Tradition*, revised edition, Catholic University of America Press, Washington, DC, 2014, p. 93.

the year 50A.D. and was martyred in the arena in Rome between 98 and 117A.D. Although the date of his birth makes it impossible, according to some early writers he was the child taken up into the arms of Jesus in Mark 9:36-37. "He then took a little child whom he set among them and embraced, and he said to them, 'Anyone who welcomes a little child such as this in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me, welcomes not me but the one who sent me.'" On his way to Rome to be martyred, St. Ignatius wrote letters to the various Christian communities he passed through, leaving us with seven letters that allow us a glimpse of the early Church. In the following quotes from his Letter to the Ephesians, we see Mary's role as the mother of Jesus, and related to this her connection with the action of the Holy Spirit:

There is only one Physician, having both flesh and spirit, born and unborn, God become man, true life in death, from Mary and from God, first passible and then impassible³ - Jesus Christ our Lord. ... For our God Jesus Christ, according to God's economy, was conceived by Mary of the seed of David, but also by the Holy Spirit. He was born and baptized, that by his Passion he might purify the water.⁴

We see here also that St. Ignatius places Mary within God's "economy" of salvation. He is one of the first Church Fathers to use this term, which eventually becomes a technical term that refers to God's plan of salvation being perfect and central to the total revelation of God to his people. Mary, who is always linked to the ministry of her Son and Lord, in bringing salvation to the Father's creation, is overshadowed by the Father's Holy Spirit at the Annunciation, that same Spirit who raises Jesus from the dead - the mystery of faith, the economy of salvation.

St. Ephrem, the Harp of the Holy Spirit

Ephrem was born in Syria around 306 and died in *Nisibis* in 373. He became the greatest example of a Syriac poet in the Patristic period, writing over three million lines of verse. The beauty and quantity of his work awarded him the title Harp of the Holy Spirit. "His verses not only overflow with beauty of form and lyricism but also express rich religious and theological thought. The poet reveals his feelings of deep

³ The terms passible and impassible refer to the suffering (passion) of Christ. The early Church was confronted with the Greco-Roman philosophical tradition that did not allow for any suffering to be possible with God. While the Church certainly condemned the heresy of Patripassionism, that is to say, that the Father suffered on the Cross; it defended the suffering of Christ, true God and true Man, who suffered in his humanity.

⁴ Letter to the Ephesians, 7,2 and 18,2, St. Ignatius of Antioch.

awe and admiration when considering the Holy Virgin and her virtues.⁵ Living some two centuries after St. Ignatius and the Apostolic Fathers (those Fathers who knew the Apostles or disciples of the Apostles), St. Ephrem not only sees Mary in relation to doctrine and apologetics, but also as the object of spiritual devotion. This is illustrated in the following quote:

*Only you (Jesus) and your Mother are more beautiful than everything
For on you, O Lord, there is no mark;
neither is there any stain in your Mother.*⁶

Some have held that St. Ephrem is one of the first Christian writers to explicitly refer to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. He wrote:

*In Mary, as in an eye,
the Light has made a dwelling and purified her spirit,
refined her thoughts, sanctified her mind, and transfigured her virginity.*⁷

For St. Ephrem, Mary is the symbol of the Church, the People of God, who await the Kingdom of God, whose gates were opened by Christ. In his *Hymns on the Crucifixion*, he wrote:

*Three angels were seen at the tomb:
these three announced that he was risen on the third day.
Mary, who saw him, is the symbol of the Church
which will be the first to recognize the signs of his
Second Coming.*⁸

Conclusion

This brief exposition introduces us to the vital role of Mary in the "economy of salvation," and this role is illustrated even in the primitive Church and throughout the Patristic tradition and beyond. Mary, especially in her most important title, Mother of God, affirms the true humanity of Christ, accepts the power of the Holy Spirit in the Word becoming flesh, and mirrors the Church as being the daughter of Christ and vessel of the Holy Spirit. □

(Rev.) David A. Fisher
Philadelphia, Penn.

Houston, Texas 25th Anniversary



From left: Fr. Milad Yaghi, Fadi Abi-Hachem and Nader Khoury.

by Gabriel Habib, M.D.

On March 21, 2015, Our Lady of the Cedars Maronite Church, Houston, Tex., kicked off its 25th Anniversary celebration with a festive banquet attended by over 400 parishioners and guests at the newly renovated Cedar Hall. The banquet included Lebanese food prepared by the Daughters of Mary, a touching speech by Fr. Milad Yaghi, Pastor and parish founder, and great musical entertainment. It was definitely a memorable night in the history of the parish.

After dinner, the parish's youth *Dabke* group entertained the crowd with their skillful talents. Following the *Dabke* performance, the featured entertainer, Nader Khoury, a well-known and accomplished singer who came from Lebanon for the occasion, charmed the audience with his beautiful voice and charismatic singing. It was not too long before the dance floor was full and all had a wonderful time until the early morning hours.

