

The Maronite Voice

A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA

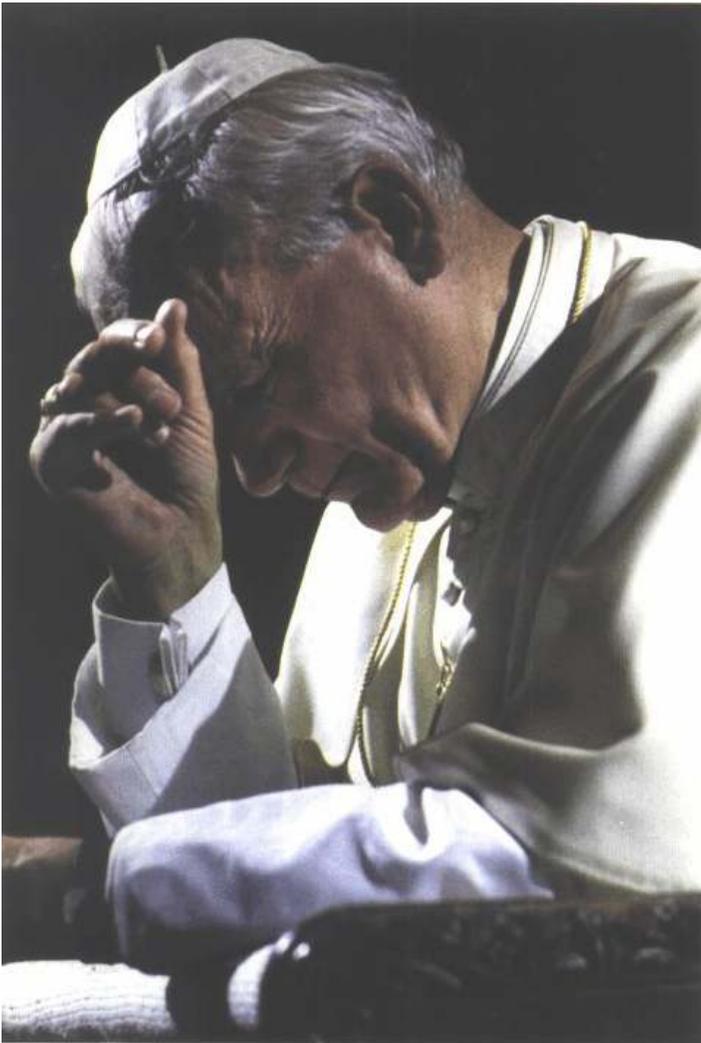


Volume VII

Issue No. V

May 2011

Pope John Paul II, The Apostolic Churches and Lebanon



Blessed John Paul II at prayer.

Nazi and later Communist oppression of the Church. The Holy Father knew of them personally and mentioned this during his Lebanon visit.

Likewise, the Pope expressed his respect for Lebanon in many diplomatic and ecclesial interventions since his earliest days after his pontifical election in October, 1978. However, the succession of wars in Lebanon, started in 1975, and caused by internal, regional and international interferences, prevented any intervention. When weapons were silenced in the Fall of 1990, Pope John Paul II was quick to call for a Synod for Lebanon. He did this June 12, 1991, and followed his convocation by a message to all the Lebanese people as well as a letter to the Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops in Lebanon (July 1991).

(Continues on page 20)

One sign of holiness is the desire and ability in a person to love the world as God so loves. This theme is an entire symphony in the life of Pope John Paul II, played out in many of his efforts to reach out to others: his profound insights given over years of Wednesday Audiences and other writings, his fruitful outreach (leading up to the 2000 Jubilee) to all those who have felt they were far from the Church, and his love and insight into the role and importance of the Apostolic Churches. In all these areas, the Holy Father was both prophetic and courageous.

As a Maronite Catholic, I would like to reflect on his love for the Apostolic Churches, especially as this theme played out in his wise and prudent desire to convoke the Synod for Lebanon in 1995.

Pope John Paul II, like his predecessor Pope Paul VI, envisioned the Synod of Bishops as a means to continue the springtime renewal of the Church begun with the Second Vatican Council. There have been twenty-five Synods since 1965, some based on different themes, such as the Family, the Eucharist, and the Word of God, others based on territorial considerations, such as the Synod for Africa, Asia, The Americas, Europe and the Middle East. In 1991 Pope John Paul II announced his desire to convoke a Synod for Lebanon, unique because it was the only time a Synod embraced all the Eastern Catholics and focused on just one country.

Pope John Paul II developed the extremely popular moral conception that "Lebanon is more than a country, it is a mission." He viewed Lebanese society as a model for religious and cultural plurality, and Islamo-Christian dialogue at the level of life, culture and politics. For a man who grew up in mostly Latin Catholic Poland, the Holy Father went beyond his cultural comfort level and developed a love for the Churches of the East and for the country of Lebanon that was refreshing and surprising to say the least. Some attribute his love for Lebanon to his gratitude for having accepted so many Polish seminarians and priests who needed shelter during the

Schedule of Bishop Robert Shaheen

May 1, 2011

First Holy Communion, St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

May 2, 2011

47th Anniversary of Priesthood, Danbury, Conn.

May 19, 2011

Evening Prayer and Dinner for Clergy, Maronite Heritage Institute Center, St. Louis, Mo.

May 20, 2011

Dedication of the Maronite Heritage Institute Center, St. Louis, Mo.

May 20 - 21, 2011

NAM Meeting, St. Louis, Mo.

May 21, 2011

Hafli, Cedars Hall, St. Louis, Mo.

May 22, 2011

Solemn Dedication Liturgy of the Heritage Culture Center, St. Louis, Mo.

June 3 -15, 2011

Maronite Bishops' Synod, Bkerke, Lebanon. ☐

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Maronite Convention 2011

St. Sharbel Church
Newtown Square, Pennsylvania

July 6 - 10, 2011

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

Sister Marla Marie to Celebrate 25th Jubilee

With gratitude to God for His abundant blessings, we cordially invite you to join us in celebrating twenty-five years of consecration and service of Sister Marla Marie Lucas of the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light. A Liturgy of thanksgiving and blessing will be celebrated by his Excellency Gregory John Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron at Saint Anthony of the Desert Church in Fall River, Massachusetts, at 4:00p.m. on Saturday, May 28, 2011. Join us for a reception following the Liturgy in the Saint Sharbel Hall. R.S.V.P. by May 14th to Sister Therese Maria via email: sisterjubilee@gmail.com or by telephone: (781) 331-3290.



If you are unable to attend and would like to send a donation, please remit to: Maronite Servants, 1199 Commercial St., Weymouth, MA 02189. ☐

All Christians Should Proclaim The Resurrection, Pope Tells Audience



“The Resurrection of the Lord marks the renewal of our human condition,” Pope Benedict XVI told a crowd gathered to pray the *Regina Caeli* on Easter Monday, April 25.

The Pope held his midday audience at the papal summer residence in Castel Gandolfo, where he is resting a few days after a heavy schedule of liturgical celebrations for Holy Week and Easter—and before

the beatification of his predecessor, Pope John Paul II, on May 1.

The Pope told his audience that all Christians share the obligation to proclaim the news of Christ’s Resurrection. He recalled the words of the Risen Jesus to the woman who first met him: “Go and tell my brethren.” The Church, Pope Benedict said, carries on the mission to “go and tell” to the people of the world today. ☐

Zenit.org, April 25, 2011

Brooklyn, New York Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral Selected By Landmark Conservancy For "Sacred Sites"



The main entrance of Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral facing Henry Street in Brooklyn, New York.

by Salma T. Vahdat

On May 22, 2011, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn, New York, will be open to the public as part of the "Sacred Sites" Program of the New York Landmark Conservancy.

The Open House is part of a year-long celebration of the 25th anniversary of the New York Landmarks Conservancy Sacred Sites program. Over 660 religious institutions throughout the state have received more than \$6.7 million in matching grants for preservation and rehabilitation of historic edifices.

Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral was constructed in 1844 by Richard Upjohn, a noted architect of the day, and is the first Romanesque Revival style church constructed in the United States. Sold to the Maronite community in 1943 by the original Church of the Pilgrims and consecrated for Maronite worship in 1944, the Congregation has flourished and currently is embarking on a Capital Campaign to raise funds for the repair and restoration of this treasure. The Conservancy has approved a grant of \$45,000 to assist in that goal.

