



# The Maronite Voice

A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA



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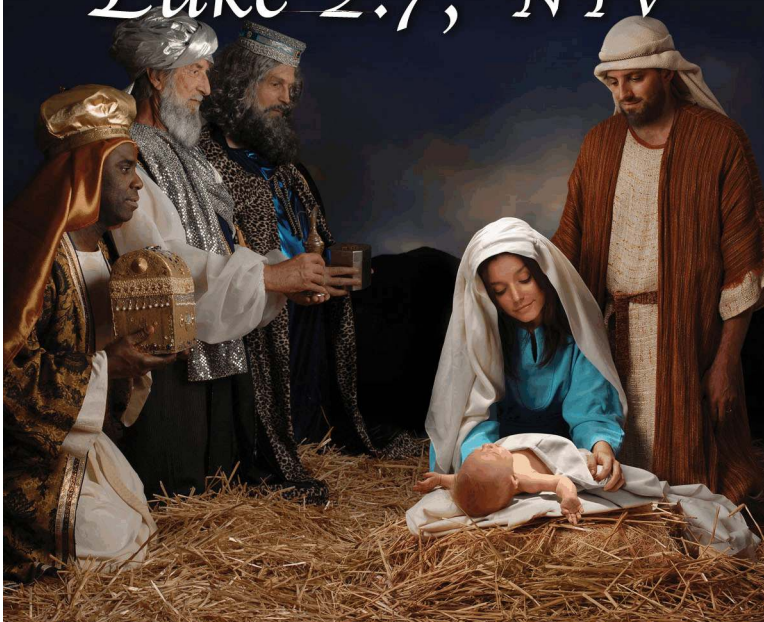
December 2011

## Christmas 2011

### *How Wonderful Are Your Works O Lord!*

*"She wrapped him in cloths  
and placed him in a manger,  
because there was no room  
for them in the inn."*

*Luke 2:7, NIV*



I love to listen to Christmas carols. Being a romantic at heart, I am always amazed at the beauty of the Christmas story. In such carols as *What Child is This, Mary, Did you Know?, Silent Night, and O Little Town of Bethlehem*, to mention a few, one cannot imagine a story more beautiful. God became a child to save us! In fact, He became a child who needs us, who is vulnerable, who depends on us, and who is, as we believe, "like us in all things but sin!"

When I think of this story, as recorded by the Gospel writers Luke and Matthew, I am also moved by the story of every child, the story of how each one of us comes into this world. In His infinite goodness and desire to love us, God planned that we should come into this world through the loving embrace of a man and a woman, in which the man gives himself completely to the care and love of his wife, and she, in turn, gives herself to him. Saint Paul describes the union of man and wife like the union of Christ and the Church at the foot of the Cross (Eph 5:22).

Throughout their shared life together husband and wife stand in fidelity, shoulder to shoulder, to face God and every challenge before them, and to help one another as they promised. When they turn to face each other in a marital embrace, their love has the power not only to strengthen their union with one another, but, by God's grace, to bring a child into the world. Can it get any more beautiful than that? In fact, it does.

The child, once conceived, lives within the womb of the mother, just below her heart! The father stands guard, protects and supports them. The child is born - in pain, yet with much wonder - reared and educated by the ones who brought him or her into this world. God willing, one day that father will walk her down the aisle, or the mother will watch her son become a priest, or the two of them will see their child with children of their own. This is all part of God's loving plan and it is most wonderful to behold. Yet it requires us to be at our best. But we

must be honest, the vocation and dignity of marriage, or the protection of life in the womb, or our parenting abilities do not always find us at our best. May God help, forgive, guide, sustain and show us His way.

*(Continues on page 15)*

## Schedule of Bishop Robert Shaheen

### December 3 - 4, 2011

100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Saint Maron Church, Youngstown, Ohio

### December 11, 2011

Annual Christmas Liturgy for young people, St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

### December 24, 2011

Christmas Eve Liturgy, St. Raymond Cathedral, Saint Louis, Mo.

### December 25, 2011

Christmas Day Liturgy, St. Raymond Cathedral, Saint Louis, Mo.

### January 14 - 15, 2012

Saint Ephrem Parish, San Diego, Calif.

### January 23 - 27, 2012

Annual Clergy Retreat, California ☐

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## **Maronite Convention 2012**

St. George Maronite Church

**San Antonio, Texas**

**July 2 - 8, 2012**

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

## **Boston, Massachusetts** ***Institute of Religious Life Meeting***

by Sr. Therese Maria Touma

On Saturday, November 11, 2011, The Maronite Servants of Christ attended the Institute on Religious Life (IRL) regional meeting at the Basilica of Perpetual Help in Boston, Mass. This year's meeting was titled, *Sacred Liturgy and the Consecrated Life*. The day of recollection included three spiritual talks, Divine Liturgy, adoration and benediction.

Sister Marla Marie presented one talk entitled *The Holy Mysteries: the Eucharist as the Radiant Light for the Consecrated Life*. In her reflective presentation, Sister highlighted the beauty of the Maronite Church within the Easter Catholic Churches, sharing some of the Maronite spirituality, theology, icons and music utilizing power point slides for illustrations.

The second part of Sister Marla Marie's presentation explained the Holy Mysteries by taking three rituals in the Divine Liturgy and relating them to the life of the consecrated person. Sister discussed the ritual of the Lighting, the symbolism of Incensing, and the prayer of the Transfer of Offerings. Sister Marla Marie referenced Church documents such as *Vita Consecrata* (Consecrated Life) to help emphasize her point of how we can enter more deeply into the Mystery of the Eucharist, so that it can become who we are to others.

Some highlights that stood out for me were the beautiful prayers that were shared visually and vocally from the Divine Liturgy, while Syriac music played in the background. Another highlight was the symbolism of the incense used in the Liturgy. We, as Religious, are to be that pleasing aroma ascending to God as we offer up our daily prayer, worship and sacrifices. As consecrated men and women, we are called to lay down our life as a living incense. In reference to the prayer of the Transfer of Offerings, Sister Marla Marie shared that we are to model Mary's receptivity in receiving the Word, Jesus, in her heart and body. We are to receive Jesus into ourselves so that we can be fruitful in radiating His light to others.

The Institute on Religious Life (IRL) promotes and supports the growth, development, and renewal of the consecrated life - particularly vowed religious life - as a gift to the Church and an evangelical witness to the world. It includes and engages bishops, priests, religious, consecrated and lay faithful in a collaborative apostolate of prayer and service, guided by the magisterial teachings and rich heritage of the Church. More information at: [www.religiouslife.com](http://www.religiouslife.com). ☐



## Portland, Oregon *Subdeacon Ordination*



From left: Fr. Jonathan Decker, Brother Anthony Joseph, Bishop Robert Shaheen, Subdeacon Wadih Kaldawi and Fr. Abdallah Zaidan.

*by Nadia Redmond*

On June 27, 2011, His Excellency Bishop Robert J. Shaheen, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, ordained Wadih Z. Kaldawi of St. Sharbel Church in Portland, Oregon, to the Order of Subdeacon at St. Raymond Cathedral in Saint Louis, Mo. Wadih's wife, Mona, and Fr. Abdallah Zaidan, M.L.M., Rector of Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon Cathedral in Los Angeles, Calif., attended along with Wadih's Pastor, Fr. Jonathan Decker, M.M.J.M.J. and Brother Anthony Joseph Alles, M.M.J.M.J. Deacon Louis Peters, who provided invaluable guidance to Wadih, assisted Bishop Robert during the ordination ceremony. Following the ordination, Bishop Shaheen and his staff hosted a dinner and a tour of the Maronite Heritage Center and the Latin Catholic Cathedral in St. Louis for those who attended the Ordination Divine Liturgy. The Maronites of Portland feel blessed to have Subdeacon Wadih serve at the Altar of St. Sharbel Church. Many thanks to Bishop Robert for making this day possible. □

## Scranton, Pennsylvania *Catholic Scouting Award*

*by Fr. Francis Marini*

Four Catholic Scouters were recently honored with the Silver Saint George Award for their significant service to Scouting in the Catholic Church at the national level. First presented in 1997, the award has been given to only seventy-six individuals since then. This year's recipients included Margaret Dillenburg, of Scranton, Pennsylvania, a parishioner of Saint Ann Maronite Church in Scranton.

Margaret has been actively involved in Boy Scouting for more than thirty years. She started as a Cub Scout Den leader

when her sons, Joe and John, were active in Scouts beginning in 1975. For the last fourteen years, Margaret has served on the Northern Lights Council and the Scranton, Penn., Diocesan Catholic Committee. She has been active on the National Board from 1991 to 1994, and worked as Cub Scout Exhibit Chair for the National Jamboree in 1993 and 1997. She has chaired the Committee on Eastern Church for Region Fifteen from 1999 to the present. She has received the Silver Beaver in the Viking Council in Minnesota in 1990, the Silver Antelope for the Central Region in 1997, and the St. George Award from the Scranton, Penn., Diocese in 1998.

Margaret was born and raised in Minnesota, and married Joe Dillenburg and raised their family in Willmar, Minn. While their children were in school, the entire Dillenburg family was active in Boy Scouting. Margaret served on the Viking Council in Minneapolis as the Assistant District Chairman (1985 - 1989), District Chairman (1989 - 1994), and Council Cub Scout Chair (1990). She served on the Webelos Camp Staff (1993 - 1996), served on the Council Executive Board (1989 - 1999) and on the Northern Star Council Advisory Board.

Along the way, Margaret completed Scoutmaster Basic, Cub Basic, and Webelos training, received Philmont Training (Key 3) in 1988, and completed Wood Badge in 1989. When the Dillenburgs retired to Pennsylvania to be nearer to their grandchildren, Margaret became active in the Scranton Diocese, counseling Eagle Scouts on their Eagle Board of Review, and participating in activities on the NEPA Council in Scranton, serving on the Council Executive Board (1996 - present), as an SME speaker, and as the Council Training Chair for Cub Scouts from 1998 to 2006. She traveled back to Minnesota in the summers to be a Wilderness Camp Commissioner from 1997 - 2007.