The next day, on Sunday, March 22, Nader Khoury treated the community to a Spiritual Concert of a mix of traditional songs and Passion hymns. Mr. Khoury was accompanied by the maestro and professor of music Mr. Fadi Abi Hachem, as he sang for the Virgin Mary in observance of Mother's Day (celebrated in the Middle East on March 21), along with nostalgic religious hymns that brought everyone back in time. □

Pontifical Appointment

On April 13, 2015, His Holiness Pope Francis appointed Bishop Francois Eid, Bishop *Emeritus* of Cairo, Egypt, of the Maronites and Procurator of the Maronite Patriarchate at the Holy See, as Apostolic Visitator for the Maronite faithful in Bulgaria, Greece and Romania. □

(VIS, April 13, 2015)

⁵ Gambero, L., pp. 108-109.
.219.

⁶ *Corpus scriptorum Christianorum orientalium*, Paris-Louvain, 1903, p.219.

⁷ *Hymns on the Church* 36, 2. St. Ephrem; CSCO 199, 88.

⁸ *Hymns on the Crucifixion*, 4, 17. CSCO, 249, 47.

***Discerning a Vocation
by
Father Tony Massad***

In reflecting back on my own vocation, I find that there were many times that God was speaking to me and many times in which I willfully did not listen. I think this is part of the discernment or searching process for each one of us when we are trying to find our vocation. It seems that when we talk about a vocation or when we hear the word "vocation," it is almost always in the context of the Church or in a religious aspect. It almost exclusively means our vocation to the religious life, i.e. priest, nun, brother, monk, etc. Yet, we all are called to seek out our own vocation. We all are called to find and align our life with

God's will rather than just our own. This is a vocation. It is said that a cross enters our life when our will and desires cross God's will for our life. When they intersect and when they seem to be going in two opposite directions we have a cross. Many times in our lives, we find that our will is in line with God's will, but there are other times where we feel this is not so. In one's discernment of a vocation I think this is inevitable at some point in one's life, but it is not the end.

When I look back at my own discernment I find that there was many a time that I felt I encountered these "crosses" so to speak. There were many times that I felt God's call to the priesthood, but I did not want to believe it. I felt my calling to the priesthood when I was a young teen, about thirteen or fourteen years old. I had grown up and was very active in my home parish of Our Lady of Lebanon in Flint, Mich. I was an altar server, in the youth group, attended catechism, and was happy to help at any church event that the church hosted. It was within this atmosphere that I first felt God calling me to the priesthood.

As I grew and the years went by, I remember that the call never went away. Some days I felt it stronger than others, but it was always with me. I graduated high school and I remember telling God and myself, "You know God, this priesthood thing is nice, but I think I'll get married, have some kids, and become a deacon. That way I can have the best of both worlds, marriage and service to the church." Well, it didn't quite work out that way.

I attended college and took courses in many different fields of study, trying to find what role I was called to be in, yet that voice of God and the idea of the priesthood never really went away. I continued my college career taking different courses, still looking and seeking, and slowly, very slowly, coming to the realization that the call to the priesthood may be the path that I am to take. I completed college with a degree in philosophy and with a minor

in business. It was as if I was taking courses that would help me in my priestly life subconsciously. Thank God that I did.

Also, in my college years, I held various jobs. I worked at a convenience store, different restaurants, for an electronics store, and then for a hardware store. After finishing college, I took a year off, so to speak, to discern what my vocation was. Was I really being called to the priesthood or to be married and have a career in a different field? I continued working at the hardware store and began working as a substitute teacher in both public and private schools, still discerning my vocation, yet slowly leaning towards the priesthood. Throughout all of these years and different roles in my life, I never stopped praying and asking God for His guidance, and much to his credit, He never stopped calling. There were days I decided not to listen. Yet, if we keep an open mind and an open heart and are true to ourselves, God's will for our lives will soon become our will and desire. I began to truly come to this realization in January of 2006, when I decided that I must at least give the seminary and this call to the priesthood a true and honest attempt.

I entered the seminary in September of 2006 and it took me about two months to feel at home, to know that I was where I was supposed to be. From that time, until now, I haven't looked back, and I thank God every day that I finally listened to Him. I was ordained to the priesthood in 2010 and I truly love my priesthood and the Maronite Church. Now as I look back to my life as a teen and a young man, I knew then in my heart that I was always going to be a priest. I honestly and really had no doubt in my mind that I was called to the priesthood, yet I think I was worried, scared and a bit selfish. I knew what the priest couldn't do and I didn't want to miss out on all those things and aspects of life. (Little did I know, the priesthood would allow and bring me to such beautiful and fulfilling experiences and opportunities.) Yet, as