We hope to see many of our friends and neighbors at the Open House between one and four o'clock in the afternoon. There will be brochures and visual aids detailing the historical significance of the Cathedral as well as guided tours. It is a time to admire and appreciate the Cathedral and the history it represents. □



Los Angeles, California St. Maron's Feast Day Celebration



From left: Fr. Abdullah Zaidan, Ambassador and Mrs. Chagoury, and Cardinal Leonardo Sandri.

by Tommy Tedros

The Annual St. Maron's Feast Day celebration at Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon Cathedral, Los Angeles, California, turned out to be quite a spectacle as we came together to celebrate the end of the Jubilee Year of the 1600th anniversary of the death of St. Maron. This year, we honored in the presence of Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches from the Vatican and His Excellency Bishop Robert Shaheen, a special person for all his contributions to society. The honoree this year was Ambassador Gilbert Chagoury for his exemplary achievements in business and diplomacy, and for his inspiring support of educational, health care and humanitarian causes around the world.

On Sunday, February 27, the Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon Cathedral community celebrated its annual St. Maron's Feast Day. The day started with a Pontifical Liturgy. Members of the Order of Saint Sharbel formed an honor guard as the altar servers and clergy entered the cathedral. The main celebrant was His Excellency Robert Shaheen. His Eminence Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Msgr. Maurizio Malvestiti, Under-Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, and a number of visiting clergy from Lebanon, Rome and the United States concelebrated. Ambassador Chagoury and his wife Rose-Marie, were inducted in the Order of Saint Sharbel during liturgy.

Following Liturgy, a luncheon was held for 550 guests at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills to honor Ambassador Chagoury as recipient of the "Lifetime Civic Achievement Award." Tommy Tedros introduced the many religious and civic dignitaries in attendance, including Ambassador of Lebanon to the United States, Antoine Chedid; Mayor of Los Angeles, Antonio Villaraigosa; and Acting Consul General of Lebanon, Madonna Aoun Ghazal. The program was then turned over to Masters of Ceremonies Father Abdallah Zaidan and Father Elias Sleiman who introduced various guests to speak.

Ambassador Gilbert Chagoury was born in Nigeria and

grew up in Africa. He left Nigeria to attend the *College des Freres* in Lebanon and studied business. He returned to Nigeria and worked his way up the corporate ladder and, at age seventeen, became the youngest executive of sales at his first employment. In 1967, during one of his many visits to Lebanon, the Ambassador met his lifelong partner Rose-Marie Chamchoum. They have four children and four grandchildren. In 1971, Ambassador Chagoury set the foundation for building an industrial empire that would span across West Africa. Ideal Flour Mills in Nigeria began full operation in 1978, the first of many flour mills he developed in Nigeria on his way to building the Chagoury Group. One of Nigeria's premiere conglomerates, with business interests in manufacturing, construction, industry, hotels and high technology, the Chagoury Group today is a leading Nigerian employer, with a workforce numbering tens of thousands of Nigerian and other African international personnel.

Ambassador Gilbert Chagoury's Maronite upbringing taught him that helping others and giving back is the central duty of all Christians. Motivated by the needs of the Caribbean country of Saint Lucia and its sensitive eco-system, in 1995, he accepted his appointment as Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Saint Lucia to UNESCO. Since 2004, he has also been Ambassador of Saint Lucia to the Holy See. In addition to helping troubled governments, Ambassador Chagoury believes in helping the less fortunate, supporting the Church and promoting the arts. The Ambassador and his wife are avid supporters of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, founded by Danny Thomas. A devoted Maronite, Ambassador Chagoury was one of the principal donors for the renovation of the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, and he was the biggest donor to help renovate and restore the Church of *Notre Dame du Liban* in Paris, France. He is a constant supporter of Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon Cathedral in Los Angeles.

In 2008, Ambassador Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury helped break ground on the Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine at the Lebanese American University (LAU) in Beirut, Lebanon. They also donated to LAU to support the establishment of a School of Nursing which will be named the Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing, in honor of the Ambassador's mother.

Some highlights of his awards and recognitions included the following milestones. In 1990, acknowledging his merit, the Vatican awarded and bestowed upon Mr. Chagoury the Order of Saint Gregory the Great at the rank of Commander. In October 1998, Pope John Paul II honored Gilbert and his family with a private audience. This past January, his granddaughter Elena was baptized at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. While there, the Ambassador and his wife were granted a private audience with Pope Benedict XVI. In 2005, in recognition of his international representation of the people of Lebanon, the Lebanese President of the Republic awarded him the distinction of Commander of the Order of the National Cedar. In 1985, St. Jude's Children Research Hospital bestowed on him its highest honor, giving him a Founder's Award. In 1988 it honored his wife as Woman of the Year, and in 1990, Ambassador Chagoury was named Man of the Year. He continues his mission to make the world a better place. He remains a dedicated philanthropist and public servant, and strives to be close to his family.

Other speakers included Dr. Elias Ayoub, Co-Chairperson of St. Maron's Day 2011 along with his wife, Mireille; Ambassador Antoine Chedid; and Bishop Robert Shaheen of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon. Father Abdallah Zaidan awarded the Silver Massabki Awards to recipients George and Ghada Ashkar and the Regional Silver Massabki Awards to recipients Antoine and Amal Alwan for their service and dedication to the local cathedral community and beyond. The Faith of the Mountain Award were given to Adele and Noor Ghassoub for their young adult achievements on the local level. An audio-visual presentation of Ambassador Chagoury's life journey was shown as it highlighted his background and career path and how it translated into the success he exhibits presently. Choir members Christine Said and Noor Ghassoub presented a musical interlude well into the luncheon. Cardinal Leonardo Sandri presented the main address as he honored Ambassador Chagoury and talked about how much this person has given over the years. This year's recipient is well-deserving of the accolades and he made us, the Lebanese community, proud to honor him in this event.

St. Maron's Day is the feast day of the founder and patron of the Maronite Church that is commemorated every February 9. Each year, the bar is raised on the magnitude of this event, and it fosters Maronite pride in us all in terms of heritage, culture, tradition and unity. □

Jacksonville, Florida *Art Exhibit*



by Fr. Elie Abi-Chedid

Saint Maron's Mission in Jacksonville, Florida, organized an Art Exhibit / Wine & Cheese tasting in celebration of Saint Maron's Feast on Sunday February 27, 2011. Dr. George Joseph, Dr. Joe Chehade, Deeda Richa, Ghada Barakat and Tommy Williams, exhibited their artistic talents in painting. The event was very pleasant and successful. □

Houston, Texas *Farewell to Fr. Andre*



From left: Fr. Milad Yaghi, Pastor, Tom Gordova, Fr. Andre Estaphan and Fr. Pierre Khoury.

by Christine Dow

On March 27, 2011, Our Lady of the Cedars Maronite Church, Houston, Texas, bid farewell to Fr. Andre Estephan, Associate Pastor of twelve years. It was a beautiful service with heartwarming words that can only touch on the surface of how Fr. Andre has impacted our church community. Fr. Andre will be moving on to join the Our Lady of Lebanon community in Lebanon.

As many mentioned at the Liturgy, Fr. Andre has made a lifelong impression on many people in the parish in many different situations, and it is apparent that he will be dearly missed.

Fr. Andre shared his gifts with many parish organizations and activities: the Choir, the Religious Education Program; the Bible studies; and the Family and Couples Retreats. From his musical talents, to his spiritual knowledge, and most of all to his humble and reverent spirit, he managed to gain the love and respect of everyone he met.

He was always available to help someone in need, going above and beyond the call of duty to help anyone in trouble, sorrow, or just wanting him to listen. His reverence causes anyone in his presence to see God as the solution to any trial. His knowledge goes beyond what we think we know about our faith; it helps us to actually live it.

It is always hard to see such a valuable person leave the family, but we wish him all the best and we hope whatever road he takes is filled with joy and happiness. He will always have a special place in our hearts. □



Warren, Michigan *MYO Regional Retreat*



The parish of St. Sharbel in Warren, Michigan, was honored to host the 2011 MYO Regional Retreat. Approximately 200 youths attended from around the region, from parishes in Akron, Youngstown and Cleveland, Ohio, Flint and Livonia, Mich., and Pittsburgh, Penn. The theme was *Rooted in Life*, which paid tribute to Colossians 2:6 - 7, "Continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him..."

The retreat officially kicked off on Friday, February 18, 2011, when the youths arrived safely at the parish. The festivities started with an ice breaker to introduce the groups to one another and then the youths had dinner and enjoyed the music of DJs Matt and Alex Romah. They woke up early on Saturday ready for their workshops. After lunch, they participated in a Penance service and then enjoyed the remainder of the afternoon roller-skating, playing miniature golf, or visiting the shrine. At night, they attended a *hafli*. On Sunday, they participated in the liturgy as the 2011 Regional Retreat came to a close. We are thankful that all the youth groups made it home safely before the forecasted heavy snowfall. □

Deadline for next month's issue of

The Maronite Voice is May 25, 2011.