Margaret's husband of fifty-three years, Joseph Dillenburg, has attended and supported the entire family's scouting activities for the last thirty-five years. Margaret and Joe are the proud parents of four grown children, one an Eagle Scout, and two grandsons, including one who is active in Boy Scouts in the Washington, D.C., area due to his Grandma's influence. □

## Eparchy of Saint Maron *Christmas Directives*

### Christmas Novena

His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour has asked that the Maronite Christmas Novena be celebrated in all the parishes of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn from December 15 to December 23, 2011, inclusive.

### Christmas Eve Liturgy

It is not the custom of the Maronite Church to celebrate Christmas before midnight. However, the Chancery Office is fully aware that in many areas the Christmas Eve Liturgy (around 5:00 p.m.) is very popular. Pastors are urged to do all they can to maintain the Midnight tradition if at all possible. □

## Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania Centennial Celebration



Left to right: Fr. Hanna Karam, Bishop Gregory Mansour showing the Key to the City, and Chorbishop Michael Thomas.

by Linda Joseph

The Parish of St. Anthony/St. George Maronite Church of Wilkes-Barre, Penn., along with its Pastor, Fr. Hanna Karam, held its 100 Year Anniversary Celebration on October 28 - 30, 2011. Co-chairpersons for the event were Dr. Raymond Khoudary and Mr. Peter Bonczewski. The weekend was a commemoration and remembrance of a century of Maronite presence in the Wyoming Valley.

The festivities began on Friday morning at the County Courthouse. Parishioners gathered to watch the Knights of Lebanon raise the Lebanese Flag in honor of Lebanon's independence. Mr. Albert G. Albert was guest speaker. The County Commissioners presented a proclamation to Mr. Vaughn Koter to recognize the day. A small reception followed where everyone enjoyed Lebanese food and pastries prepared by the parishioners.

His Excellency Bishop Gregory J. Mansour presided at the *Ramsho* service on Friday evening. Afterwards the Altar & Rosary Society sponsored a reception in the Parish Hall. Mayor Thomas Leighton from the City of Wilkes-Barre presented Bishop Gregory Mansour with the Key to the City and a Proclamation of Recognition of the Maronite Community and its contributions to the City of Wilkes-Barre.

Saturday morning was devoted to the children and young adults of the parish. The children's centennial celebration program began with *Safro*. The children recited the various readings and sang songs throughout the service. After the *Safro*, the Altar Servers were presented to Bishop Gregory and they were awarded certificates of recognition for their loyal service. The MYO members were then presented to the Bishop. The Maronite Formation Program children then presented a *Parade of Saints* in which the children were dressed as designated saints. Two of the young adults narrated the background story as each "saint" came forward to the sanctuary. Mrs. Anne Kasper, Religious Education Director, along with the teachers and children, presented Bishop Mansour with bouquets of flowers and a beautiful

book of pictures showing all religious activities and social programs held by the students. A reception in the parish hall followed the program.

Saturday evening the grand banquet was held at Woodlands Inn with entertainment by the John Sallit Ensemble. Mr. Frank Nockley was Master of Ceremonies. A special presentation was made to Mr. Albert G. Albert for his many years of dedication and commitment to the Maronites on a local, national and international level. Everyone enjoyed a fun filled evening despite the snowstorm that fell upon Northeast Pennsylvania.

On Sunday, Bishop Mansour celebrated the Divine Liturgy. His Excellency Bishop Stephen Hector Doueihi, Chorbishop Michael Thomas, Msgr. Peter Fahed Azar, Msgr. Victor Kayrouz, Fr. Hanna Karam, Fr. Sam Najjar, Fr. Bart Leon, and Fr. Kamil Al-Chouefati concelebrated. Subdeacon Crosby Sparks assisted. Also in attendance was Bishop John Dougherty, representing the Diocese of Scranton, Penn. Mr. Amine Harb, President of NAM, presented Fr. Karam with an icon of the Blessed Massabki Brothers. At the end of the liturgy all the elders of the parish, seventy-five years and older, were asked to come in front of the altar for a special blessing. Brunch was held at Woodlands Inn. □

## Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania End of The Summer MYO Party

The Our Lady of Victory MYO in Pittsburgh is building its way towards success. We have many young people who are passionate about the church and who are very active with the MYO. We hope to get more participants every year. Our first MYO party was held on Saturday, October 8, 2011, to end the summer and to start a new year of working together as a group. The Parish is very excited to see us become active in our faith and is helping us every step of the way. □



Top row (left to right): Sarah Joseph, Lauren Joseph, Christopher Joseph, Johnny Boulos, Ian Newman, George Shara, and Father Simon ElHajj. Second row: Tamara Al-Choufete, Mark Boulos, Vincent Michael and Thomas Michael. Bottom row: Sharbel Sadaka, Joseph Michael, Gabe Newman and Nadin Sadaka.





## Fall River, Massachusetts Youth Day 2011



Subdeacon Brian Dunn (left) and Chorbishop Joseph Kaddo, Pastor, with the attendees of the Youth Day 2011.

by Subdeacon Brian Dunn

On September 11, 2011, the Parish of St. Anthony of the Desert Church, Fall River, Mass., celebrated its Youth Day 2011, at the St. Sharbel Parish Center. Thirty-five children from the ages of 4 to 12 years old participated, and approximately fifteen volunteers helped coordinate the events that were planned for the children.

All the children enjoyed a sack race, tug of war, hop scotch and jump rope contests, and some of the older children in the group played basketball games.

More outdoor activities were held after a hot dog party lunch. Before the children departed for home, they enjoyed an ice cream Sundae party inside the St. Sharbel Parish Center.

This event was sponsored by the Blessed Mother Guild with the help of the Sunday School teachers and private sponsors from the parish. A special thank you to the Co-Chairs Terry Galib, President of the Blessed Mother Guild, and Rachel Shaker-Filipe and Shannon Burke-Martin. Shannon and Rachel are both Sunday School teachers. The photographer of the event was Elizabeth Shaker. The event was a huge success and other Youth Day Events are being planned for 2012. □

## Eparchy of Saint Maron Annual Clergy Retreat

The Annual Clergy Retreat of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn will take place from Monday evening, January 9, to Friday morning, January 13, 2012, at Our Lady of Florida Spiritual Center, 1300 US Highway One, North Palm Beach, FL 33408. □



## Saint Paul, Minnesota Holy Family Church Beautified



Holy Family Church

by Patti Kzaley Anderson

On October 31, 2011, parishioners gathered outside at Holy Family Maronite Church in Mendota Heights [Saint Paul], Minn., following the morning Divine liturgy, Fr. Rodrigue Constantin, Pastor, dedicated a new seven foot Antiochene cross placed on the uppermost part of the church as well as two stained-glass windows (from the old church) in the skylight above the altar and a beautiful, four foot plaque at the entrance to the church. The plaque bears a picture of the Holy Family - a perfect replica of that which adorned the entryway to the "old" church of two years ago. Thanks to the generosity of three families from the parish, the cross, stained-glass windows and plaque make our spiritual home more welcoming and aesthetically pleasing. The dedication was followed by a home-cooked breakfast sponsored by one of the families for all of the members and friends of Holy Family Parish. □



*Our warm personal greetings to you and your families as we celebrate the Incarnation of the Son of God.*

*We are grateful for the support you have given us during the year.*

*May the Prince of Peace fill your hearts with His Love and Peace at Christmas and in the New Year.*

*From all of us here at The Maronite Voice, Merry Christmas and a Blessed and Joyful 2012.*



## San Antonio, Texas *Annual Lebanese Festival*



by Robert Beathe

For the fourth year in a row, the parishioners of St. George Maronite Church, San Antonio, Texas, transformed their parish grounds into a festival celebrating the rich and beautiful culture of Lebanon. Attendance records were smashed November 4 - 6, 2011, as people came from as far away as Florida and Maine to sample Middle Eastern main dishes and desserts. It was more than a food festival, and one could revel in the sights and sounds of the land of our ancestors with famous singer Tony Mikhael and our very own Lebanese Folk Dancers or purchase authentic cultural items from Lebanon at the Bazaar.

The Maronite religious heritage is not forgotten during the festival as people are made aware of the Maronite faith and its place within the greater Catholic Communion through a video presentation and church tours.

A very special thank you to all the volunteers and participants who made this event a great success as we once again helped share our culture and traditions with the greater community. □

## Uniontown, Pennsylvania *Thanksgiving Food Drive*

by Dr. Mabel Howard

St. George Ladies Guild of Uniontown, Pennsylvania believes that Thanksgiving is a time for caring and sharing. It is more than watching football, feasting, and relaxing. Thanksgiving represents two important lifelong lessons to be learned - personal gratitude for one's good fortune and compassion for God's less fortunate.

The Thanksgiving holiday season is truly a special time of year to enjoy the company of family and friends along with the traditional turkey and its trimmings. It is a time to reflect upon our lives, put personal trials and tribulations into perspective, and be thankful for our many blessings from God. In an effort to give less fortunate families a reason to

be thankful, members of the St. George Ladies Guild joined forces to organize a food drive for the needy in the local community. They purchased turkeys and collected nonperishable food donations to make Thanksgiving dinner baskets for numerous families in need. Each basket contained the ingredients for an entire Thanksgiving dinner and desserts. The Ladies Guild worked in cooperation with the St. Vincent de Paul Society in Uniontown to distribute the baskets in time for the Thanksgiving Day celebration. This is only one way in which the Ladies Guild hopes to continue making a difference in the lives of others.