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

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

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

Or

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

Or

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

THE ORDER OF SAINT SHARBEL



Perpetual Members

★ Karen Carter

*Our Lady of the Cedars Church,
Jamaica Plain, Mass.*

Annual Members

★ Houda Daou

*Our Lady of Mercy Church,
Worcester, Mass.*

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, visit www.orderstsharbel.org, or write to:

Eparchy of Saint Maron
109 Remsen Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

or

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

I got older and realized that I must be true to myself, and as I began to align my will with God's will for my life, it was as if my life was in cruise control and many of the worries and concerns that I was holding on just fell by the wayside. I decided to really listen. It was only after I really listened to God's call and had faith in His plan for me that I truly felt and continue to feel at ease. I am thankful that I finally listened to God's call for my life. To take a famous line from St. Augustine, as he said so aptly over 1600 years ago, "You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless, until they can find rest in you." Do not be afraid. The sooner we listen, the sooner we find our vocation, the sooner we get closer to God, the sooner our hearts can be at rest. □

Dartmouth, Massachusetts Maronite Sisters Offer Retreats



From left: Natalie Salameh, Mother Marla Marie and Sister Therese Maria.

by Sister Therese Maria

As Maronite Servants of Christ the Light we strive to radiate by our lives the joy and beauty of living the Gospel and following Christ to the full. We are privileged to serve Maronite parishes and spread the light, hope and healing that Jesus brings.

In response to Pope Francis' letter to religious in this Year of Consecrated Life, we recognize that: "It is not by proselytizing that the Church grows, but by attraction" (Evangelii Gaudium, No. 14).

In the upcoming months and in our efforts to "wake up the World," we will be offering the following retreat opportunities at the Mother of the Light Convent, in Dartmouth, Mass. Please call us at (508) 996-1753 for further details or to RSVP to any of these spiritual events:

- *Seeking and Resting in the Light Ladies Overnight Retreat* for ages 18 - 35 on Saturday June 6, 2015, to Sunday June 7. These two days will include: meals, prayer, Liturgy, faith sharing, quiet reflection, fellowship and more. No costs involved. Donations are welcome. RSVP by June 1.
- *Revitalizing in the Light Retreat* open for both men and women on Saturday June 13, 2015, from 11 a.m.-5p.m. RSVP by June 6.
- Our Annual Light of Life (LoL) Summer Bible Camp for children ages 4 to 12 will be held from Monday, August 3 to Friday, August 7, 2015.

Pope Francis also points out, "consecrated life will not flourish as a result of brilliant vocation programs, but because the young people we meet find us attractive, because they see us as men and women who are happy!" □

Chicago, Illinois Subdeacon Ordination



Fr. Pierre Albalaa, Subdeacon Tom Podraza and Bishop Elias Zaidan.

On Sunday, February 15, 2015, family, friends and parishioners of Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Lombard [Chicago], Ill., were blessed and honored by the Pastoral visit of His Excellency Bishop A. Elias Zaidan, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, during which he ordained Thomas Podraza as a Subdeacon.

Subdeacon Thomas [Tom] welcomed our Lord's message in the Sermon on the Mount, as he is often described as poor in spirit, meek, merciful, peaceful and just. For decades, he has been serving loyally and devotedly the Parish community as an office administrative assistant, as coordinator of the altar servers ministry, as a lector and usher. It was most fitting that he received the great honor of ordination during the annual celebration of Saint Maron's Feast Day.

After the Divine Liturgy, clergy, parishioners and guests joined the family of the newly ordained Subdeacon to a luncheon reception in the Parish Hall. In his speech, Subdeacon Tom expressed his deep gratitude to Father Pierre Albalaa who helped him on his spiritual journey and thanked his family and fellow Parishioners for their support. □

Lakewood, Colorado Saint Rafka's Play

by Jeb Barry, Youth Director

To honor the 101-year anniversary of St. Rafka's death (1832-1914+), the youth of St. Rafka Maronite Parish in Lakewood [Denver], Colo., performed a play in her honor, "The Miraculous Soil of St. Rafka." As the name suggests, many healing miracles were attributed to the soil around her grave, beginning with the cure of the Mother



Fr. Andre addresses the cast members of the St. Rafka play.

Superior of her own convent the day after she was buried.

The play follows a grandfather who tells the story of St. Rafka to his grandson. As he does, the story comes alive and we see St. Rafka as a little girl named Pierrette learning her rosary from her mother. Later, we see the adolescent Pierrette as a servant in a rich man's house, and finally we see the grown up Pierrette, taking her mother's name of Rafka in the convent of St. Joseph Monastery in Lebanon.

There, Rafka begs her divine spouse, Our Lord Jesus, to let her suffer with Him to bring the grace of conversion to the people. The Lord answers her prayer, and Rafka loses her right eye, eventually going totally blind. Later her bones become disjointed to such a degree that she can only knit and pray the rosary. All her suffering becomes legend to the villages surrounding her convent, and she becomes known simply as "the saint." After years of resolute but joyful suffering, Our Lord took Rafka to Himself. St. John Paul II canonized her in 2001, and now she is known as the "Little Flower of Lebanon."