The Maronite Voice is the official Newsletter of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon and of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn.



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Pictures must be original. Digital pictures must be in "JPG" format and in high resolution. □

Brooklyn, New York *MYO - MYA Retreat*



by Salma T. Vahdat

It was an enthusiastic gathering of 154 young men and women who attended the MYO - MYA retreat at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn, N.Y., on March 25 - 26, 2011.

The youth came from five states, representing parishes from Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and they were accompanied by Fr. Michael Marone, Administrator of St. Maron Church in Philadelphia, Penn., and Fr. Vincent Farhat, Parochial Vicar at St. Anthony Church in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

The theme of the retreat was "*In Pursuit of Happiness*", and it can be said the group was quite receptive to adopting that mantra. They attended the Friday Lenten Service of the Stations of the Cross and were most attentive to the homily of Fr. Geoffrey Abdallah, Director of Music for the Eparchy of Saint Maron. He encouraged the youth to look for happiness within themselves and, through prayer, to listen to their hearts because God, who wants us to be happy, would help them to find direction in their lives.

Dinner, which was prepared by the parents of the MYO, was served in the social hall and was followed by the award winning film, "Life Is Beautiful." Therese Abi-Habib was responsible for the organization of the meals and the audio-visuals.

The Retreat Masters were the Very Rev. James A. Root, Rector of the Cathedral, Fr. Geoffrey Abdallah, Fr. Michael Marone and Fr. Vincent Farhat.

On Saturday, all had an opportunity to pray, reflect and participate in Stations for Youth, Morning Prayer, Divine Liturgy, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Reconciliation.

After all was said and done and before leaving to return to their homes, an impromptu *hafli* erupted! Musical instruments appeared, songs were sung, dancing began and the lightness and brightness of these wonderful young people was enjoyed by all. They are our future. □

San Antonio, Texas *Feast Day and Awards*



Pictured from Right to Left: Roxanne & Kevin Kearns, Cheryl Mery Smith, Rita Houayek, Patricia Karam, Ameen Al-Bahloly, Jackie Mery Hull, Fr. Ghassan Mattar, MLM, Jo Ann Reed, Margaret Estefan for her mother, Carlie Estefan, Fr. Charles Khachan, MLM, and Chris Khattar. □

by Pat Perrillo

Each year the community of south Texas Maronites comes together in San Antonio to celebrate the Feast Day of our patron, St. Maron. This year's weekend-long event began with a *hafli* Saturday night featuring the talents of Anwar Zein. The celebration continued the next morning with the Divine Liturgy, during which parish leaders received a special blessing to assist them throughout the year. After Liturgy the parish family gathered for a luncheon and a video presentation on the life of St. Maron prepared by Fr. Ghassan Mattar and Fr. Charles Khachan. A special slide show highlighted the year's many events, both spiritual and social.

Afterwards, Fr. Ghassan singled out those parishioners who had given their "time, talent and treasure" in extraordinary service of the parish. Jo Ann Reed and Carlie Estefan received the Bishop's Award for their service to the Eparchy as well as to St. George Church; Jackie Mery Hull and Ameen Al-Bahloly were awarded the Silver Massabki Medal and the Faith of the Mountain Award respectively. Rita Houayek, Patricia Karam, Kevin and Roxanne Kearns, and Cheryl Mery Smith received the St. George Appreciation Award. Christopher Khattar received the first annual Altar Server Award. □

Food for Thought

The Lord does us the honor of placing his confidence in us and calling us to the ministry, showing us his mercy. This call is not reserved for a few; it is for everyone, each in his own state of life.

Pope John Paul II

Uniontown, Pennsylvania *Pastoral Visit*



Bishop Mansour blesses the people as he walks down the aisle of Saint George Church to celebrate the Divine Liturgy.

by Joanne John

St. George Parish in Uniontown, Penn., was honored by a pastoral visit from Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, on April 8-10, 2011.

On Friday evening he joined Father Nadim Helou, M.L.M., Administrator, in celebrating the Divine Liturgy which was attended by many of the parishioners. Following the Liturgy, all enjoyed an evening meal in the church hall and many lingered to visit with the bishop.

Saturday was a busy day for Bishop Gregory and Fr. Nadim as they began their day early, visiting some of the sick of the parish and returning in time to visit with the Altar & Rosary Society and then the Ladies Guild members. The Bishop talked to both groups about what they have accomplished in this past year and urged them to continue the good work they have already done. He suggested that they reach out to other women of the parish, especially to the young adults to follow in the footsteps of those before them so that the work they have begun will continue.

A luncheon was prepared by the Altar & Rosary Society for all, and then Bishop Gregory, accompanied by Fr. Nadim, met with the newly formed Maronite Men's Group (the MMG) and Subdeacon Thomas R. George.

Bishop Gregory celebrated the Saturday evening Divine Liturgy for the children of the parish with Fr. Nadim Helou concelebrating. The Maronite Christian Formation (MCF) children and members of the MYO participated in the Liturgy.

A buffet supper with a children's menu was held in the church hall. The evening concluded with the parishioners again having time to visit with their former pastor, friend and now their bishop.

Sunday's Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Bishop Gregory. The Bishop told of his trip to elect the new Patriarch and of the enthronement five days later. It was an enriching experience for him to participate in this historic event.

After Liturgy, a light brunch was served by the MMG, with help from the Ladies Guild. Bishop Gregory was available for last greetings and an unending line of pictures with everyone.

Bishop Gregory also met with the Parish Council on Sunday as well as the parish Pro-Life Committee. The Bishop was asked many questions about the role of the committee and his input into their future plans. He told them that in all areas, whether it be Pro-Life, Pro-Family, Pro-Marriage or Chastity Education to "... speak the truth in love. Let all words come from the heart."

Both Bishop Gregory and Father Nadim suggested that a day be chosen to pray the Rosary of the Unborn during the upcoming Altar & Rosary Society sponsored outdoor daily recitation during the month of May. Our thanks go out to Bishop Gregory for brightening our weekend and our prayers are for God's blessing on him and his continued love in his work with others. □

Lawrence, Massachusetts *Graduation Day*



Sunday, April 10, 2011, marked the graduation day for the Religious Education Program at St. Anthony Maronite Church in Lawrence, Mass. At the end of the Liturgy, 145 children received a certificate of achievement for their attendance and participation in the eparchial program. This day will remain in their minds and hearts as they grow older realizing what the teachers and the church planted in their hearts and lives about Christ. Also, they will realize how important the gift of Faith is and how we preserve it and pass it on to others through our good example and the way of life. (*Continues on page 8*)

Father Vincent Farhat, Subdeacon Jim Demers and Msgr. Peter F. Azar, Pastor, thanked the Coordinator and teachers of the Religious Education Program for their endless efforts and dedication shown to the children on a weekly basis. They also thanked the parents for their trust and for being so diligent in encouraging their children to be part of this rich and important Program.

Knights of the Altar



On April 3, St. Anthony's offered its Sunday 9:00 a.m. Liturgy for its Knights of the Altar and their families. Seventeen knights were promoted during a ceremony at the conclusion of the Liturgy, with Msgr. Peter Azar and Fr. Vincent Farhat presenting certificates to each knight and pins to each member who achieved the rank of full knight. Each was responsible not only for serving the Lord respectfully at his assigned Liturgies, but also for attending monthly meetings for spiritual, social, and educational growth. Each rank requires increasing knowledge of the Liturgy; names of the vestments, areas of the church, and liturgical items; volunteering at Parish functions; mentoring; and knowledge of prayers.

Congratulations to our Knights of the Altar, and thank you to Subdeacon James Demers for his support and guidance in this special program.

Sunshine Committee

Our dedicated volunteer women of the parish made visits to our shut-ins for Easter. The idea is to remind our homebound faithful parishioners that they are not forgotten at Saint Anthony, their spiritual home. After the blessing of Palms, the Sunshine committee gathered and crafted crosses and crowns made out of the blessed branches of Palms. Their visiting brought great joy and happiness to the sick and the shut-ins. ☐

Minneapolis, Minnesota *MYO Lenten Lock-In*



Chicken! Veggies! Soy! Rice! Teenagers yelled out their needs as they competed on filling bags of food for hungry children. In this year's Lent Lock-In on Saturday, March 19, 2011, members of the Saint Maron, Minneapolis, Minn., MYO experienced what it was like to be in the shoes of the millions of starving children around the world. Twenty-five kids packaged food at Feed My Starving Children while fasting.

They measured powdered chicken stock, a tablespoon of dry vegetables, soy, and a cup of rice into a funnel to fill each bag, weigh it, and seal it. They divided up the jobs, and by the end had packaged enough bags to feed seventy-seven hungry children for an entire year.