Also, the St. George Ladies Guild celebrated their annual Harvestfest with family and friends in November. For this event, ladies of St. George Church and the neighboring Catholic churches were invited to the St. George Church Hall for an afternoon of friendship, fun, games and entertainment, beautiful prizes, and a delicious variety of covered dish foods and desserts. □

## Springfield, Massachusetts *Bazaar*



On November 19 - 20, 2011, St. Anthony Women's Guild held a fall harvest bazaar at St. Anthony Maronite Church in Springfield, Mass. Middle Eastern and American food and pastries were featured as well as crafts and a country store. □



## Brockton, Massachusetts *Lebanese Festival*



by Michelle Nessralla and Ghazi Saab

What a proud and joyous weekend for Fr. Tony Mouanes and the Parish Family of Saint Theresa Church, Brockton, Mass. They recently celebrated the feast day of the "Little Flower of Jesus" with a nine-day novena which culminated in a weekend-long Lebanese Festival.

Over the course of three days, dozens of volunteers proudly showcased the warmth and hospitality of Lebanese traditions and culture. Volunteers worked diligently to make the Festival a successful reality; this proved to be the case with hundreds of people in attendance throughout the weekend, enjoying Lebanese dishes, baked goods, music and dance. Guests and visitors, including Mayor Linda Balzotti, State Representative Michael Brady, State Senator Tom P. Kennedy, School Committee Representative Thomas Minichiello, Councilors-at-Large Jass Stewart and Todd Petti, Chorbishop Joseph Lahoud, Lebanese Consul Ibrahim Hanna, local politicians and area clergy, were greeted with a warm welcome and invited to "savor the moment."

The Festival began on Friday, September 30, 2011. After Fr. Mouanes welcomed the crowd, Alexandra and Georgina Younes led the singing of the American and Lebanese National Anthems. Msgr. Fahed Azar, Pastor of St. Anthony Church in Lawrence, Mass., offered the blessing. On Sunday, October 2, Monsignor David M. George, who had served as pastor of Saint Theresa Church for fourteen years, celebrated the Divine Liturgy with Fr. Mouanes. This day also marked the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Monsignor David's ordination to the priesthood, and the parish family was thrilled to be with him for this momentous and happy occasion.

Behind every successful event are the "driving forces" which empower volunteers to do their best. Members of the Festival Planning Committee are Co-Chairs Audrey Nessralla and Ghazi Saab, Paula Saba-Daaboul, Paula Samia, Joyce Nessralla, and Cauna Magner. And standing strong at the helm was Fr. Mouanes, who inspired and encouraged all volunteers to offer their collective talents for "the glory of God and for the Church of Saint Theresa." He reminded them of the promise of Saint Theresa to "let fall from Heaven ... a

shower of roses." And Saint Theresa did just that. The parish has been strengthened with a renewed synergy, a deeper commitment to the betterment of the church and a prevalent sense of joy! For these blessings and more, we are most grateful! □

## West Covina, California *First Annual Carnival*



by Layla Tahan

On Sunday, October 30, 2011, the community of St. Jude Maronite Church in West Covina, California, held its First Annual Carnival to celebrate the Feast of its patron saint. The event was a great attracting a large number of people who came to share in the entertainment, games, amusements, concessions, raffle tickets, a bake sale, and a variety of delicious food. A banner created from petitions that the parishioners mailed in to pray for hopeless cases, was placed by the altar of Saint Jude for blessings and prayers. Father Samuel Madel, Pastor of Saint Jude, celebrated the Divine Liturgy for the occasion and prayed for people's intentions to be granted with the intercession of St. Jude. The carnival has proven to be a successful tool to fundraise and build comradery among parishioners. The community of St. Jude in West Covina is looking forward to future carnivals and bigger turnouts in the years to come. □

## From the Book Shelf

***The Prayer of the Faithful***, three volumes of morning and evening prayer of the faithful in English, is available from Saint Maron Publications.

**Volume One** (Sundays of the Church; Season of Announcements; Birth of the Lord and Epiphany) is available for \$40 plus \$5 shipping.

**Volume Two** (Seasons of Great Lent and Resurrection) is available for \$40 plus \$5 shipping.

**Volume Three** (Seasons of Pentecost and Holy Cross) is available for \$30 plus \$5 shipping.

To order your copy (ies) please write to:

Saint Maron Publications, 4611 Sadler Road  
Glen Allen, Virginia 23060

For further information, call (804) 762-4301. or visit [www.stmaron.org](http://www.stmaron.org). □

## Minneapolis, Minnesota *Hair for Hope*



Parishioners and hair stylists Aimee Brask and Leisa Moses Magee cut Msgr. sharbel Maroun's hair.

by Joanne Moses

Excitement reigned as Yaoob Jacobs auctioned the opportunity to cut Monsignor sharbel Maroun's hair. "Starting at \$200, yes! Do I hear \$225? Yes, \$250, over here, \$300, to you, \$325, \$325, going once. Going twice for \$300 dollars!" Twenty-six ponytailed bundles were auctioned off bringing in from \$200 to \$1,000 each. Another \$2,000 was given to "buzz cut" Msgr.'s remaining hair.

In all, haircuts and ticket sales raised nearly \$19,000. Donations to Hair For Hope brought another \$16,000 for a total of \$35,000. Monsignor earmarked \$27,500 to *Teleumiere/Noursat* to support evangelization and \$7,500 to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital to fight pediatric cancer.

Monsignor sharbel began growing his hair long in July of 2009 with the intent of donating it eventually to Locks For Love where it would join the hair donations of nine other people to become a wig for a cancer patient. He devoted two years to honor the struggle of those who have fought cancer and the memory of those who have succumbed. During this time, comments became common. Monsignor levied fines on all remarks, whether negative or positive, and solicited donations to his objective which became Hair For Hope.

The hair-cutting ceremony took place in the Cedars Hall of Saint Maron Church, Minneapolis, Minn., on Sunday, August 14, 2011, following morning Liturgy. An angel hair pasta dinner, cooked and donated by Ken and Ida Couri and their children, delighted over 300 guests. Monsignor sharbel and Roukos Jacobs, backed up by the parish trio of Badr Awad, Caroline Zogheib, and Maroun Tabet, provided a rousing concert program of nine spiritual songs before the hair-cutting and seven afterward. After nine songs, a brief slideshow outlined Monsignor's progress, and Yaoob Jacobs began the auction.

Spirited bidding resulted in twenty-nine participants' having a hand at cutting Monsignor's hair. Several of the "cutters" were more than twenty people whom Monsignor inspired to donate their own hair over the last two years, here

and in Lebanon. A display table honored Monsignor and the other hair donors with their names, photos, and locks of hair. Parishioners and hair stylists Aimee Brask and Leisa Moses Magee of Maude Salon deftly assisted the hair-cutting throughout.

After the hair ceremony, the concert continued. The music drew remaining groups to their feet to *dabke* between tables. The day was videotaped to be broadcast on *Teleumiere*. Monsignor sharbel Maroun is the president of *Teleumiere, USA*. Monsignor said, "It was a very blessed two-year experience." We feel more blessed as a parish having him with us to inspire and challenge us to higher purpose. People can still support this cause by visiting [www.stmaron.com/h4h](http://www.stmaron.com/h4h). □

## Newtown Square, Pennsylvania *Parade of Saints*



by Lillian Shahade

On Sunday, October 30, 2011, Feast of Christ the King, the children of St. Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church in Newtown Square, Penn., came dressed as their favorite saint in honor of All Saints Day. The children were included in the Processional, and all took their place in the front pews to observe the Divine Liturgy close up.

As a change from the traditional Halloween costumes, this was to teach the children about the saints and what it takes to become a saint.

The children who participated this year, left to right, came as St. Gabriel (Emily Estephan), St. Joan of Arc (Nicole Estephan), St. Sharbel (Ilyass Muqbel), St. Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini (Lillian Shahade), St. Florian sent one of his charges to represent him as the policeman, Tarik Wadie, and St. Timothy (Timothy Carr).

Last year almost thirty children dressed, but this year a sudden and extreme cold hit the area and discouraged some of the children from participating. Following the Divine Liturgy a party was held in the hall for the children and they all received treats. □



## Brooklyn, New York Senior Luncheon



A table of guests is shown with a member of the Confraternity, Rose Jabir, seeing to their needs. The committee is in the background.

by Salma Vahdat

As part of the Outreach Program at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y., the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception hosted a "Senior Circle" luncheon on Saturday, November 12, 2011, for residents of a senior housing facility in the Brooklyn Heights area. Chaired by Lydia Gordon and a committee of happy, hard working ladies, they prepared a typical Lebanese meal and desserts. It was enjoyed by thirty residents who were welcomed by the committee and Msgr. James Root, Rector.

The successful event is going to be repeated on a monthly basis, and it is anticipated that it will continue to be well received and, no doubt, grow. □

## Elevation of Very Reverend James A. Root to Monsignor

by Salma Vahdat

On Saturday, December 3, 2011, a grateful and ecstatic Community of Faith at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn, N.Y., witnessed the elevation and ordination of its Rector, Very Reverend James A. Root, to the rank of *Periodeut* with the title of Monsignor.



Fr. James heard the announcement of his elevation at the Divine Liturgy concelebrated at the Cathedral by His Beatitude Patriarch Bechara Peter Rai and Bishop Gregory Mansour on October 23. It had been requested by Bishop Mansour of the Patriarch who graciously accepted the request and made the announcement at the conclusion of his homily. The entire congregation was delighted and rose as one to confirm and congratulate its rector. Monsignor James has

brought new life into the Cathedral's Community, marshaling the talents of the group leaders and organizations for the benefit of all. □

## Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

### December 3, 2011

Ordination of Msgr. James Root to the Rank of *Periodeut*, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

### December 4, 2011

Liturgy of Thanksgiving for Msgr. Root, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

### December 8, 2011

Installation of Bishop Libasci, Dover, New Hampshire. At 6:00 p.m. visit to St. George Parish and Liturgy of the Immaculate Conception

### December 9, 2011

Final Vows of Sister Olga, Boston, Mass.

### December 10 - 11, 2011

Pastoral Visit to St. Elias Church, Roanoke, Va.