Leanna Marcus, age 11, stated that it was an honor reenacting the life of Saint Rafka. It all started when Father Andre Mouhana, Pastor, suggested that the children reenact the life of Saint Rafka. Sometime later, I and all the other children found out who we would be playing. Some people had more than one character, which made the play even more challenging. Our first practice was delightful, as everyone was eager to start, and there were three people playing the role of Saint Rafka. Lily Jenkins played young Saint Rafka. I (Leanna Marcus) played Saint Rafka growing up, and Natalie Cohlma played Saint Rafka as an adult.

It was very difficult to act out the pain and suffering of Saint Rafka. When the day of the play came all of us were very nervous. As we entered the church, my heart pounded, and I wondered if it would be a disaster. But once the play was over, I was surprised at how amazing everyone did. It was an outstanding experience, and I would like to thank the parents, who took the time to take their children to practice every Sunday, Jeb Barry, who directed the play, and the children who performed. Lastly, Father Andre, who helped make the play happen. □



Newtown Square, Pennsylvania *Bishop's Visit*



From left: Fr., Canulli, Bishop Mansour and Fr. Khallouf.

by Lillian Shahade

Bishop Gregory Mansour's pastoral visit to St. Sharbel Church in Newtown Square, Penn., on April 12, 2015, was well-received indeed. Concelebrating with Bishop Gregory were Fr. Richard Canulli, OSA and Fr. Raymond Khallouf, Administrator.

Bishop Gregory spoke of the many ways parishioners can contribute toward the future growth of their Church by working together with commitment and dedication. He spoke of the past, mending differences and showing kindness and forgiveness and a willingness to work together toward the main goal of bringing the Church to its fullest. He was pleased to hear of the MYO, the Ladies Guild and the many ideas that were put forth for the benefit of all.

Bishop Gregory, on behalf of Fr. Raymond and the entire parish, presented a neck Cross and a Certificate of Appreciation and Thanks to Charlotte Bijansky, Janet Scott and Helen Olejniczak (absent) for their dedication and commitment. The Choir, led by John Khawam, added to the solemnity of the Divine Liturgy.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy a luncheon was held, in honor of Bishop Mansour, in the Church Hall, where everyone present had an opportunity to speak with him and welcome him to St. Sharbel Church.

Certificate of Recognition and Thanks

Charlotte Bijansky, Janet Scott and Helen Olejniczak have been working together for many years now and have shown a dedication and commitment to St. Sharbel Church that is worth emulating. In today's age of a throw-away society and a "me first" mentality, these ladies always put the Church first.

The only reason they might not show to set-up, sell and serve for the Coffee Hour is if there were ten feet of snow. For many years, before and during their kitchen commitment, Helen and Charlotte came every Monday evening to help

with the bingo group. They also could be seen at the ticket booth for many hours during the festival and for any parish event.

When you see someone at the same place week in and week out one tends to take them for granted; believe me, these ladies make a special effort to get to the Church on time. Recently, Helen has had to discontinue because of health issues.

Seeing their dedication, Fr. Raymond only thought it right that they should be recognized and acknowledged for their many years of service to St. Sharbel Church. It was fitting that they were presented a neck cross and certificate of appreciation by Bishop Gregory Mansour on his Pastoral visitation on April 12, 2015, on behalf of the entire parish. Cousin Lillian Shahade accepted the certificate for Helen, who was absent. □

Tulsa, Oklahoma *Men's Retreat*

Chorbishop William J. Leser, Judicial Vicar of the Tribunal of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, spoke at a day of prayer for the Men's Club of St. Thérèse Parish in Tulsa, Okla., on Saturday March 28, 2015. His theme was "Things I Had to Learn and Unlearn."



Chorbishop Leser noted that all people, but especially men, have trouble learning to share their feelings; they tend to hide their feelings. This has to be overcome in all areas of life; for example, one must learn to open up to his spouse about his feelings for her if he wants his marriage to grow and flower. Also, there are other people that one must learn to share with.

This is the same with one's spiritual life. One must take time to share with God. He must find time to be quiet and listen to God. Chorbishop Leser advocated as a start using *Lectio Divina*, reading and meditating upon a passage in Sacred Scripture, as a way of initiating this sharing with God. He emphasized that men must realize that prayer is not only talking to God but also listening. Prayer is not a soliloquy; it is a colloquy. He acknowledged that we would not use our ears to hear God talking to us but rather our hearts.

Father Elias Abi Sarkis, Pastor, provided a lunch for the attendees, and the Sacrament of Penance was available for them. □

Food For Thought

An act of perfect conformity to the will of God unites us more to Him than a hundred other acts of virtue.