A Catholic Charities spokesperson showed them photos of children who were starving and the improvement of the same children after eating these meals for several weeks - healthy, energized, and able to learn. She showed them a huge world map marked with areas served. She took them to an African hut built on-site using the wood of the food-bearing pallets to structure the small house, as well as indicating the large plastic bags that wrap the pallets are used to weatherproof the hut, so nothing is wasted. The MYO teens stood in front of the hut for a group photo.

Back at the church, their fasting continued. Religious education teacher, George Younes, led a riveting discussion about Jesus and the blind man who was restored his eyesight. The MYO felt their own eyes were opened as they were given a new view of hunger. "Our experience opened our eyes to all the suffering, pain, and starvation going on in the world. By having gone through this, we are more united as a whole, as a parish, as one group. It is said that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. That is very much the case here, and through our pain and hunger, we became stronger because of it."

The youths enjoyed their time together with activities like a group cooking session for food to be served at the Sunday church brunch. "During our fast, Msgr. sharbel was so kind as to make popcorn and allow us to smell it. He ate the popcorn and other treats in front of us."

(Continues on page 9)

The final comment from MYO member Anthony Tabet was, "Such a blast! The chaperones were great, and we wouldn't have had such a good time without MYO Coordinator Jovita Awaijane, George Younes, Victorine Hinrichs, *Abouna* Sharbel, Elianne Farhat, Sue Saadeh, and Rebecca Elkhoury. Between cooking, the Dark Knight, video games, and just hanging out, the MYO had a fantastic Spring Lent Lock-in!"

The lock-in ended around noon Sunday. The youths happily filled their own plates at a plentiful brunch to celebrate the election of the new Maronite Patriarch!

Never Too Old to Give and Love

The parish of Saint Maron of Minneapolis, Minnesota, honored their Matriarch, Sadie Anton, on her 102nd Birthday. Sadie rarely misses a weekend Divine Liturgy. She rarely misses working a day at the parish dinner, festivals and other events.



Moreover, Sadie volunteers three days a week at the Northeast Neighborhood, serving at tables, feeding "the old people," as she calls them. She is the first one in and the last one out. She lives alone, prepares her own taxes and never misses calling her friends for their birthdays or special occasion. She has a wonderful attitude on life which must keep her happy and looking forward to the next day. Happy Birthday, Sadie!

Award Ceremony



The parish of Saint Maron of Minneapolis, Minnesota, recently awarded The Silver Massabki Award to Mr. & Mrs. Karam and Carla Bedros and the Faith of the Mountain Award to Michael Zerka. □



Dedication of the Maronite Heritage Institute (MHI)

MAY 19 - 22, 2011

Thursday, May 19th Clergy Day

6:00 p.m. Divine Liturgy - St. Raymond Cathedral
7:00 p.m. Reception - Pastoral Center

Friday, May 20th

9:30 a.m. Pick-up from hotel
10 - 11:30 a.m. Conference/Meeting MHI
12:00 p.m. Lunch
1 - 4:00 p.m. Free Time
4:15 p.m. Pick-up from hotel
5:00 p.m. Liturgy and Blessing of MHI
6 - 7:30 p.m. Reception-MHI

Saturday, May 21st

Free Day to enjoy the City of St. Louis

5:00 p.m. Liturgy - for those leaving early Sunday morning
6:00 p.m. Cocktail Hour - Cedars Banquet Center
7:00 p.m. Grand *Hafli* - \$40.00 per person - Cash Bar

Sunday, May 22nd

11:00 a.m. Closing Divine Liturgy
12:00 p.m. Light lunch - Cedars Banquet Center
NAM Spring Drawing

Hotel: Drury Plaza at the Arch 314-231-3003, 1-800-378-7946, www.druryhotels.com, Group #2113791. Reservation must be made no later than May 3, 2011. Room rate is \$99.00 per night single through quad. Free breakfast, 5:30-7:00p.m. hot food and cold beverages, 3:00-10:00 p.m. soda, popcorn, free WiFi. □

"But Now Christ Has Been Raised From the Dead, The First Fruits of Those Who Have Fallen Asleep" (1Cor. 15: 20)

Easter Message 2011

His Beatitude Bechara Peter Rai Patriarch of Antioch and the Whole East

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead opened, in the history of humanity, a new page that will never be turned over. For, it has changed the face of Man and the face of the World. Christ, the Son of God, who redeemed the whole humanity by his death on the cross, rose from the dead so that we obtain the fruits of redemption, which is the pardon of sins and the new life in the Holy Spirit. His resurrection has become a state of resurrection which he opened before every believer in the mystery of his death and resurrection. This made the Apostle Paul assure that "Christ has in fact been raised from the dead, the first fruits of all who have fallen asleep" (1Cor.15: 20).

I am glad, at the start of my patriarchal service to address the first Easter message to the Bishops of our Maronite Church, its priests, monks, nuns and all its sons and daughters living in Lebanon, the countries of the East and throughout the world. I include in it the greeting of love, my apostolic blessing, communion with all of them and best wishes for the glorious Easter. I also present these greetings to our beloved brothers of the various churches, to our dear Moslem co-citizens and all others throughout all countries. I wish for all to enjoy the peace descending from God and carrying all the graces of Heaven and its spiritual and worldly blessings.

"Christ has in fact been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep." The resurrection of Christ is not a past event which can be overlooked, be indifferent towards it or ignore it with all its dimensions and meanings. The resurrection of the Lord is a guaranty of the human nature of the human being, for he recovers the beauty of his human nature which is created to God's image and adorned by innocence. The blood of Christ, which has been shed on the cross, has cleaned Man from sins and offenses by forgiveness and blew in him a new life through the Holy Spirit, by the force of his resurrection. Here is the Lord, raised from the dead, continuing, through the sacerdotal service in the Church, what he had done the day of his resurrection, when he entered the closed place where his disciples, priests of the New Testament, were meeting that Sunday evening. He showed them his hands with the traces of crucifixion and his side with the trace of the spearhead. All



these show the source of the forgiveness flowing from his wounds throughout the times. He said to them, "Peace be with you ... as the Father has sent me, so I send you." He breathed on them and said to them: "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them and whose sins are retained are retained" (Jn 20: 19 - 23). It's an act of a new creation. On the creation of the first Man, God blew in him life from his spirit, Man was created to God's image and was in a state of innocence. After having distorted this picture and lost innocence by his sins and evil doings, God created him anew blowing into him the Holy Spirit, thanks to the blood of redemption which incarnate God shed on the cross of salvation. Thus, Christ, risen from the dead with the brightness of human nature, is the first fruits of those who rise to a new Man.

The manifestations of the resurrection show in human life in many ways: in the sinners who renew themselves by repentance and reconciliation, the grieved who find solace in God's mercy, the suffering, oppressed and prisoners who become open to Divine hope, the sick, handicapped and neglected who see in their suffering as extension of Christ's redemptive sufferings. All these obtain by their merits God's graces, his contentment and his peace to the whole world.

Among the manifestations of the resurrection are reconciliations which take place among people, the fraternal encounters, understanding and dialogue, the initiatives of social love and self denial in giving, to alleviate pain, deliver from need, relieve from despair, sow joy in hearts, develop the human person and raise society.

From among the manifestations of the resurrection are also the saints the Church raised upon the altars as witnesses of the resurrection which has embellished them by the resurrection of hearts in their historic life, adorned them with the heroism of divine, human and ethical virtues which raised them, following their death, to the glory of Heaven around the throne of the Lamb. There they are shining like the sun in the kingdom of the Father and the heaven of the Church. We mention among them in our present time, successively the martyrs, blessed Massabki brothers, the saints Sharbel, Neemtallah and Rafka, the blessed Father Yacoub Haddad

the Capucin, Mother Mary Alphonsine and Brother Stephan Neemeh, and two honored, Patriarch Stephan Doueihy and Father Bechara Abou Mrad. Besides, the Universal Church is preparing to celebrate, in a week's time, the beatification of the great Pope John Paul II.

We look forward to the manifestations of resurrection in our national life, hoping that Lebanon rises, thanks to the good will, from the crisis of forming the government, the worsening situation which the citizens have to bear its economic, social and living difficulties, and from the bleeding of emigration and the despair of our rising generations to have a better future. We also wish that the dawn of the resurrection of peace, stability and understanding breaks forth in the Holy Land and the Arab countries which are suffering from troubles.

O Christ, the Risen from among the dead, You who are the first fruits of those who died, raise us with you for a new life. Raise our minds to the light of faith! Raise our will to the way of good in hope! Raise our hearts to communion and love! Make us among the first fruits of those who rose from the dead.