### December 12, 2011

Seminary Visit and Catholic University Trustees' Meeting, Washington, D.C.

### December 17, 2011

Youth and Family Day, St. Sharbel Church, Somerset, N.J.

### December 18, 2011

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

### December 24 - 25, 2011

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

### December 26 - 31, 2011

Family Visit

### January 1, 2012

Pastoral Visit to Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Miami, Fla.

### January 6, 2012

Epiphany Liturgy at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

### January 7 - 8, 2012

Pastoral Visit to St. Jude Maronite Church, Orlando, Fla.

### January 9 - 13, 2012

Annual Clergy Retreat, West Palm Beach, Fla.

### January 15, 2012

Pastoral Visit to Mary Mother of the Light Mission, West Palm Beach □



# ***The Question of Universal Salvation: Will All Be Saved?***

by Fr. David A. Fisher

*"Some will not be redeemed. There is no doctrine which I would more willingly remove from Christianity than this, if it lay in my power." - C.S. Lewis*

Kallistos Ware, Greek Orthodox Bishop and retired Oxford theologian, has in recent years been a leading advocate for the "possibility" of universal salvation. While realizing that we can never have a totally adequate understanding of human immortality and the criteria for salvation on this side of the grave, Ware makes a poignant argument by using particular passages from St. Paul and the Fathers of Church that at least the question of salvation for all is a valid question.

Ware recalls a dialogue between St. Silouan of Mt. Athos (1866-1939) and a hermit, in which the hermit was convinced some, like atheists, deserve eternal damnation. The holy monk replied, why would you feel happy about someone burning in hell? Our love cannot bear such a thing, so we must at least pray for all. This dialogue illustrates the heart of the question; on the one side is human free will and responsibility and on other side is the endless love and mercy of God.

The New Testament certainly is weighted in favor of texts that seem to rule out any possibility of universal salvation, yet Ware points to a series of Pauline texts which affirm a parallel between the universality of sin and the universality of redemption. In 1 Corinthians 15:22, where Paul is working out the analogy between the first and second Adam: "As all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ." In Romans 11:32, "God has imprisoned all in disobedience, that he may be merciful to all." Also in Romans 5:18, "Just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all." While these passages might suggest that Christ offers salvation to all and some will respond to it, if we look closely, Paul does not say perhaps or possibly, rather his words make almost an affirmation it will happen to all.

Possibly the most positive text in terms of universal salvation is 1 Corinthians 15:28. Here Paul says Christ will reign until "God has put all things in subjection under his feet... And when all things are made subject to the Son, then the Son himself will also be made subject to the Father, who has subjected all things to him; and thus God will be all in all." These words clearly do not allow for an eternal dualism that some of God's creation will be forever lost; rather they point to an ultimate reconciliation for all.

When we move to the Patristic data there can be found no Western Fathers who support universal salvation; it is quite clear, for example, in St. Augustine's writings that eternal damnation for some, if not the majority of the human race, is a fact. An African Church Father, Arnobius of Sicca, does however offer a unique solution, conditional immortality: that is to say the damned will cease to exist, rather than be cast into hell. The problem with this position, of course, is that it

erases the promise of uniqueness God gives to all of us at creation.

In the Eastern Fathers we find Origen, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. Isaac of Nineveh all arguing for the possibility of universal salvation. Origen held the view known as "apocatastasis" (similar to the 20<sup>th</sup> century French Jesuit philosopher Teilhard de Chardin), that there will be an ultimate restoration of all things and all persons. St. Gregory of Nyssa abandoned the idea of pre-existent souls which Origen had attached to his doctrine and which caused its condemnation. Gregory merely affirms that within the mystery of the Divine Incarnation is held the ultimate restoration and reconciliation of all with God. Isaac of Nineveh took the position that hell is a scourging of love, where those in it have chosen through their lives on earth to be separated from God. In his thoughts the doors of hell are locked from the inside, the possibility of repentance and forgiveness is extended to those in hell.

In the final analysis, the question of salvation is always an inquiry into the balancing of human free will with God's mercy and forgiveness. Scripture tells us that our God is a jealous God, who did not even spare His only Son for our salvation. God revealed to us in Jesus Christ, is a God of unfathomable love, who will wait us out to turn our hearts towards him, yet He is also the Creator of our free will and allows us the freedom of even rejecting Him who made us. □

## **About the Author**

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## ***Respect for Life in Today's Society***

by Susan Wills, USCCB Pro Life Office

For many decades now, Catholics have joined together to witness publicly to the inherent equality and transcendent value of every human being. In countless liturgies and events we have given thanks to God for the gift of human life, and prayed for his guidance and blessings on our efforts to defend the most vulnerable members of the human family.

We voice our opposition to the injustice and cruelty of abortion on behalf of the victims whose voices have been silenced. At the same time, we remind the living victims of abortion - the mothers and fathers who grieve the loss of an irreplaceable child - that God's mercy is greater than any human sin, and that healing and peace can be theirs through the sacrament of reconciliation and the Church's Project Rachel Ministry.

From October 2, 2011, to October 6, 2012, Catholics are asked to reflect on the Respect Life theme: I came so that all might have life and have it to the full. In this brief explanation of his mission (cf. John 10:10), Jesus refers both to our hope of eternal life, to be restored through his death and resurrection, and to our life in this world.

By following Jesus' new Commandment of unselfish



love, our lives can be richly fulfilling, and marked by joy and peace. In contrast, treating others as either means or obstacles to one's self-serving goals, while never learning to love generously, is an impoverished way to live.

Viewing life as a "zero sum" game, in which advancing one's interests requires putting aside the needs of others, can lead to callous unconcern for anyone who is especially weak, defenseless, and in need of our help. The unborn child, the aging parent who some call a "burden" on our medical system, the allegedly "excess" embryo in the fertility clinic, the person with a disability, the cognitively impaired accident victim who needs assistance in receiving food and water to live - each today is at risk of being dismissed as a "life unworthy of life."

Jesus' promise of "life to the full" is especially poignant today, when our culture and sometimes our government promote values inimical to the happiness and true good of individuals and society. We face increasing attempts to expunge God and religious discourse from public life. This promotes the dangerous proposition that human beings enjoy no special status by virtue of their God-given humanity. Some now even seek to eliminate religiously motivated people and organizations from public programs, by forcing them to violate their moral and religious convictions or stop serving the needy.

The same forces, aided by advertising and entertainment media, promote a selfish and demeaning view of human sexuality, by extolling the alleged good of sexual activity without love or commitment. This view of sex as "free" of commitment or consequences has no place for openness to new life. Hence contraceptives are promoted even to young teens as though they were essential to women's well-being, and abortion defended as the "necessary" back-up plan when contraceptives fail. And fail they do. Studies report that most women seeking abortions were using contraception in the month they became pregnant. Again and again, studies show that increasing access to contraception fails to reduce rates of unplanned pregnancies and abortions.

Both these trends - a distorted view of sexuality and a disdain for the role of religion - are exhibited by the Department of Health and Human Services' recent decision on the "preventive services" to be mandated in virtually all private health plans under the new health care law. The Department ruled that such mandated services will include surgical sterilization and all FDA-approved contraceptive drugs and devices - including the abortifacient drug "Ella," a close analogue to the abortion pill RU-486.

The decision is wrong on many levels. Preventive services are aimed at preventing diseases (e.g., by vaccinations) or detecting them early to aid prompt treatment (e.g., screening for diabetes or cancer). But pregnancy is not a disease. It is the normal, healthy state by which each of us came into the world. Far from preventing disease, contraceptives can have serious health consequences of their own, for example, increasing the risk of acquiring a sexually transmitted disease, such as AIDS, increasing the risk of breast cancer from excess estrogen, and of blood clots that can lead to stroke from synthetic progestin. Mandating such coverage shows neither respect for women's health or freedom, nor respect for the consciences of those who do not want to take part in such problematic initiatives.

The "religious employer" exemption offered by the

Department is so extremely narrow that it protects almost no one. Catholic institutions providing health care and other services to the needy could be forced to fire their non-Catholic employees and cease serving the poor and vulnerable of other faiths - or stop providing health coverage at all. It has been said that Jesus himself, or the Good Samaritan of his famous parable, would not qualify as "religious enough" for the exemption, since they insisted on helping people who did not share their view of God.

All these misguided efforts to foster false values among our youth, to silence the voice of moral truth in the public domain, and to deprive believers of their constitutionally-protected right to live according to their religious convictions, must be resisted by education, public advocacy, and above all by prayer.

The founders of our nation understood that religion and morality are essential to the survival of a freedom-loving society. John Adams expressed this conviction, stating: "We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Our Constitution was made for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other."

Catholics must not shrink from the obligation to assert the values and principles we hold essential to the common good, beginning with the right to life of every human being and the right of every woman and man to express and live by his or her religious beliefs and well-formed conscience.

As Pope Benedict XVI reminded us in a 2010 *Ad Limina* address to visiting bishops, "a society can be built only by tirelessly respecting, promoting and teaching the transcendent nature of the human person." That common nature transcends all accidental differences of age, race, strength, or conditions of dependency, preparing us to be one human family under God.

Let us pray and reflect on how each of us might renew our commitment and witness to "respecting, promoting and teaching the transcendent nature of the human person," thereby shoring up the foundations of a society sorely in need of this guidance. □

*(Reprinted with permission)*

**Deadline for next month's issue of *The Maronite Voice* is December 26, 2011.**



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# ***Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue Meets, Issues Statement on Plight of Christians in the Middle East***

*by Chorbishop John D. Faris, J.C.O.D.*

**T**he North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation held its 81<sup>st</sup> meeting at St Paul's College in Washington, D.C., October 27- 29, 2011. The meeting was chaired by Catholic Archbishop Gregory Aymond of New Orleans. The Orthodox co-chairman since 1987, Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh, has retired, and a successor has not yet been named. During this meeting the members heard reports about major events in the lives of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches and issued a brief statement, "On the Plight of Churches in the Middle East." (See statement that follows.)