St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori

North Jackson, Ohio 25 Club Winners

The monthly winners for the year 2014 -2015 of the 25 Club at Our Lady of Lebanon National Shrine and Basilica in North Jackson, Ohio, are as follows:

Month	Ticket No.	Name
May, 2014		No drawing
June, 2014	395	Nick and Silva Ghossain
July, 2014	121	Dr. Tom Michael
August, 2014	009	John Lyons
September, 2014	387	Brenda Leshnock
October, 2014	158	Jackie Wells
November 2014	180	John Matinko
December, 2014	262	Joan Rosh
January, 2015	150	Rocco Mediatì
February, 2015	054	Steve Moreland
March, 2015	208	John Nastase
April, 2015		Banquet and drawings

The 25 Club originally began in 1968 with purchasers paying just \$25 a ticket twice a year. The money was used to pay the Shrine's utilities. Today, the 25 Club remains an important fundraiser. If you are interested in purchasing a ticket, please give the Basilica Shrine office a call at (330) 538-3351 or by email at office@ourladyofLebanonshrine.com. ☐

Boston, Massachusetts Knights of the Virgin Mary



The Knights of the Virgin Mary (*Fersen El Adra*) at Our Lady of the Cedars, Jamaica Plain [Boston], are getting ready for the May 17, 2015, consecration ceremony. During their April meeting, the Knights were actively

engaged in a lesson that allowed them to discover and follow what is required from a Knight of the Virgin Mary. They also cooperated to make a bouquet of lilies out of paper plates to present to Saint Mary. For a traditional snack, kids made their own *mankouchi* and enjoyed eating it with their friends. ☐



Christian Exodus Contributing to Rise of Militant Islam in Middle East

The steady exodus of Christians from the Middle East is weakening the position of moderate Muslims, warns Maronite Catholic Patriarch Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai.

The Lebanese prelate told a UNESCO audience in Paris that if Christians disappear from the Middle East, "Islam will fall into the hands of fundamentalists." He urged European leaders to take action to preserve the Christian presence.

The Maronite Patriarch also made a plea for help for the refugees who have been forced from their homes because of the bloodshed in the region. He said that Lebanon is now providing shelter for more than 1.5 million refugees from Syria - a figure equivalent to roughly one-third of Lebanon's native population.

Cardinal Rai pleaded for world leaders to push for a negotiated end to the fighting in Syria, as well as in Iraq and Yemen. Above all, he said, "Stop supporting the belligerents with arms and money." ☐

(Catholic World News - April 28, 2015)

Blood of Christians Is Crying Out to Anyone Who Can Still Tell Good From Evil

Pope Francis says the blood of persecuted Christians is crying out to "everyone who can still distinguish between good and evil."

He said this in a message Monday [April 20] to His Holiness Abuna Matthias, Patriarch of the Ethiopian Tewahedo Orthodox Church, after the Islamic State (ISIS) released a video Sunday showing the execution of thirty people said to be Ethiopian Christians.

The Christians are killed in two groups in the video, fifteen beheaded on the beach in eastern Libya and fifteen shot in the southern Libyan desert.

The Pope said it was with "great distress and sadness" that he learned of the "further shocking violence perpetrated against innocent Christians in Libya."

In February, ISIS released a similar video showing the beheading of 21 Coptic Christians on the Libyan shores of the Mediterranean.

"I know that Your Holiness is suffering deeply in heart and mind at the sight of your faithful children being killed for the sole reason that they are followers of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," the Pontiff said.

Both of the videos have been addressed to the "nation of the cross."

The Pope's message to the Ethiopian patriarch repeated an affirmation he made in February: "It makes no difference whether the victims are Catholic, Copt, Orthodox or Protestant. Their blood is one and the same in their confession of Christ!"

Ethiopia is over 40% Orthodox, with about another third of its population being Muslim. Protestants make up another near 20% and Catholics are less than 1% of the population.

Pope Francis said, "The blood of our Christian brothers and sisters is a testimony which cries out to be heard by everyone who can still distinguish between good and evil. All the more this cry must be heard by those who have the destiny of peoples in their hands."

The Holy Father ended his message saying the unfading joy of Easter is this year "tinged with profound sorrow."

"Yet we know that the life we live in God's merciful love is stronger than the pain all Christians feel, a pain shared by men and women of good will in all religious traditions," he concluded.

Libya is a destination site for many African migrants, either looking for work there or for passage to Europe. The plight of these people was highlighted further as a boat carrying migrants sank off the Libyan shore over the weekend and several hundred are thought to have died. An exact number has yet to be confirmed since reports from the few survivors indicate a range of 700 to nearly 1,000 passengers, some of whom were locked into the lowest level of the vessel. (K.N.) □

(*Zenit.org, April 21, 2015*)

The Holy Father Addresses the Patriarchal Synod of the Armenian Catholic Church

On April 9, 2015, Pope Francis received in audience twenty bishops of the Synod of the Armenian Catholic Church, who will attend Sunday's [April 12] Holy Mass to be celebrated for faithful of Armenian rite in St. Peter's Basilica, during which St. Gregory of Narek will be proclaimed a Doctor of the Church.