Christ rose from the dead, He indeed did!
Bkerke, April, 22, 2011 ☐

Iraqi Refugees Renewed Our Church

Letter of Maronite Archbishop Nassar of Damascus

Here is a translation of the letter written by Maronite Archbishop Samir Nassar of Damascus, Syria, titled "Thanks to the Iraqi Refugees."

Syrria has facilitated the reception of Iraqi refugees. Thousands of them have come, above all to Damascus, and hundreds of them continue to come to flee from death and the violence they have suffered since 2003. U.N. agencies organize their exodus to other more clement skies. While waiting for their visas, these refugees stay in Damascus, at times for two or three years and sometimes more.

These well-formed Christians, fervent and practicing, take refuge in Christian faith and hope. They fill our churches, invigorate our parishes and reinforce the Christian faith in Syria, offering new encouragement to our parishes.

Iraqi refugees take part assiduously in daily Mass despite the fact they come from far away, on foot or public transport.

On asking for confession before receiving Communion, these refugees have accelerated the return to the confessional which now has waiting queues. Their devotion to the saints and veneration of the Virgin has

relaunched the production of candles, and the niches of the saints both within and outside the churches are illuminated day and night.

Their children are numerous in the catechism and First Communion classes. Young people are involved in the choirs and liturgies of different churches.

The war spread information technology rapidly in Iraq. These refugees who have arrived in Damascus are very familiar with the Internet and the Web. They have put their knowledge in a generous way at the service of parishes and communities. In this way, thanks to them, our parishes have been equipped with Web sites, vanguard instrument at the service of evangelization at a universal scale.

Moved by profound piety, they come together in dozens, two or three times a week, to do the great cleaning of the cathedral and the Square of the Church until they receive their visas. Before traveling, they ensure the take over in this activity.

They take part in prayer vigils, eucharistic adoration, pilgrimages and processions on the streets of Damascus during Holy Week and especially in the month of May. Their spiritual dynamism attracts other communities; one of our priests gives a helping hand in the Chaldean parish.

Despite their poverty and precarious condition of life, they are generous and know how to share. Suffice it to see them as they leave Mass giving help with joy, a smile and tears.

They live their more intimate moments in silence before the Most Blessed Sacrament, face-to-face with the Lord. For hours, they mourn the death of their loved ones and wonder about the future. And they try to understand the reason why.

They arrive in great numbers at the archbishopric every week to say good-bye before traveling to the unknown, and at times separated: parents to Australia, children to Canada. Even in exile they cannot live as a family, an even more painful wrench.

These Iraqi refugees passing through Damascus are itinerant missionaries who have left their imprint on the Church in Syria, which sees them pass by and wonders about its own future.

The synod of Christians of the East was an opportunity and a hope which, however, has been unable to halt the exodus. These missionary refugees scattered in the four corners of the world are united only by prayer and the Internet, as their roots have been torn and they live the twilight of their Church. Will these Iraqi refugees, with their religious vitality, offer a new encouragement to the Churches of the East that receive them?

[Translation by ZENIT, March 14, 2011]

Meet Our Youngest Seminarian

THE ORDER OF SAINT SHARBEL



Annual Members

★ **Margaret Louis Malouf**
*Saint George Maronite Church,
San Antonio, Tex.*

★ **Kerry H. Hutchinson**
*Our Lady's Maronite Church
Austin, Tex.*

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 10th Street
St. Louis, MO 63104

I am Vincent Talamas and I am twenty-three years old, the youngest seminarian for the Eparchy of Saint Maron. I was brought up most of my life in the Latin Church and only recently decided to follow the Maronite way. I have two sisters, one younger, one older. My elder sister, Tatyana, became best friends with a Maronite girl from *Bsharre* and through their friendship I was introduced to the Maronite tradition, which I have come to love and appreciate more and more. While my call to the priesthood is in no way as glamorous as that of St. Francis or St. Sharbel, our beloved saint, I have always tried to remain open to that voice crying in the desert, "Make straight the way of the Lord" (John 1:23). For me, that 'voice in the desert' experience began in Saudi Arabia where I was born, baptized and raised Catholic until returning to America at the age of eleven. Living in Saudi and practicing the faith underground was a challenge for my family, but it bore manifold fruits. Not only did my parents strive to teach us the basics of our faith, but they fostered in us deep love and devotion to Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Though we Christians lived as a minority in a predominantly Muslim country, this only helped to nourish our family bonds and promote a fortified sense of community.

Now, almost thirteen years later, I am studying here at the seminary in D.C., where I face another desert of challenges, yet I often feel like I am rediscovering that oasis of Christian community that I first experienced in the suburbs of *Riyadh*. For instance, when I visited Lebanon in the summer of 2006, I was inspired by the love and simplicity of the people, priests, monks and hermits. I was particularly encouraged by Padre Dario, who is actually a Colombian hermit living in *Hawqa*. "You don't have to do what I am doing to become a saint," he said. "Only make sure to live your ordinary life with extraordinary zeal." And that is what I try to do as a seminarian. I am adapting to life in the seminary, and I really enjoy discovering more about our rich traditions and Syriac heritage. Though it is a long journey and I am a beginner, I hope to follow faithfully and courageously those who have tread the path before me. At this stage of the journey, I consider myself blest to be in the company of so many noble priests, dedicated seminarians and religious, and countless parishioners who love the Church and motivate me to do the same. I only pray that God's will be done in me and through me, since this alone brings joy. Please keep me in your intentions; I shall remember you in mine. □

History Committee Maronites Remembered

A photo album, old letters, a video or other remembrances are comforts to us when we miss someone who has died. The Maronite History Committee is gathering archives of parishes, priests, and institutions in both eparchies over the past 150 years in the United States (see www.usmaronites.com). We would be remiss if we did not honor our past by also including a memorial remembering those deceased loved ones who were part of our lives and the life of our Church.

If you have a deceased family member, friend, co-worker or neighbor that you want to include in this permanent memorial, please send one picture of the person and a short 150 word summary of their life either by mail or email to:

Ramona Milford
Attn: Maronite History OR
9860 Tesson Creek Est.
St. Louis, MO 63123

VIA EMAIL (1 jpeg / 1 .doc)
ramonamarie26@att.net
Subject: Maronites Remembered

Please submit a picture and short summary today so that future generations will have the opportunity to appreciate the history of the Maronite Church in the United States. □

Glen Allen, Virginia Regional Youth Retreat



by Cathy George

Youth from Maronite churches of Washington D.C., Roanoke, Va., and Raleigh, N.C., traveled to Saint Anthony Maronite Catholic Church in Glen Allen, Va., for a Regional Youth Retreat during the weekend of April 1- 3, 2011. Sister Celine Nohra from North Jackson, Ohio, was invited to lead the retreat. Sister Marie Madeleine Islandar also came to be the retreat master for the women of the parish. Sister Madeleine's theme was purity of heart and how to be obedient to the Word of God in everyday life.

Over sixty youth and advisors spent the weekend reflecting on what it means to be true friends to God and others. Through Sister Celine's talks and group discussions, they explored images of God, positive self images, and how to live out their spirituality in the world. She compared their responsibility to bring others to Jesus as the four friends of the paralyzed man brought him to Jesus. The youth had the opportunity to talk about vocations, celebrate the mystery of Reconciliation, and participated in a candlelight prayer service. The youth enjoyed fun activities as well, including fun icebreakers and a dance Saturday night.

Monsignor George Sebaali celebrated the closing liturgy Sunday morning. Before leaving they promised to keep in touch until the next year's retreat. □

Uniontown, Pennsylvania Special Lenten Program

A special Lenten program was presented to the St. George Altar & Rosary Society in Uniontown, Penn., at their monthly meeting in March, by Ellie Nesser, Executive Director, Southpointe Center, California University of Pennsylvania, and a member of the Altar & Rosary Society. Also in attendance was parish administrator and the organization's spiritual advisor, Fr. Nadim Helou, M.L.M., who assisted in the explanations.

Ellie's presentation, entitled "Food for the Soul," centered on foods and spices mentioned in the Bible that we



still eat today. Display boards were labeled with the many items and their Bible reference. Many of the spices, nuts and fruits were laid out for the members to enjoy.

Also included in her displays was a section on St. Martha, patron saint of cooks, homemakers and servers. A third display centered on Holy Thursday and the Last Supper.