The members of the Consultation also continued their study of the role of the laity in the two churches and the intermediate or regional levels of ecclesial authority. A paper on the Catholic theology of the parish by Sister of Charity of Leavenworth Susan K. Wood of Marquette University was presented in her absence. Father Patrick Viscuso of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America delivered a paper, "Canonical Reflections on the Orthodox Parish." Father Nicholas Apostola of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas presented a study, "The Role of the Laity in the Church," and Chorbishop John D. Faris, Pastor of St. Louis Gonzaga Maronite Church in Utica, New York, presented a paper, "Synodal Governance in the Eastern Catholic Churches."

The Consultation also welcomed a new Orthodox member, Despina D. Prassas, Ph.D., associate professor of theology at Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island.

The next meeting is slated to take place at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts, June 5-7, 2012.

Additional Orthodox members include Rev. Dr. Thomas FitzGerald, Dean of the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts; Father John Erickson, former dean and professor of Canon Law and Church History at Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, New York; Father James Dutko, Pastor of St. Michael's Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church in Binghamton, New York; Susan Ashbrook Harvey, Ph.D., of Brown University; Paul Meyendorff, Ph.D.; Alexander Schmemmann, Professor of Liturgical Theology and Editor of Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly, Crestwood, New York; Bishop-Elect Alexander Golitzin, Professor of Theology at Marquette University, Milwaukee; Robert Haddad, Ph.D.; Sophia Smith, Professor Emeritus of History at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts; Father Robert Stephanopoulos, Pastor Emeritus of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New York; Father Theodore Pulcini, Associate Professor of Religion at Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania; and Father Mark Arey, General Secretary of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), New York, staff.

Additional Catholic members are Jesuit Father Brian

Daley (Secretary), Catherine F. Huisking, Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame; Thomas Bird, Ph.D., of Queens College, City University of New York, Flushing, New York; Sylvain Destremes, Ph.D., Faculty of the Grand Seminaire in Montreal; Father Peter Galadza, Kule Family Professor of Liturgy at the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies, Ottawa; Father John Galvin, Professor of Systematic Theology, The Catholic University of America (CUA); Father Sidney Griffith, Professor in the Department of Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures, CUA; Father Joseph Komonchak, Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at CUA; Monsignor Paul McPartlan; Carl J. Peter, Professor of Systematic Theology and Ecumenism at CUA; Father David Petras, Spiritual Director and Professor of Liturgy at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Pittsburgh; Penn.; Vito Nicastro, Ph.D., Associate Director of the Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, Archdiocese of Boston; and Paulist Father Ronald Roberson, Ph.D., Associate Director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, staff.

## ***Statement of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation***

The "Arab Spring" is unleashing forces that are having a devastating effect on the Christian communities of the Middle East. Our Churches in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine report disturbing developments such as destruction of churches and massacres of innocent civilians that cause us grave concern. Many of our church leaders are calling Christians and all people of good will to stand in solidarity with the members of these ancient indigenous communities. In unity with them and each other, we the members of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, gathered October 27-29, 2011, add our voice to their call.

We are concerned for our fellow Christians who, in the face of daunting challenges, struggle to maintain a necessary witness to Christ in their homelands. United with them in prayer and solidarity, we ask our fellow Christians living in the West to take time to develop a more realistic appreciation of their predicament. We ask our political leaders to exert more pressure where it can protect these Churches, many of which have survived centuries of hardship but now stand on the verge of disappearing completely.

When one part of the body suffers, all suffer (cf. 1 Cor. 12:26). As Christians in the West, we therefore have the vital responsibility to respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters who live in fear for their lives and communities at this moment. As Orthodox and Catholic Christians we share this responsibility and this concern together. □





## Commentary on *The Child Lures Prevention Program*

by Alice Grayson of *Veil of Innocence*

In past years, our beloved bishops, Gregory Mansour and Robert Shaheen, have graciously provided parents (not schools or CCD programs) with a resource, called *The Child Lures Prevention Program: Parental Guide [Lures]*. This guide includes information about child abuse and kidnaping not necessarily known by every parent. The topics listed in the *Parental Guide of Lures* include: "Asking Assistance, Lost Pet, Bribery, Authority Figures, Fake Job Offers, Faking an Emergency and the Internet"

For example, abusers are sometimes people with whom the parents are already acquainted - a teacher, a coach, a neighbor. Parents are encouraged to be aware of signs which may indicate a problem - such as an adult showering too many gifts to a child, or expressing an unusual interest in, or spending too much time alone with a particular child. The child might be acting more angry or anxious or more withdrawn than usual.

*Lures* encourages parents to be very involved with their children's friends and activities and maintain good communication with their children. Also, child snatchers are extraordinary clever nowadays, learning the names of people close to the child, following patterns of daily routine both by observation and by internet. Computer usage needs to be closely monitored, as well as television shows and movies.

Indeed the children live in a more dangerous world, where traditional Christian values are not commonplace among parental peers, and are deliberately undermined by the prevailing culture. Kudos to our bishops who take their job as shepherds seriously.

However, *Veil of Innocence* submits this warning about the *Lures* program and other safe environment programs, which, although they serve as a resource update, are dangerous when administered by educators in the classroom group setting, even to five and six year olds. This setting takes away the safety and intimacy of parental child communication on sensitive, sexual, and dangerous subjects. The result for the child is a loss of innocence and a fear of people and situations. The program seeks to get the school and churches "off the hook" by placing the responsibility of safety on the shoulders of mere children. Child abuse-prevention programs, while purporting to teach a child to be safe, may very well be "luring" them into dangerous situations and actions by destroying the protective quality of innocence and purity in children. Ponder this quote below:

"Children are more apt to flee from any impure infringement upon their privacy when their sense of decency and modesty remain intact, especially when reinforced with Catholic teachings." (*Taken from Luring Parent and Child: A Critique of the Child Lures Prevention Program: Parent Guide*, by *Mothers Watch*, 2004, <http://www.veilofinnocence.org/essays-critiques/151.html>)

Parents need to be aware of the problems with these programs when taught in the group setting of a classroom by teachers who will inevitably inject their own beliefs into the curriculum, whatever they may be. Although the parent

guide contains some useful information for parents to use with their own children, the purpose of this writing is to be informative to parents whose children are enrolled in public and private schools. For more information on *Lures* and other safe environment and sex education programs, as well as the Church's teachings on the subject, especially affirming parents as the first and best educators of their children, the following website can be helpful: [veilofinnocence.org](http://veilofinnocence.org). □

## Beaverton, Oregon *Monastery of Jesus, Mary and Joseph*



Fr. Jonathan Decker (left) and Brother Anthony Joseph at the altar of their chapel.

by Ed Langlois of the *Catholic Sentinel*

Maronite Bishop Robert Shaheen of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon established the Oregon Monastery of Jesus, Mary and Joseph on June 27 [2011], during a ceremony in St. Raymond Cathedral in St. Louis, Mo. Brother Anthony Joseph Alles professed vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and received a simple black habit. The bishop blessed Father Jonathan Decker, a longtime Maronite priest and spiritual director, as prior.

The new monastery is for now housed in a simple home on a suburban cul de sac. Father Jonathan and Brother Anthony Joseph hope with the support of backers to purchase land for a larger monastery that will endure through the centuries.

*Abouna*, which is Arabic for "Father," is still known by a few as Father Decker. He's a hermit who also is pastor of St. Sharbel Maronite Parish in Portland. The Monastery of Jesus, Mary and Joseph is the first Maronite monastery in the western U.S. The only other is in Petersham, Mass., and is home to about two dozen monks.

The new monastery is located in an area of Beaverton known as Bethany. That's the name of the Palestinian village where Mary and Martha lived and where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. These facts are not lost on the monks as they seek to live lives of deep attention to Jesus.

A former bedroom has been transformed into a chapel, paneled with cedar from Lebanon, a deeply symbolic choice.

This room is the heart of the small priory. The two monks chant psalm-based prayer five times daily, including at 3 a.m. "There are no days off in the monastery," Abouna Jonathan says. "This is not a profession, it is a life. It's disciplined, but it's disciplined by love."

The Maronite tradition is one of the Eastern rites of the Catholic Church. Maronites, who trace their ritual to the 5<sup>th</sup> century monk Maron in the mountains of Syria, are in full communion with the Holy See. "Ours is a spirituality of the desert," Abouna Jonathan says. "Monasticism is our topography."

Some early Christians took to the dry lands and mountains of the Levant to live simple, undistracted lives. The Maronite rite emerged in that context and became the primary expression of Christianity in Lebanon, but has adherents from all backgrounds.

Maronite monasticism includes distinctive charisms and language, but it shares tradition with Latin rite monks. The most common guidelines for all Christian monastic life come from St. Benedict of Nursia, who drew partly on Eastern traditions when he wrote his 6th-century rule. "We are not reinventing the wheel," Abouna Jonathan says. "What we can do is bring Eastern mysticism to the people, to the whole church."

Brother Anthony Joseph, 26, is a graduate in philosophy from the Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio. "We live in a world filled with noise," he says. "We operate in that world and we operate impulsively a lot of times. This is about going out to the desert - silence, external and internal. It's a rich silence, a musical silence."

For his monastic name, Brother Anthony Joseph combined a 3<sup>rd</sup>-century monk - Anthony of the Desert - and the foster father of Jesus. In them, he valued perseverance and resilience.

"Anthony's life was spent conquering unredeemed parts of himself and giving them over to Christ," says Brother Anthony Joseph. "He was totally given over to Christ." He chose St. Joseph because the saint became fully what God wanted him to be, and because St. Joseph moved through a time of confusion into clarity.

"We have to be godly men like St. Joseph," says Abouna Jonathan. "We need constantly to be discerning what we are supposed to do." Monks, like St. Joseph, should respond "immediately" to God's messages, the priest says.