In the discourse he addressed to the bishops, the Holy Father remarked that on Sunday they will "raise a prayer of Christian intercession for the sons and daughters of your beloved people, who were made victims a hundred years ago," and invoked Divine Mercy "so that it might help all, in the love for truth and justice, to heal every wound and to expedite concrete gestures of reconciliation and peace between the nations that still have not managed to reach a reasonable consensus on the interpretation of these sad events."

Francis greeted all the clergy and lay faithful of the Armenian Catholic Church, many of whom have accompanied the bishops to Rome in these days, as well as "those who live in the countries of the diaspora, such as the United States, Latin America, Europe, Russia, Ukraine, up to the Motherland." He added, "I think with particular sadness of those areas, such as that of Aleppo, that a hundred years ago were a safe haven for the few survivors. In such regions the stability of Christians, not only Armenians, has latterly

been placed in danger."

"Your people, whom tradition recognizes as the first to convert to Christianity in 301, has a two thousand-year history and preserves an admirable patrimony of spirituality and culture, united with a capacity for recovery amid the many persecutions and trials to which it has been subjected. I invite you always to cultivate a sentiment of acknowledgment of the Lord, for having been capable of maintaining fidelity to Him even during the most difficult periods. It is important, furthermore, to ask of God the gift of wisdom of the heart: the commemoration of the victims of a hundred years ago indeed places us before the darkness of the *mysterium iniquitatis*."

"As the Gospel tells us, from the depths of the human heart there may emerge the darkest powers, capable of planning the systematic annihilation of one's brother, of considering him an enemy, an adversary, or even without the same human dignity," he observed. "But for believers the issue of the evil committed by man also introduces the mystery of participation in the redemptive Passion: a number of sons and daughters of the Armenian nation were capable of pronouncing Christ's name to the point of shedding their blood or of death by starvation during the interminable exodus they were forced to undertake."

"The painful pages in the history of your people continue, in a certain sense, the Passion of Christ, but in each one of these there is also the germ of the Resurrection. There is no lack of commitment among you, Pastors, to the education of the lay faithful to enable them to interpret reality with new eyes, in order to be able to say every day: my people consists not only of those who suffer for Christ, but above all of those who are risen in Him. Therefore it is important to remember the past, in order to draw from it the new lymph needed to nurture the present with the glorious announcement of the Gospel and with the witness of charity. I encourage you to support the path of continuing formation of priests and consecrated persons. They are your first collaborators; the communion between them and you will be strengthened by the exemplary fraternity they may observe in the Synod and with the Patriarch."

The Pope expressed his gratitude to those who made efforts to alleviate the sufferings of their ancestors, making special reference to Pope Benedict XV "who intervened before the Sultan Mehmet V to bring an end to the massacre of the Armenians," and who was "a great friend of the Christian Orient: he established the Congregation for the Oriental Churches and the Pontifical Oriental Institute, and in 1920 he inscribed St. Ephrem the Syrian among the Doctors of the Universal Church." Francis continued, "I am pleased that our meeting takes place on the eve of the same gesture I will have the pleasure of performing on Sunday regarding the great figure of St. Gregory of Narek."

"To his intercession, I entrust in particular the ecumenical dialogue between the Catholic Armenian Church and the Armenian Apostolic Church, aware of the fact that the 'ecumenism of blood' has already been achieved through the martyrdom and persecution that took place one hundred years ago," he concluded. "I now invoke the Lord's blessing upon you and your faithful, and I ask you not to forget to pray for me." □

(*Vatican Information Service, April 9, 2015*)

Ordination Class of 2015 Shows Increase in Number Ordained, Reflects Positive Impact of Support from Families, Catholic Schools, Parish Priests

Department of Communications, USCCB

The 2015 class of men ordained to the priesthood report that they were, on average, about seventeen when they first considered a vocation to the priesthood and encouraged to consider a vocation by an average of four people. Seven in ten (71 percent) say they were encouraged by a parish priest, as well as friends (46 percent), parishioners (45 percent), and mothers (40 percent). On average, they lived in the diocese or eparchy for which they will be ordained for fifteen years before entering seminary. Religious ordinands knew the members of their religious institute an average of six years before entering.

The total number of potential ordinands for the class of 2015, 595, is up from 477 in 2014 and 497 in 2013.

The Georgetown University-based Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) gathered the data for "The Class of 2015: Survey of Ordinands to the Priesthood." CARA collects the data annually for the U.S. Bishops' Secretariat for Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations. Approximately 69 percent of the 595 potential ordinands reported to CARA. These 411 respondents include 317 ordinands to the diocesan priesthood from 120 different dioceses and archdioceses and 94 ordinands to the religious priesthood.