The program was followed by a luncheon using the foods from the Bible. A business meeting followed, led by President Devona Unice and concluded with Patricia Joseph, ARS Chaplain, who spoke to the group about the need for prayer to St. Michael the Archangel to defend the world against the evils that threaten our society in today's world. All members were given a St. Michael prayer card to help in their devotion to him. □

Lombard, Illinois Honoring Maronite Patriarch

by Cathy Awad

It is with proud jubilation that Our Lady of Lebanon, Lombard, Ill, celebrated the election and enthronement of our new Patriarch Bechara Peter



Rai on Sunday, March 27. Chorbishop Alfred Badawi, having just returned from Lebanon, soon after the election of the new Patriarch, guided the special Liturgical celebration and subsequent delightful reception. The church pews were filled and the parishioners burst in applause as Chorbishop Alfred proclaimed, "Long Live Our Patriarch" during his homily. Reception attendees lingered after Liturgy boasting about the new Patriarch's reputation of courage, integrity and holiness. Everyone sensed the aura of Lebanon's glory that had been given to him. □

Retreat Thought

by Julia Hassan

MYO member of Saint Anthony Maronite Church in Lawrence, Mass.

Twenty: a common word that is so magical. The word twenty can mean something different to every person. To me this represents the twenty hours on retreat that I had to reflect on my life. Those twenty hours convinced me to change how I act and live in the joy of God. The theme for this spiritual retreat was *The Pursuit of Happiness*.

At first this theme didn't mean much to me until I heard sermons made by Father Geoffrey [Abdallah] and Father Mike [Maroune]. I didn't know either of these men until this retreat. Another amazing thing is that I wasn't even listening at first. Then they asked us if we had enough happiness in us to last a lifetime or just enough to get through a couple of days. That question caught my attention. Was I truly happy? I spent those twenty hours thinking, am I truly happy?

I eventually came to the conclusion that I wasn't. That was when I decided I needed to find the joy of God. I decided I needed to change and learn to live the way Jesus wanted us to. I understand now that I not only needed to forgive but also forget. I have learned from those twenty hours I need to change. I plan to follow the way of the Christian faith. Don't get me wrong. I follow the faith but I want to learn as much as I can now. I never knew that just twenty hours could make such a big impact on my life.

I think the hardest part of making the change I am determined to make is being nice to anyone and everyone. Anyone who has tried to be nice to everyone must know it is hard. I think it is especially hard if you are a teenager like I am. Another thing that makes my change difficult is letting go of my worries. God expects us to rely on him for everything. I shouldn't need to worry about things because God will always give us everything we need. If I stray off of God's path I know now that he will bring and accept me back. While I was at the retreat we read the parable of the Prodigal Son. This is a great example of God accepting someone who strayed off the path. The youngest son took his part of his father's inheritance and left. I learned that the Father in this story represented God, and the son was his people. When the youngest son ran into trouble he returned to his father. The father welcomed him back into the family. This story gives me strength to trust in God. Those twenty hours gave me great insight on my life.

While I was in deep thought about trusting God, the priests were talking about time. Not a.m. p.m. time but past present future time. Lots of people live in the past; I am one of those people. Many people dread the future; I am one of those people, too. I learned that one thing people have trouble doing is living in the present. I have learned that those people that do live in the present are much happier than those that don't. So I learned that an element of being truly happy is not living in the past or dreading the future but living in the present.

During those twenty hours a song came to mind. It was a song by One Republic that fit the theme of our retreat, *The Pursuit of Happiness*. That song was called Good Life. The song is about the band {One Republic} and how they have run into problems on their path to fame but they can't complain because they are living the Good Life. This song

fits into the theme because in the song they are grateful and are not complaining about problems they face. This band and their songs helped persuade me to make my decision to change.

'Twenty' is a word that represents a big goal I want to keep. I hope I will succeed in *my Pursuit of Happiness*. It is a difficult path but it will change my life. I hope to act as a role model to others and make the world a nicer and happier place. I am proud of those twenty hours on retreat and how they changed my life. □

Julia Hassan attended the 20-hour youth retreat held in Brooklyn, New York, March 25 -26, 2011.

Flint, Michigan Saint Maron Feast Day



Bishop Boyea and clergy at St. Maron Liturgy.

Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Flint, Mich., celebrated the 1600th anniversary of the death of St. Maron on Saturday, February 12, 2011. Bishop Earl Boyea of the Catholic Diocese of Lansing officiated at the Liturgy. More than 280 people including many clergy and local and national dignitaries attended the event.

During the dinner, a ceremony was held in honor of Mr. Joseph Faris, the only living founding member of the parish, who was presented with the Silver Massabki Award. In addition, the Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church Award was presented to Deacon Marty and Nina Rachid for their dedication and work in the parish.

Father Hanna Tayar, Pastor, focused on how Our Lady of Lebanon Parish illustrates unity in diversity. He noted that "Although the community is comprised of people from various nationalities, cultures and rites, we form the Body of Christ while we receive the same Communion." He also stated that we are one family and don't have to be Maronite or Lebanese to attend a Maronite Church or to pray to St. Maron because St. Maron is a saint of the Universal Catholic Church. Thanking the whole community for their dedication and their hard work, Fr. Tayyar encouraged the community to continue to convey to the new generations the heritage which we received from our founders without uprooting our children from 21 centuries of Eastern tradition. □

Maronite Convention: Seeking Active Participants!

by Claudine El-Beyrouthy

As July quickly approaches we hope that you have read and heard about the Philadelphia NAM convention plans in prior issues of *The Maronite Voice*, in the *Beit Maroun* newsletter, and in the brochures and fliers sent to your homes and parishes. We are eager to share our agenda for workshops, music, food, and other forms of entertainment. The backdrop for the convention is the exciting city of Philadelphia, which is a great vacation destination, especially during the Fourth of July holiday.

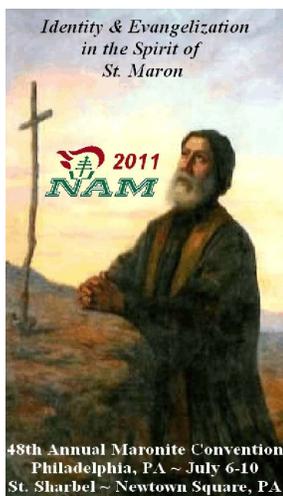
All of us working on the convention this year know that planning alone cannot guarantee its success. In speaking with members who have attended past NAM conventions the common ingredient responsible for making each year's event a success is the people.

John and AnneMarie Azzi are heading up our raffle and silent auction committee this year. As attendees of several past NAM conventions they reaffirm how important it is to branch out and meet new people outside of your circle of friends at NAM. Personally they have developed friendships at NAM conventions with people from across the U.S. and Canada, and they emphasize the importance of taking it to the next level and keeping in touch after the convention. The convention is an opportunity to meet other Maronites who are living their lives outside of the Middle East, who share a common heritage but also face the same daily life issues. They have also found NAM a great place to grow their business ventures and network with potential clients.

Lillian Shahade is working on many aspects of the convention, including encouraging membership in NAM and the Order of Saint Sharbel. She feels strongly that the purpose of the convention is to bring people together, to share their faith and common interests, and even discover extended families. The more people talk, she states, the more likely they are to discover a common relative on their father or mother's side of the family. The friendly atmosphere of past conventions allows people to socialize while still gaining insight about our Maronite heritage and faith.

Our parish NAM delegate Jeannette Abboud-Niemczyk, is an annual participant in the conventions, and this year is she is putting together our convention ad book. She looks forward to attending the convention every year to reconnect to her heritage as a Lebanese American and to renew her friendships.

Others share similar stories about how acquaintances made at past NAM conventions have led to relationships that last well beyond one week in July. No other event offers this opportunity - a group of people who share a common bond of faith, language, and culture each bringing their own unique



perspective on life. Our goal is to encourage everyone to attend - Americans, immigrants, and visitors; young and old. From there it is up to you - talk, dance, sing, and pray together - and help make our convention a success for everyone. Additional information can be found at www.namnews.org and on our parish website and www.saintsharbel.org.

Workshops/Presentations

Thursday, July 7, 10:00 - 11:30 am: *Back to the Maronite Roots* by USEK - University of the Holy Spirit - *Kaslik*, Lebanon

The Holy Spirit University of Kaslik has been a leader in preserving the Maronite tradition and shaping the Maronite Identity. Being the first Maronite University, the panel will discuss how USEK participates in the liturgical and the musical reform; what USEK is doing to preserve Maronite manuscripts, photos, and archives and, in addition, USEK will discuss the project for Maronite inscriptions in Lebanon.

Thursday, July 7, 3:00 - 4:30 pm: *Discovering Our "Faith of the Mountain"* by Fr. George El-Khalli, Ph.D.

As parents, we are the caretakers of our children's education; we are entrusted to carry the Church's teachings into our family life. The *Faith of the Mountain* catechism series, which our churches use for our Maronite Christian Formation classes, has been updated. Please join us to review the materials that guide your children's religious education through the school year. The series is designed for school-aged children from pre-school through 8th grade. Included in the series are the following topics: the Trinity, the Holy Mysteries, our Church family, the commandments, Maronite liturgy, First Penance and Eucharist, the Bible, the Creed, Church history, and the world's religions. As parents, grandparents and godparents, we are responsible for the education of the next generation of Maronites.