The monastery is named after the Holy Family because of a deep commitment to Christian love and unity, as in a family. "This is called a monastery, but it's a family and families are built on love," says Abouna Jonathan, holding out his clasped hands in a gesture of gratitude. "We are constantly asking ourselves, 'Are we loving one another as He loved us?' We came from loving families. They taught us how to love. We continue that love here."

As among the Desert Fathers, hospitality is key at the new Maronite monastery. Visitors receive an embrace at the doorway, a sprinkling of holy water and kisses on the cheeks. Then guests are taken to the tabernacle for prayer. Back in the living room, a warm cup of tea and a snack appear. The conversation flows.

When there are no visitors, it's largely a silent life inside the monastery's clean white walls. There is conversation on occasion, but it's not trite. "When we talk, it is about something with meaning," Abouna Jonathan says. Still, these

monks laugh regularly. For example, they explain why Abouna Jonathan does most of the cooking. Brother Anthony took charge of a meal once when visitors were expected and set the smoke alarm off three times.

The monks do their own work, cleaning bathrooms, sweeping, washing windows, dusting the holy statues. Friends send food on occasion, but the men do go grocery shopping. At Fred Meyer, the store workers know them by name and greet them joyfully. At meals, the monks listen to holy recorded books or read to each other.

Abouna Jonathan and Brother Anthony are balanced men. Drawn to silence, they also seek fellowship with people in the world. Eastern monasticism fits them well. Instead of a strict cloister tradition, Eastern monks have a custom of welcoming sojourners who want to tap into the holy pursuits. The desert hermits saw people all the time.

The monks look for an example to the 4<sup>th</sup>-century monk St. Pachomius, who left the Egyptian army to begin an ascetic life near the Nile. The saint went into the desert precisely so he could help visitors encounter God more deeply. "You share the fruits of your contemplation with others," Brother Anthony Joseph says.

Another model at the monastery is St. Sharbel Makhoul, the 20<sup>th</sup> century Maronite monk after whom the Portland parish is named. St. Sharbel was a hermit but not a recluse. Fasting and praying through decades, he made himself available if someone needed spiritual guidance or advice. "The fruit of silence is to give back," Abouna Jonathan says. "It's not for yourself. It's to give back to God, to God's people." "This monastery is for the whole church," he says.

In his 1995 encyclical letter on ecumenism, *Ut Unum Sint*, Pope John Paul II said the Western and Eastern Catholic rites like the Maronites work together to embody the fullness of Christian tradition and spirituality. "The Church must breathe with her two lungs," Pope John Paul wrote.

Oregon is also home to St. Irene, a Byzantine Catholic parish in North Portland, and Nativity of the Mother of God, a Ukrainian Byzantine parish in Springfield. "We came not to compete, we came to complete," Abouna Jonathan says of his own arrival in Oregon in the mid 1980s, when few people here knew the Catholic Church had Eastern rites, many of them in the Middle East.

Brother Anthony Joseph studies theology via online courses from Holy Apostles Seminary in Connecticut. At the monastery, he receives spiritual and human formation. At St. Sharbel, he gains pastoral experience as the people of the parish teach him about family life and how to love. Abouna Jonathan makes sure his junior monk stays physically active each day, swimming and running.

Chanting God's praises comes naturally to Brother Anthony Joseph. He spent six years in a Portland children's choir singing Renaissance polyphony and Gregorian chant. He was able to travel to Mexico and Rome with the group. The young monk has long been a thoughtful and insightful man. In 2008, just out of college, he began working in the pro-life movement. That year, he spoke with the Catholic Sentinel outside the construction site of a new Planned Parenthood building in Portland.

"People see abortion as a way to protect their freedom. I think our society has lost its sense of real freedom," he said then, wearing a red shirt with a small white cross and the words, "Lifeguard for the unborn." Even before he became



a monk, he would help homeless people whenever he could. He'd have long conversations about faith with a Protestant workmate.

Young Nathaniel came for spiritual direction to Abouna Jonathan, who suggested visiting various religious communities to discern his call. After getting to know the options and getting to know himself, the young man chose Maronite monastic life. "You take the gifts God gave you and you put them in God's hands to be at his disposal," Brother Anthony Joseph says. "This is not a human vocation; it's a divine vocation. You can only live it by God's grace."

Inquiries about the monastic vocation and life can go to the monks' recently launched website at [www.mmjnmj.com](http://www.mmjnmj.com), and they can be reached by mail at Maronite Monks of Jesus Mary and Joseph, 1804 SE 16th Ave., Portland, OR 97214. To reach the monastery by phone, call 503-231-3853. Good will donations and prayers are greatly appreciated.

In gratitude to almighty God for His many graces already received, the monks would also like to thank Bishop Robert J. Shaheen of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon for his blessing and support as well as Archbishop John Vlazny for his generous welcome on behalf of the Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon. The monks say they are grateful for "this wonderful opportunity to serve God in this capacity." □

## ***How Wonderful Are Your Works O Lord!***

*Continued from page 1*

And now, back to the Christmas story about how God Himself came into our world. In this story, there is also marriage, childbirth and much love, yet there is also something wonderfully new. Although Mary and Joseph came into this world in the usual way, Mary was conceived without original sin in order to give her complete freedom to make her "yes" at the Annunciation (Lk 1). This story, which we call the Immaculate Conception (of Mary in the womb of her mother, Anna) is God's new beginning with us. Mary, through her loving obedience, is the new Eve who becomes the "mother of all the living" (Gn 2), and Jesus the new Adam. Together they show us what it means to live in complete fidelity to God and invite us to be as Saint Paul urges, "a new creation" (2Cor 5:17).

In the Christmas story, Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary by the announcement of the Angel Gabriel and the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. Mary made her complete and free gift of self when she said, "May it be done to me according to your Word" (Lk 1:38). Joseph, by the revelation of an angel, decided that instead of "divorcing her quietly" (Mt 1:19), as was his plan, he would take "her into his home" (Mt 1:24) and care for her as a "virgin who cared for the Virgin" (Maronite Liturgy). This celibate and chaste caring was something completely new and wonderful, a sign that God was doing something new in the midst of his people. The Church from the beginning has honored this truth with tenderness and respect. It may not make complete sense to the world, but still the story continues to inspire hope and gratitude even today. This is the Christmas message and it does not get better than that!

The way we come into the world and the way You did, O

Lord, is a wonder! Help us, Lord, to honor both this Christmas season. □

+ Bishop Gregory John Mansour  
Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

## ***San Diego, California Forty Days For Life***

*by Patricia Hansen  
Director, Mother of Life Pro-Life Center*

**N**ovember 6, 2011, marked the last day of the Forty Days for Life Prayer Vigil throughout our nation and in many other countries of the world.

St. Ephrem, Mariam Mother of Life, Pro-Life Center along with Fr. Nabil Mouannes, Pastor, participated in the Prayer vigil that also consisted of fasting and sacrifices.

This year the local Planned Parenthood facility located in El Cajon, Calif., was the site of the Vigil for the first time. Vicki Whitmire, who is a prayer member of The Mariam Mother of Life Committee, organized the El Cajon Vigil and many members of the committee and parish participated.

Shawn Carney, Campaign Director reported that 508 babies were saved as a result of the prayer, fasting and presence of pro-life prayer warriors. Wonderful reports of conversions and saves were emailed to members throughout the Forty Days.

The Forty Days for Life campaign is awakening more and more people to the evil of abortion, converting hearts, and saving souls. The next 40-Day campaign will be during Lent 2012. Plan on participating in your community or begin one at your local Planned Parenthood or abortion facility. It will not only bless you, but you will be part of saving lives. For more information, log on to [www.40daysforlife.com](http://www.40daysforlife.com). □

## ***Pope Invited to Visit Lebanon***

**L**ebanon's Prime Minister, Najib Mikati, was received in audience by Pope Benedict XVI on Monday, November 28, 2011. In an interview with Vatican Radio before the meeting the political leader said he would invite the Pope to visit his country as soon as possible. In October 2010, a synod of bishops was held to discuss the situation of the Church in the Middle East. Mikati offered Lebanon as the place where the Post-Synodal Exhortation could be presented.

No official date has been set for the Exhortation's publication but a number of press reports say that it could come out next April.

According to Vatican Radio, Mikati also said that Christians in Lebanon could provide an example to others on how to move toward democracy.

"The cordial discussions served to highlight the role Lebanon plays in the region and in the entire world, and its vocation to offer a message of freedom and respectful coexistence among the various Christian and Muslim communities who live there," commented a release published by the Holy See's press office following the audience with the Pope. ... □  
(*Zenit.org, November 29, 2011*)

# ***The Maronite Chapel at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. How Did it Come About?***

*by Bishop Gregory Mansour*

Several years ago Mrs. Ina Rihani of our parish in Washington, D.C., had a dream to have a Maronite Chapel at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. She approached Bishops Stephen Hector Doueihi and John Chedid and told them about it. She was given permission to explore the possibility. The answer from the Basilica was that there were only a few places left and that a chapel would cost at least one million dollars. At the time both Bishops were struggling to make ends meet, so the idea was put on hold.

In the Fall of 2007, I had gathered a team of seventeen persons from throughout the Eparchy of Saint Maron to see if we could make a joint effort to financially set the Eparchy on a solid foundation for the future. First, this Committee insisted on complete financial transparency and accountability, a process that I had already begun in the Chancery Office and which was very well underway in each of the parishes. We are now happy to say that we are as transparent and accountable as any diocese can and should be.

The Committee felt the great need to focus on fundraising in the Eparchy because we had no endowment for the Seminary, and no support fund for our missions, the Cathedral had need of major repairs, and the Priest Retirement Fund was much under-funded. I thought we would focus on these four needs - all noble, and all very much needed. They were all "maintenance" issues that needed to be done. At that time, the Eparchy was infusing an extra \$100,000 each year to support a meager \$900 a month stipend for retired priests. The Seminary had no extra monies to do needed repairs or to support the new vocations God was sending us. The Cathedral needed basic repairs just to stop leaks, maintain its walls and towers, and to avoid continued deterioration, and our missions had nothing extra to go on to continue to thrive.