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Raleigh, North Carolina, chair of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations, found that the data gave reason for hope but also provide areas for further growth.

"It is encouraging to see the slight increase in the number of ordinations this year in the United States," Bishop Burbidge said. "When asked about the positive influences they encountered while discerning the call, those to be ordained responded that the support from their family, parish priest, and Catholic schools ranked very high."

Father W. Shawn McKnight, Executive Director of the Secretariat, cited educational debt as a growing concern. "Over 26 percent of those ordained carried educational debt at the time they entered the seminary, averaging a little over \$22,500 in educational debt at entrance to the seminary. Considering the high percentage of the men ordained already having earned an undergraduate degree, it will be important to find ways to assist in debt reduction in the future."

Among the survey's major findings:

- The average age for the Class of 2015 is 34. The median age (midpoint of the distribution) is 31. Eight in ten respondents are between 25 and 39. This distribution is slightly younger than in 2014, but follows the pattern in recent years of average age at ordination in the mid-thirties.
- Two-thirds (69 percent) report their primary race or

ethnicity as Caucasian/European American/white. Compared to the adult Catholic population of the United States, they are more likely to be of Asian or Pacific Islander background (10 percent of responding ordinands), but less likely to be Hispanic/Latino (14 percent of responding ordinands). Compared to diocesan ordinands, religious ordinands are less likely to report their race or ethnicity as Caucasian/European American/white.

- One-quarter (25 percent) were born outside the United States, with the largest numbers coming from Colombia, Mexico, the Philippines, Nigeria, Poland and Vietnam. On average, respondents born in another country have lived in the United States for 12 years. Between 20 and 30 percent of ordinands to diocesan priesthood for each of the last ten years were born outside of the United States.
- Most ordinands have been Catholic since infancy, although 7 percent became Catholic later in life. Eighty-four percent report that both of their parents are Catholic and more than a third (37 percent) have a relative who is a priest or a religious.
- More than half completed college (60 percent) before entering the seminary. One in seven (15 percent) entered the seminary with a graduate degree. One in three (34 percent) report entering the seminary while in college. The most common fields of study for ordinands before entering the seminary are theology or philosophy (20 percent), liberal arts (19 percent), and science (13 percent).
- Half of responding ordinands (51 percent) attended a Catholic elementary school, which is a rate higher than that of all Catholic adults in the United States. In addition, ordinands are somewhat more likely than other U.S. Catholic adults to have attended a Catholic high school and they are much more likely to have attended a Catholic college (45 percent, compared to 7 percent among U.S. Catholic adults).
- Six in ten ordinands (61 percent) report some type of full-time work experience prior to entering the seminary, most often in education. Four percent of responding ordinands report prior service in the U.S. Armed Forces. About one in six ordinands (16 percent) report that either parent had a military career in the U.S. Armed Forces.
- Eight in ten (78 percent) indicate they served as an altar server and about half (51 percent) reporting service as a lector. One in seven (14 percent) participated in a World Youth Day before entering the seminary.
- About seven in ten report regularly praying the rosary (70 percent) and participating in Eucharistic adoration (70 percent) before entering the seminary.
- Almost half (48 percent) indicated that they were discouraged from considering the priesthood. On average, two individuals are said to have discouraged them.

The full report can be found online:
usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/ordination-class/index.cfm. □

Cleveland, Ohio, Prepares for the 52nd Maronite Convention

With the convention a short two months away, the committees are hard at work preparing for their guests. This year's convention starts on July 1, 2015, and everyone has been working on a full schedule of informative, inspiring workshops, colorful excursions and fun events for the evenings' entertainment.

Workshops

How America Turned me from a Lebanese Immigrant into a NASA Rocket Scientist

Thursday, July 2, 2015: 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon, Mr. Charles Elachi, Ph.D.

Dr. Elachi is a NASA scientist born in Lebanon and is the Director of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), located in Pasadena, California. He has held this position since May 1, 2001 and also holds professorships in electrical engineering and planetary science at Caltech. In addition to his position as Director of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Dr. Elachi is vice president of the California Institute of Technology.

Dr. Elachi's motivating discussion will focus on religion and faith as seen from a scientist's perspective, and he will also discuss how America turned him from a Lebanese immigrant to a NASA rocket scientist. His career will provide an insight to exploring space, science and faith. His story on how he got there will provide motivation on shaping our future.

Journey of a First Generation Maronite Professional: Thoughts on Family Health and Wellness in America

Thursday, July 2, 2015: 3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., Drs. Sonia Najjar and Deborah Ghazoul-Mills.

Dr. Sonia Najjar, Ph.D. is a Professor of Physiology and Pharmacology at the University of Toledo. She is also the founding director of the Center for Diabetes and Endocrine Research (CeDER).