Friday, July 8, 10:00 - 11:30 am: *Maronite Liturgical Music* by Fr. Geoffrey Abdallah and the Inter-Eparchial Music Commission

The songs that fill our hearts during Divine Liturgy and the poignancy of their words are incredible testaments to the richness of our culture. Come fill your senses with the beauty that is the Maronite Church. You will also be able to experience the first-ever compilation of the Inter-Eparchial Music Commission. Come let the poetry that is our music fill your senses and soothe your soul.

Friday, July 8, 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.: *Saints of Lebanon and Our Pursuit of Another Canonization of the Massabki Brothers* by Archbishop Samir Nassar of the Eparchy of Damascus, Syria, and Mr. Louis Ragy

Our faith has brought forward some very remarkable individuals who have brought miracles to those whose faith does not waiver. This year we celebrated the 1600th Anniversary of the death of Saint Maron. Since the founding of the Church, we have had the honor of having saints live

among us, including Saint Sharbel Makhlof, Saint Nimatullah El-Hardini, and Saint Rafqa Choboq El-Rayes. NAM has taken up the staff to bring the Blessed Massabki Brothers to the level they deserve. Come learn why we have the responsibility of guaranteeing their canonization.

Saturday, July 9, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.: *Lebanese Language in the 21st Century by Antoine Faddoul, M.S., AIAA*

The interactive presentation will give the audience an overview about the Lebanese language, its history, teaching methods and the proposed system for writing it. The presentation will chronicle the linguistic and structural development of modern Lebanese from its ancient Canaanite/Aramaic roots to modern days. The audience will be briefed on the methods developed by the Lebanese Language Institute to provide resources for learning and teaching Lebanese. The presentation will discuss the role of IT in spreading of the Lebanese language and developing the modern Lebanese Latin Letters system [LLL] to make Lebanese a globally accessible language. The interactive component will include implementation of the LLL system in daily life for communication, learning and teaching. Samples, exercises, as well as a demonstration of an automated verb conjugation program will also be presented.

Saturday, July 9, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.: *Making a difference in the Church "Commission on Lebanon."*

Panelists: Jacque Kallasy and Nehmet Frem. Moderators: Chorbishop Seely Beggiani and Rev. Abdallah Zaidan, M.L.M.

This presentation will help us to understand how we can all contribute in the growth of the Maronite Church on different levels: spiritual, economical, educational and social. Based on personal experiences and great contributions of our speakers, we will learn how we can have an active attitude within the Church, instead of having a merely passive observation. The future of the Church is not only in the hands of priests and bishops, but in the hand of every faithful person. In this workshop, we can learn how every one of us, despite our weakness, can collaborate in the growth and renovation of our Church.

Young Adults and Young Adults Professionals Workshops

Thursday, July 7, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.: *Theology on Tap with Bishop Gregory Mansour and Bishop Robert Shaheen*

Friday, July 8, 1:30 - 2:30 pm: *Bridging the U.S. and Lebanon Through Higher Education*

A presentation by Notre Dame University (NDU), *Louaize*, Lebanon with Dr. Assad Eid and Dr. George Abdelnour.

This workshop introduces the important role that Maronite Catholic universities play in Lebanon today by focusing on the mission of Notre Dame University. Founded by the Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin Mary in 1987, NDU is

the sole Lebanese Maronite institution to offer an American-style curriculum and the only one whose language of instruction is English. In keeping with the University's mission of universal education as the key to a rewarding and productive life, the workshop will highlight the University's contribution to social progress and stability in Lebanon, as well as ongoing efforts to forge lasting links with the Lebanese community in North America. The workshop will seek feedback from attendees as to the best ways to foster links between the Maronite community and Lebanon and will highlight opportunities for involvement with NDU. These include academic programs such as study abroad, NDU's summer Lebanese Arabic and Cultural Immersion program, graduate study in various disciplines, as well as professional and academic partnership opportunities for Lebanese expatriates. The workshop will also introduce the work of NDU's Lebanese Research and Emigration Center (LERC) in preserving the history of Lebanese immigration worldwide

General Assembly Guest Speaker

Saturday, July 9, 9:30 a.m.: Fr. Simone Faddoul, President of Caritas, Lebanon will update us on the situation of the Christians in Lebanon and the poverty level prevailing among them. He will also discuss the issues brought by Iraqi Christian refugees to Lebanon. □

Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

May 1, 2011

Pleasantville Mission, N.J., at 4:00 p.m.

May 12, 2011

Eparchial Benefit Dinner with Cardinal Wuerl, Our Lady of Lebanon Parish, Washington, D.C.

May 15, 2011

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

May 19 - 20, 2011

Dedication of Maronite Heritage Institute, St. Louis, Mo.

May 22, 2011

Family Visit, Flint, Mich.

May 28, 2011

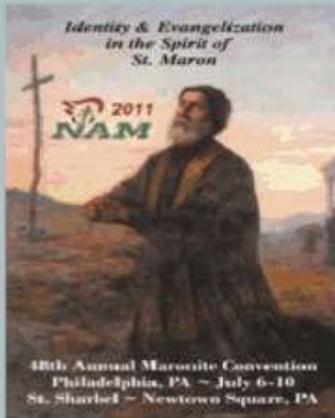
25th Anniversary of Sister Marla Marie, St. Anthony of the Desert, Fall River, Mass.

June 2 -17, 2011

Maronite Bishops' Synod, *Bkerke*, Lebanon. □

48th Annual National Maronite Convention July 6-10, 2011 Philadelphia, PA

*Sponsored by the National Apostolate of Maronites
Hosted by St. Sharbel Church*



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Ask for NAM convention.

Wednesday July 6th:

"Dinner Under the stars"

DJ Dance music

Thursday July 7th:

Evangelical Singer Joumana Mdawar

Friday July 8th:

Middle Eastern Cuisine with
Yousef Chamoun and band

Saturday July 9th:

Grand Banquet featuring
Superstar Tony Kiwan & orchestra



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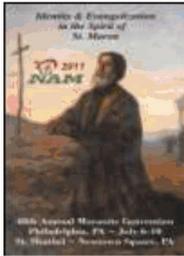
The National Constitution Center

The Liberty Bell

The Franklin Institute

The Philadelphia Museum of Art





48th Annual Maronite Convention

Sponsored by: The National Apostolate of Maronites
 Hosted by: St. Sharbel Church, New Town Square, PA
 July 6 - 10, 2011 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Pre-Registration Form *Deadline – June 13, 2011*

Please complete all information, or register on-line: www.namnews.org. Incomplete forms cannot be processed. Please PRINT legibly:
 E-mail is the preferred way of communicating back to you a confirmation for your registration

First Name: _____ Last Name _____
 Address: _____
 City/State/Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ Email: _____
 Parish: _____
 Package/Program purchased: _____

Check all that apply:

NAM Member NAM Delegate
 NAM Board Ord. St. Sharbel
 Conv. Comm. Child (5 – 10)
 Youth (11-18) Yng Ad (18-35)
 Vegetarian Age: _____

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY:

PACKAGES ONLY - Enter # of packages desired and dollar amount. Fill in Totals and Grand Total

NAM members, whose 2010 dues have been paid, will receive \$15 off of the Full Adult Package and \$10 off other packages.
 This discount is void after the pre-registration deadline of 13 June 2011.

If you wish to pay your dues or become a member with this registration, please send a separate check payable to NAM.
 The **“Covenant of Behavior”** **MUST** be completed and SIGNED for all Youth Registrants, and must be accompanied by a parent
Entertainment Packages ONLY for students with valid IDs (18-35), allows entry to evening events after 10 PM.
No dinner. No seating, music only.