All seventeen members of the team wanted us not just to maintain but to dream. They asked "what dream do you have that can rally our people and help them not only to financially maintain the heritage they have been given, but to go beyond?" At that time I brought up the idea of the Chapel at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. They unanimously wanted us to include it along with the other four needed "maintenance" projects. Thus, the Chapel, a dream that was shelved, became a dream of hope.

Chorbishop Michael Thomas began discussions with Monsignor Walter Rossi, Rector of the National Shrine. I began discussions with Cardinal Justin Rigali, Chairman of the Shrine Board of Trustees. The cost for the Chapel was then estimated at less than the million previously thought. Artistic and architectural plans were drawn up. In the meantime, I had gone out to a handful of donors and asked for help with all five of our goals, four to maintain and one to

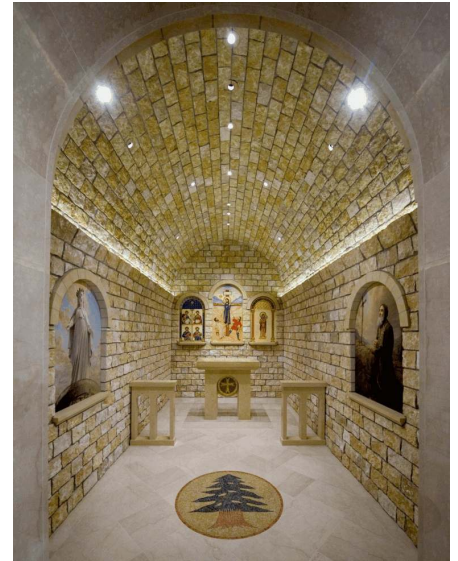
dream. With God's grace I was able to secure pledges totaling \$1.85 million to be given over a period of five years from a few of those donors. This was a good beginning, but shortly after that, the economy turned bad and several of those whom I had hoped could help with pledges asked me to wait until times got better. Thus, I put our fundraising efforts on hold, and instead moved in a new direction, to get more people in the Eparchy involved in helping.

We brought on board Mr. John Kurey as Eparchial Stewardship Director. He was able to help us with Eparchial Benefit Dinners in Washington and New York, and he successfully applied for several grants for the Eparchy including for seminarian education, the Cathedral, the Servants of Christ the Light, and our missions. He has been a great help to us in reaching out. All of the costs of the Stewardship Office for the first years, including his salary, are covered by grants he has written. We are now on solid foundation to meet more of our financial commitments.

Through all these efforts, we were able to afford the Chapel, which cost a total of \$525,000. We have also begun our renovations at the Cathedral, which is a big project, and will take a lot more help. We have raised the pension for our retired priests from \$900 to \$1,500 per month, which is still too little, so we continue to work on it. We have made several needed repairs to the Seminary and have continued to support our fine seminarians. One day we hope to establish a revolving loan fund to provide financial support for the missions and parishes.

We are nowhere near our goal for all four of the maintenance projects which we set out to accomplish, but we are on our way. While on the way, we have been blessed with a beautiful new Maronite Chapel that reminds us of our stone churches in Lebanon and the art and spirituality of our ancient Maronite tradition.

We are closer than we were five years ago when we set out not only to maintain but to dream, but we still need your help. To find out more about how you can help, please contact us at (718)-237-9913 or [saintmaron@yahoo.com](mailto:saintmaron@yahoo.com), or visit the Eparchy's website at [www.stmaron.org](http://www.stmaron.org). □



Our Lady of Lebanon Chapel



# North Carolina Teens Participate in World Youth Day, Madrid 2011

A group of seven courageous teens (Michael Gamble, Kane Gamble, Kara Gamble, Ashley Jenkins, Alex Haodley, Jamie Baggett and Madison Bigler) and three adult chaperones (Marie VanHeusen, Ian VanHeusen and Cecilia Romero) from the parish of St. Michael the Archangel in Fayetteville, North Carolina, had the opportunity to attend World Youth Day which was held August 15 - 21, 2011, in Madrid, Spain. The group arrived at their host parish of Santa Teresa Benedicta de la Cruz in the vicinity of Mira Sierra which is located northwest of Madrid. We were warmly welcomed not only by the 100 plus degree weather but also with the kindness and generosity of the parishioners and Fathers Fulgencio and Don Jose. At the welcoming we were given the official JMJ - *Jornada Mundial de la Juventud* (World Youth Day in Spanish) red and yellow backpacks, information and t-shirts. Then, the group was divided into three smaller groups who stayed with their area host families. After a few hours of much needed rest, the teen pilgrims and chaperones made their way to the opening Mass that was held at La Puerta de Atocha which is in central Madrid. It was there amid hundreds of thousands of people waving flags of every country that we met two groups of Lebanese. We found each other because Fr. Sam Najjar, Pastor of St. Michael, had lent his treasured Lebanese flag to the teens. After small talk and camping out on the hot street for several hours we decided to head on back and get ready for the next day.

Wednesday, August 17, we left very early and took the metro to downtown Madrid to a small quaint church dedicated to St. Jose Maria Escriva, founder of *Opus Dei* and one of the Patron saints of WYD, to meet up with a group of Catholics from the Roman Diocese of Raleigh, North Carolina, to attend Mass and catechesis. The main theme of the day was "What is God calling you to do?" and the various speakers talked about the vocations to religious life. After catechesis the teens had the opportunity to meet the Roman Bishop who sent his warm greetings to Bishop Gregory Mansour. The rest of the day was spent sightseeing and visiting various



churches. During this time we met Maronites from Lebanon, and the priest in charge of this group happened to be a very close friend of Fr. Dominique Hanna. Fr. Antoine sent a recorded greeting to Fr. Dominique and invited him to come to the next WYD. Later that afternoon the teens attended the USCCB sponsored vocations fair held at the Jesuit College which was right by the U.S. Embassy. It was on the front steps of the church that Seminarian Ian VanHeusen gave a talk on meditation and Eucharistic adoration. Later the group went to a tiny underground chapel to pray at adoration.

Thursday was one of the most anticipated days because Pope Benedict XVI was coming to Madrid and would be touring the city in the popemobile. This day, due to the heat wave, the teens spent a few hours at Principe Pio, a popular shopping venue and later at El Prado which is a huge park in central Madrid with a lake in the middle. The teens exchanged flags with young people of several different countries attending WYD. Then off they went to find a good spot to see Pope Benedict. This was no easy task since there were more than a million people lined up to see the Pope. Even though the weather was hot, they found a good place and while waiting for hours, they met people from Chile and watched the Sisters of Life (yes, the ones from

N.Y.) entertaining the young people with juggling, Spanish teens dancing flamenco, and people exchanging pins, chanting and singing. All of Madrid became one huge Catholic celebration. As the Pope passed by, within ten feet of where we were standing, he waved and blessed the crowds. Thousands of white paper doves and red and yellow balloons were launched in the air in celebration. And again, on the other side of the street we saw the Lebanese flag waving. . . you guessed it, more Maronites had come to greet the Pope. Due to the large crowds, the metro system had closed and our fearless leader, Ms. Marie Van Heusen, treated the whole group to tapas - local Spanish appetizers, at a small restaurant. Then off we went walking several miles, amid streets filled with fellow pilgrims, to find a metro station that was open so we could get back to our host families.

By Friday the teens had the opportunity to go to confession in that same quaint church of St. Jose Maria Escriva. This was one of the last remaining things on our "to do" list so as to obtain plenary indulgence. The other three items were to make the pilgrimage, attend Mass and offer our prayers for the intentions of Pope Benedict XVI. The afternoon was spent at El Prado attending the international vocations fair. El Prado had sections for music venues and also one of the

largest places where confession were held in the city. Hundreds of priests were hearing confessions in many languages. Later that afternoon we tried to make it to the Stations of the Cross. Due to the incredible heat wave the group decided to watch it on a large screen TV at one of the local restaurants while having an early dinner. Then it was rest time because the next day would be the most arduous day of all.

Our seminarian, Ian, left early that Saturday morning to attend a special Mass that the Pope had for these young men. We opted to leave later in the day to make the six mile trek to the Cuatro Vientos air field. The whole week of WYD turned out to be the hottest week of the year for Madrid, and we felt every degree on our bodies as we walked with our camping backpacks filled with sleeping bags and other necessities. Because of the heat, we took the metro to the closest stop possible, and millions of other pilgrims had decided to do the same thing. Each Metro car was packed full of young people. The weight of the masses literally collapsed the system several stops before the air field. This left us once again walking and a bit lost in the middle of the "desert" of Madrid trying to find our way to Cuatro Vientos. But soon we heard the noise: the singing, talking and praying of thousands upon thousands of young people walking toward the field. The noise grew louder and louder until we saw the rivers of young people and united with them. Because it was hot, the residents took pity on us and threw buckets of water from their high-rise apartments. Other residents and fire brigades hosed us down with water. Not even a half hour would pass and we would be dry to the bone. Still we continued to walk and three hours later made it to our goal. Unfortunately, our place had been taken and we ended up in a secondary field an hour before the security forces closed the gates. We set up camp in front of an enormous screen. The heat, the dust, and little food and water made us all appreciate our homes and comforts back in the U.S., but we were going to tough it out and hold on to the end. Then the wind shifted, the clouds thickened and darkened. We rejoiced thinking that the worst of the hot sun was over. That was until the storm hit during the Vigil and the screens went

dark. It was a fast moving storm with hurricane force winds, rain and lightning striking with full force. Luckily seminarian Ian had bought several umbrellas in the morning to shield us from the sun. With the wind and rain raging we held on for dear life until the storm passed. Then the screens lit up and the Pope was able to finish the Vigil. We passed the rest of the night walking, talking and dancing. While doing one of our rounds on the camp, we met more Maronites! This group of over seventy came from Australia. We met friends and family of Sister Therese Marie of the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light. They, too, had walked for hours and lost their place and ended up with us in the back field.

The next day was the closing Mass, with the Pope's blessing to go and be witnesses to our faith. And then... when we thought it was over, Yes! we had to walk back! Back in the scorching heat, amid thousands, with little water and backpacks that weighed a ton. Two hours later we made it to an empty Burger King (a small miracle), and devoured our food and once again ... we met more Maronites from Australia. These young adults were also friends of Sister Therese Marie and had worked with her in the last WYD in Australia. After picture taking and giving them pins, we took the metro to our host families for a well deserved rest. The following day we caught our plane back to the U.S. to our families. The next WYD is scheduled for 2013! By then most of the St. Michael's teens will be young adults, and they have already begun plans to make the pilgrimage to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Are you interested in having an adventure and experience like we had? Well look for the next article on how to plan for RIO 2013. Special thanks to Fr. Sam Najjar and all the parishioners and friends of St. Michael the Archangel for financially and spiritually supporting the teens in WYD. Also a special Shout out for Ms. Marie Van Heusen. It could not be done without you, Marie. □



## **Jack G. Shaheen 2012 Mass Communications Scholarships**

**Purpose:** To honor Arab-American students who excel in media studies

**Amount:** \$1,000

**Eligibility:**

- ◆ College students classified as a junior, senior, or enrolled in graduate school for the 2012 - 2013 academic year majoring in journalism, radio, television, and/or film
- ◆ Must have a minimum of 3.0 GPA and be a U.S. citizen of Arab heritage

Applicants please submit the following items to the ADC Research Institute:

- A one page statement explaining your goals and stating that: you are a U.S. citizen; you are of Arab heritage; and why you merit the scholarship.
- Two original signed letters of recommendation from mass communications professors.
- Copies of your articles, videos, films, etc. (The items will not be returned to you).
- Official academic transcripts including your GPA
- Permanent home address, phone number, e-mail address, and phone number during the school year.

The deadline is April 1, 2012 (incomplete or late applications will not be accepted).

Submit all materials to:

Jack G. Shaheen Mass  
Communications Scholarship  
ADC Research Institute  
1732 Wisconsin Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20007.

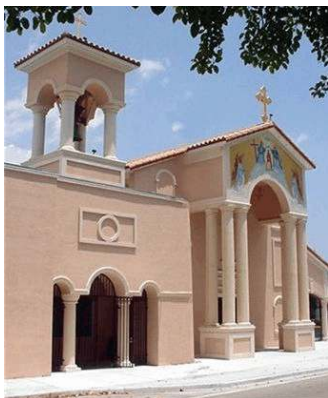
For further details, call 202- 244-2990 or email [organizing@ADC.org](mailto:organizing@ADC.org). Awards will be presented in June 2012 during ADC's National Convention in Washington, D.C. □



## ***Maronite Churches in Florida***

**T**he cold, snowy and dark days of winter will soon be upon our brothers and sisters who live in the north, and many of you seek refuge in the warmth of Florida during these months. Whether you are a “snowbird” escaping for a few weeks or a few months, a retiree moving permanently, or you are simply just moving to Florida, there is a chance you can find a Maronite Church not too far away. Over the past few decades the growth of the Maronite Church has been dramatic. There are now five existing Maronite Churches, and a new one opening January 6, 2012 in Fort Lauderdale. They are located throughout Florida and stand ready to greet you with open arms (and sunshine). So please, when you are in Florida for whatever reason, take time to join with other Maronites in celebrating the Divine Liturgy at one of our churches.

### ***Miami***



#### **Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Church**

2055 Coral Way  
Miami, FL 33145  
Rev. Elie Mikhael, Pastor  
Tel. 305-856-7449

#### **Liturgical Schedule**

Weekday Liturgy: 12:00 noon  
Sunday Liturgy: 9:00 a.m. (in Spanish) and 11:00 a.m. (in English and Arabic)  
Holy Days of Obligation: 8:00 p.m.

Website: [www.ololmiami.org](http://www.ololmiami.org)  
Email: [ololmiami@bellsouth.net](mailto:ololmiami@bellsouth.net)

### ***West Palm Beach***

#### **Mary Mother of the Light Maronite Church**

4891 Lake Worth Rd.  
Greenacres, FL 33463  
Rev. Jorge Perales,  
Administrator  
Subdeacon Dennis  
Somerville  
Tel. 561-433-8831

#### **Liturgical Schedule**

Sunday Liturgy: 11:00 a.m.  
Holy Days of Obligation: 7:15 p.m.  
Website: [www.MaryMotherofLight.org](http://www.MaryMotherofLight.org)  
Email: [mmolchurch@gmail.com](mailto:mmolchurch@gmail.com)



### ***Orlando***



#### **St. Jude Maronite Church**

5555 Dr. Phillips Boulevard  
Orlando, FL 32819  
Rev. Bassam Saade, Pastor  
Subdeacon Jack Manhire  
Tel. 407-363-7405

#### **Liturgical Schedule**

Weekday Liturgy: 12:00 noon  
(Tuesday -Thursday) and 6:00 p.m. (Friday)

Saturday Liturgy: 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday Liturgy: 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.  
Holy Days of Obligation at 12:00 noon  
Website: [www.saintjudechurch.org](http://www.saintjudechurch.org)  
Email: [Stjudecatholicch@bellsouth.net](mailto:Stjudecatholicch@bellsouth.net)

### ***Tampa***

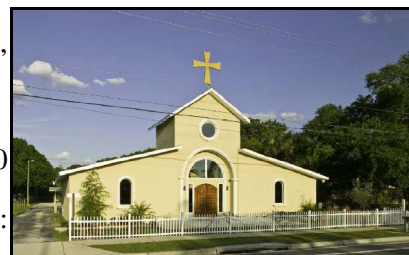
#### **Saints Peter and Paul Maronite Church**

6201 Sheldon Road  
Tampa, FL, 33615-3115  
Rev. Peter Boulos,  
Administrator  
Tel. 813-886-7413

#### **Liturgical Schedule**

Sunday Liturgy: 11:30 a.m.  
Holy Days of Obligation: 7:00 p.m.

Website: [www.maronitetampa.com](http://www.maronitetampa.com)  
Email: [Maronitetampa@yahoo.com](mailto:Maronitetampa@yahoo.com)



### ***Jacksonville***

#### **Saint Maron Maronite Church**

7032 Bowden Road  
Jacksonville, FL, 32216  
Rev. Elie Abi-Chedid, Administrator  
Deacon Elias Shami  
Tel. 904-448-0203

#### **Liturgical Schedule**

Weekday Liturgy: 7:00 p.m.  
Sunday Liturgy: 11:15 a.m.  
Holy Days of Obligation: 7:00 p.m.  
Website: [www.stmaronjax.org](http://www.stmaronjax.org)  
Email: [frchedid@hotmail.com](mailto:frchedid@hotmail.com)

### ***Fort Lauderdale***

*New Maronite Church -  
First Divine Liturgy - Feast  
of the Epiphany, January 6,  
2012 at 7:30 p.m.*

#### **Heart of Jesus Maronite Church**

1800 N.E 6<sup>th</sup> Curt  
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33304  
Chorbishop Michael  
Thomas, Administrator  
Tel. 954-522-3939

Deacon John Jarvis

#### **Liturgical Schedule**

Weekday Liturgy: 12:00 noon  
Saturday 4:00 p.m. (English); Sunday 11:00 a.m. (Arabic, English); Holy Days of Obligations: Vigil Mass at 7:30 p.m.; and Holy Day at 12:00 noon  
Website: [heartofjesus.org](http://heartofjesus.org); Email: [heartofjesusfl@gmail.com](mailto:heartofjesusfl@gmail.com)



## Glen Allen, Virginia *Living Museum*



First grade children depict a segment of the parish history dating to the 1890s. Their teacher, Kelly George, is standing to the left.

**S**t. Anthony Maronite Catholic Church, Glen Allen, Virginia, is celebrating its centennial as an officially recognized parish. Several celebrations have taken place, the latest being a living museum of the parish's history performed by the youth of the religious education program. What started as a casual idea was brought to fruition on November 13, 2011. Each grade level from preschool through high school was assigned a segment of the parish history dating from the 1890s, the earliest days of the Maronite community, to the present. Their task was to develop a skit to play out their historical assignment. And develop they did, from elaborate fire scenes depicting the burning of an early twentieth century candy factory where Mass was held to narratives conveying pertinent parts of the parish's history. All performed their roles diligently. During and following the

living museum the attendees gathered in the church's social hall for a light meal. The final celebration will take place the weekend of February 11 - 12, 2012. □

## *Prayer Requires "Radical" Act of Trust, Says Pope*

**O**ffering a reflection on the Good Shepherd, Benedict XVI underlined the relationship between prayer and "a radical act of trust."

The Pope reflected on Psalm 23 during his weekly general audience held in St. Peter's Square. Continuing his series of catecheses on prayer, he noted that "turning to Lord in prayer involves a radical act of trust, in the awareness that one is entrusting oneself to God who is good."

The Pontiff began: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want": thus begins this beautiful prayer, calling to mind the nomadic environment of sheep-rearing and the experience of a mutual knowledge that is established between the shepherd and the sheep that make up his little flock.

"The image evokes an atmosphere of confidence, intimacy and tenderness: the shepherd knows his young sheep one by one; he calls them by name and they follow him, because they know him and they trust him.

"He cares for them; he guards them as precious possessions, ready to defend them, to assure their well-being, and to establish them in peace. Nothing can be lacking if the shepherd is with them."

Pope Benedict XVI said that if one walks behind the "Good Shepherd," even if he is led through "winding or long the paths" or "spiritually desert regions, waterless and with a sun of scorching rationalism," one can be assured of "traveling along 'right' paths."

"He who goes with the Lord even into the dark valleys of suffering, of uncertainty and of every human problem feels secure," the Pope added. "You are with me: this is our certainty, this is what sustains us. ... □

*Zenit.org, October 5, 2011*