Dr. Deborah Ghazoul-Mills, M.D., is board-certified in general pediatrics. She is also the Medical Director of Cleveland Clinic Westlake Community Pediatrics, part of Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital Pediatric Institute.

Our First Global Citizens and Our Path to the Future

Friday, July 3, 2015: 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon, John Zogby

Mr. Zogby, the founder of the "Zogby Poll" and the Zogby companies, is an American public opinion pollster and author. He is currently Senior Analyst with Zogby Analytics. Mr. Zogby grew up in Utica, New York, the son of Lebanese Catholic immigrants. Zogby received a Bachelor's degree in history from Le Moyne College in 1970 and a Master's degree in history from Syracuse University in 1973. He taught history and political science for twenty-four years. A trustee of Le Moyne College, Zogby received the Alumni Award in June, 2000. In 2005, he was awarded Honorary Doctorate Degrees from State University of New York and the Graduate School of Union University. In 2009, Zogby received an Honorary Doctorate Degree from the College of

St. Rose. In 2008 he was awarded the Chancellor's Distinguished Fellows Award from the University of California, Irvine. His talk will focus on the first global citizens and their contributions and will discuss our path to the future. The Maronite Millennials represent a unique cultural connection and bridge to global understanding. They need to proudly showcase this heritage and exercise their role as the bridge.

Success Can be Around the Corner

Friday, July 3, 2015, 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m., Mr. Georges Harik, Ph.D.

Dr. Harik was one of Google's first ten employees. He held the roles of director of Googlettes and distinguished engineer responsible for Nacsent Google initiatives, including Gmail, Google talk and Google video. He is also a founder of imo.im, a social networking application. In the spring of 1999, Dr. Georges Harik was looking for a break from the engineering world after a job at Silicon Graphics. He was planning to travel the world for a year, but a mutual friend introduced him to a fellow alum from the University of Michigan, and he spent a few hours talking to him about search. After that, Dr. Harik shelved his travel plans and signed on as a Google software engineer. He will inspire and motivate our Maronite Young Adults (MYA) with his story as he speaks about how opportunity and success can be just around the corner.

Forgiven, God's Way: Lessons from a Family Tragedy

Saturday, July 4, 2015: 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon, Mrs. Rachel Muha

Rachel Muha was born and raised a Maronite. Mrs. Muha's son, Brian Muha, was assaulted, abducted, and murdered by two inner-city youth. Rachel and her family wanted to help God bring good out of evil. She is the Founder and director of the Brian Muha Memorial Foundation and the Run The Race Club, an inner-city preschool, afterschool and summer program for inner-city children and their families. Mrs. Muha is also the 2011 winner of the national Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Jefferson Award, called the Nobel peace Prize of service. Based on her real life experience and story she will be discussing forgiveness and lessons learned from this tragedy. So many times, we get into disagreements with others and we forget the message of forgiveness. Her life story will definitely leave you thinking twice about what is really important in your life.

Commission on the Middle East

A Panelist Discussion on Maronite Americans and U.S. Policy and its Impact on Events in the Middle East

Saturday, July 4, 2015: 3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., Moderators: Fr. Toufic Nasr and Chorbishop Seely Beggiani

This panel discussion will focus on how Maronite Americans can impact U.S. policy and its effect on events that are sweeping through several countries in the Middle East. □

Detroit, Michigan *Palm Sunday Celebration*



From left: Msgr. Louis Baz, Mrs. Jeanette Rahi, Bishop Zaidan and Dr. Daher Rahi.

by Chris Rahi Kassab

His Excellency Bishop A. Elias Zaidan, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, celebrated Palm Sunday Liturgy with Msgr. Louis Baz at St. Maron Church in Detroit, Mich., noting that St. Maron was the first Maronite Cathedral in the United States.

Parishioners and children dressed in their Sunday finest gathered for the occasion. Despite chilly temperatures Bishop Zaidan led everyone in a traditional walk outside the church with palms and candles.

Following the Liturgy Bishop Zaidan blessed a mosaic of St. Theresa of The Little Flower donated to the church by Dr. and Mrs. Daher Rahi, their children and grandchildren. After the Palm Sunday celebration parishioners gathered at St. Maron's hall for brunch. □

Lewisville, Texas *Legion of Mary*



From left: Alphonsine Ugochukwu, Annie Ramapuram, Joe Rendon, Fr. Assaad ElBasha, Sister Anna, Marichu Barrone, Rose Onoh (President), and Sister Peggy.

The Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapter has officially been established at Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church in Lewisville [Dallas], Texas. The collective is seven members strong and growing. On March 24, 2015, the Feast of the Annunciation, Fr. Assad ElBasha, Pastor, presided over the "Total Consecration" of each of the Legion of Mary's members. □

Appeal From Caritas Lebanon

Christians in Lebanon are suffering. Please pray for Lebanon! If you are able to relieve some of the suffering, please visit: www.Caritas.org.lb. Thank you for your consideration. □