Day programs for Youth, Young Adults, and Young Adult Professionals are additional and not included in the packages
 Individual event registrations are available online only

Pkg. Options	Adult (18 & over)		Youth (12-18)		Children (5-11)		Entertainment Only		Totals
	Pre-Reg.	Late	Pre-Reg.	Late	Pre-Reg.	Late	Pre-Reg.	Late	
Full (Wed-Sun)	___\$280	\$310	___\$250	\$280	___\$165	\$195	___\$120	\$150	\$
Lg Wknd(Thu-Sun)	___\$250	\$280	___\$220	\$250	___\$140	\$170	___\$100	\$130	\$
Weekend (Fri-Sun)	___\$220	\$250	___\$190	\$220	___\$120	\$150	___\$ 80	\$110	\$
Saturday – Sunday	___\$165	\$195	___\$135	\$165	___\$ 75	\$105	___\$ 60	\$ 90	\$
Youth Day Events*	___\$70 (Wed – Sun)		___\$50 (Fri – Sun)						\$
Young Adults Day Events*	___\$150 (Wed – Sun)		___\$120 (Fri – Sun)						\$
Young Adults Professionals Day Events*	___\$150 (Wed – Sun)		___\$120 (Fri – Sun)						\$
Grand Total									\$

*These events are age specific, onsite and late registrations may incur \$20 late fee
 Thursday evening no dinner, only concert with Evangelical Singer Joumana Moudawar
Make checks payable to “NAM Convention” and mail to NAM P.O. Box 717– Yonkers, NY 10702-4611.
Please DO NOT SEND CASH.
If using credit card – complete the information below and mail to address above or FAX to 914-964-3071.
For further information call the NAM Office 914-964-3070 email: nam@namnews.org.

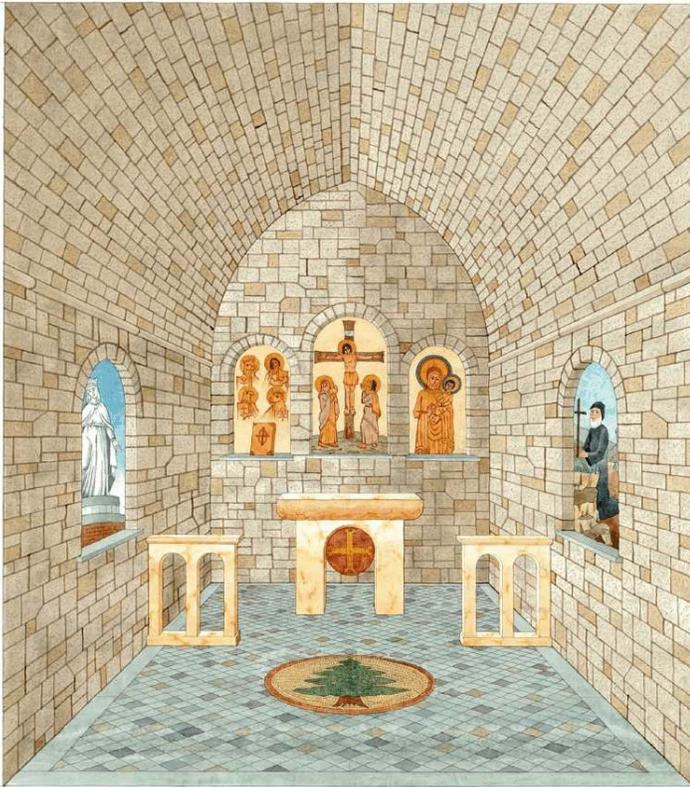
For Credit Card: Amex Disc MC Visa Acct. #: _____
 Exp. Date: _____ V-code (3 or 4 digit # on back of card): _____
 Signature: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY: AMT. PD: _____ DATE: _____ CHK #: _____ REG. #: _____

*For Hotel Reservation contact the Sheraton City Center 800-325-3535 or 215-448-2000 code NAM Convention
 Convention room rate \$119 per room per night*

Maronite Chapel in Honor of Our Lady of Lebanon at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.

Our Lady of Lebanon - The Maronite Chapel Building the Dream



This Fall, a Maronite Chapel will open at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. The Chapel will honor our Blessed Mother under the title of Our Lady of Lebanon, and has been spearheaded by the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn.

The Maronite Chapel will be a unique, Middle Eastern Catholic presence at the Shrine. It will also place the Maronite Church in America in the context of the Universal Church for all Shrine visitors, and appropriately recognize the rich tradition and legacy of the Maronite Church and her devotion to Our Lady.

The Chapel is being designed by Master Artist Louis R. DiCocco III, the President of St. Jude Liturgical Arts Studio of Havertown, Penn. Mr. DiCocco is well known for his work on the Chapel of Our Lady of La Vang at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

The Chapel's interior design is a deliberate attempt to place the worshiper in the stone churches of Lebanon. The altar is designed with a Syrian Cross as found in many ancient churches of Syria and Lebanon. A Cedar of Lebanon adorns the tile floor. The Crucifixion scene behind the altar, as well as the four evangelists on the left side of the altar and the Virgin and Child on the right, were taken from the 6th century *Rabboula* illustrated Book of Gospels. Saint Maron will greet the worshiper on one side of the entrance and Our

Lady of Lebanon on the other.

The dedication for the new Chapel is tentatively scheduled for September 23, 2011, to coincide with the 50th Anniversary of Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary in Washington, D.C., and the 50th anniversary of priesthood of Chorbishop Seely Beggiani, Seminary Rector.

The Chapel is the capstone of the Eparchy's three-year effort to financially support seminarians and retired priests, strengthen the missions, and renovate the Eparchy's Cathedral in Brooklyn.

Financial support is welcome for the Maronite Chapel and the other efforts of the Eparchy. A Benefit Dinner to raise funds for the Eparchy will be held in Washington, D.C. on May 12, 2011. Cardinal Donald Wuerl has accepted the invitation of Bishop Mansour to speak at this dinner.

About the Basilica

The Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception is the largest Roman Catholic church in North America and is one of the ten largest churches in the world. It is the nation's preeminent Marian Shrine dedicated to the patroness of the United States, the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title Immaculate C o n c e p t i o n . Designated a national sanctuary of prayer and pilgrimage, the Basilica receives nearly one million visitors annually.



Artwork from the forthcoming Maronite Chapel: The Virgin and Child

Among its visitors are Pope Benedict XVI, who visited the Basilica in April 2008, as did the late Pope John Paul II and Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta. The Rector of the Basilica is Monsignor Walter R. Rossi.

About the May 12 Eparchial Benefit Dinner

For information on the May 12 Eparchial Benefit Dinner to be held in Washington, D.C., an invitation to the events surrounding the historic opening of the Chapel and the 50th anniversary of Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary, or to contribute to this historic effort, please email Chancerystmaron@verizon.net. ☐

Pope John Paul II, the Apostolic Churches and Lebanon

Continued from page 1

The Synod's objective was simple: spiritual renewal with penance and reconciliation within Lebanese society and a new solidarity among all the Lebanese. The Synod was addressed directly to the faithful of the Catholic Church - Maronite, Melkite, Armenian, Syriac, Chaldean and Latin - and indirectly to the four Orthodox Churches - Antiochene, Armenian and Syriac - as well as to Assyrian and Evangelical Christians. The Synod aimed to establish with all Christians a bond of prayer, consultation and cooperation. Also, Muslim communities - Sunni, Shiite and the Druze - were invited to the Synod in order to help both Catholics and Muslims understand the meaning of the Synod and to better cooperate together in overcoming misunderstandings and obstacles.

The Pope's visit to Lebanon May 10 and 11, 1997 to celebrate the closure of the Synod for Lebanon and to deliver the Apostolic Exhortation had a tremendous effect on promoting Lebanon, the country, as a message and an ideal model to the East and the West. Likewise, on the ecclesial level, a renewal of Christians had begun by their working together in better harmony. They became more aware of their spiritual, social, cultural and political role in Lebanon and throughout the Middle East as well as of their apostolic mission. The upcoming beatification of Pope John Paul II on May 1, 2011, will attract thousands of Lebanese.

The recent Synod for the Middle East held in October, 2010, an amazing celebration of unity in diversity which brought such hope to Christians of the Middle East, was greatly helped by the Synod for Lebanon held fifteen years earlier (along with the follow-up Special Assembly in Lebanon convoked for all the Eastern Churches in 1999). The

solidarity, cooperation and friendships that were formed before, during, and after the Synod for Lebanon allowed the 2010 Synod the special graces needed to deepen communion and make better the witness.

Another grace directly attributable to the intervention of Pope John Paul II in Lebanon was just recently celebrated March 25, 2011: the enthronement of the new Maronite Patriarch Bechara Peter Rai. On this day, the Feast of the Annunciation, which for the last two years has been an officially established Christian-Muslim holiday in Lebanon, the background was set for the enthronement. The person enthroned as Patriarch, with his brother bishops surrounding him, with representatives of every Muslim and Christian community present, and with every political leader likewise present, was the one whom Pope John Paul II had chosen twenty years previously to coordinate the beginning steps of the Synod for Lebanon, and who considers himself, along with the present writer, a spiritual son of Pope John Paul II.

These and many more graces were the result of the prophetic and courageous vision of one holy man who loved the world as God loves, who recognized in the Apostolic Churches of the Middle East a treasure, and who had the conviction and courage to call them not only to a greater Catholic-Orthodox unity, but also to better witness to non-Christians the immeasurable treasures of Christ.

+ Gregory John Mansour
Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn