

the Maronite **Voice**



"Elias was taken up to Heaven and will come back to announce the Second Coming"

— Maronite Divine Liturgy



the Maronite Voice

BISHOP'S MESSAGE

4 **God Created Man to be Free**
by Bishop Gregory John Mansour

6 **Bishops Schedules**

8 **Saint Elias: Prophet and Miracle Worker**
by Rev. David A. Fisher

12 **Saint Elias Maronite Cathedral in Aleppo: A Sign of Hope and Rebirth**
by Macarios Jabbour and TMV Staff

14 **First Holy Communion 2021**

WORKER IN THE VINEYARD

20 **Chorbishop Seely Beggiani: Maronite Priest, Rector and Scholar**
by Brandon Shulleeta

LIVING CHURCH

22 **The Order of Saint Sharbel: A Mission for Maronite Seminarians and Priests**
by Anna Salloum

24 Keeping Up with the National MYA

25 Maronite Youth Share their Plans for a Recreational Summer

26 Parish News

34 Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn 2020 Financial Reports

38 Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon 2020 Financial Reports

GOING DEEPER INTO THE SPIRITUAL LIFE...

42 The Life of a Seminarian *by Vincent Michael*

43 From the Editor

THE MARONITE VOICE

A bi-monthly publication of Saint Maron Publications under the auspices of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn and Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles.
ISSN 1080-9880

Publishers

Most Reverend Gregory John Mansour
Most Reverend A. Elias Zaidan

Editor

Chorbishop John D. Faris

Managing Editor

Rev. Aaron Sandbothe

Art and Design Director

Ms. Glory Rasi

Production Coordinator

Subdeacon Michael Maynes

Parish News Editors

Dr. Mabel George Howard
(Eparchy of Saint Maron)
mabelgeorgehoward@gmail.com

Rev. Pierre Bassil
(Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon)
maronitevoicewest@gmail.com

Feature Writers

Anna Salloum
Brandon Shulleeta

• In order to be considered for publication, all submissions must be in electronic format and signed by the author with contact information. Images must be of high resolution and quality (minimal 300 dpi, jpg format).

• Subscription rates are \$25.00/year.

• Paid Advertising
\$150 - Quarter page full color
\$250 - Half page full color
\$400 - Full page full color
Additional discounts for six editions (one year).
All ads must be submitted electronically. High resolution jpg or PDF with embedded fonts required. No bleeds. Contact TheMaroniteVoice@gmail.com

Contact Us

Phone: 804.346.1160
Email: MaroniteVoice@gmail.com
Mailing Address:
4611 Sadler Road
Glen Allen, VA 23060

Office Hours

Monday - Friday | 9 am - 1 pm

Printed in Richmond, Virginia





God Created Man to be Free

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

often wonder why God created man free. God took a great risk to create man free, with no police to ensure that when man would get out of line he would be obliged to believe and obey. Why would God go through all the effort to create this magnificent universe, and also to redeem man in such a wondrous way at the cross, if all this effort could easily go to waste with man's destructive and self-destructive tendencies?

Likewise, why did God create in such a way that one scientist could look deeply into the mysteries of the universe and believe, and yet another scientist could completely deny that God created, as if the universe had another origin outside of itself?

The same way that God created us, he also redeemed us, very carefully, so as not to overwhelm us so that we would be *forced* to believe and obey. His humble birth, his shameful death on the cross, his resurrection from the dead

(which was doubted by many) and especially his ascension into heaven, were all events that one could either embrace or reject. Moreover, regarding his ascension, why didn't Jesus just stay with us on earth, he could have lived with us on earth for all eternity as all the proof we would need. He could correct us, resolve our controversies, prove his resurrection and his authority wherever there was doubt.

Instead, our Lord chose to abide with us through an *invisible* Holy Spirit, and through the *subtle yet real* presence in the Sacraments (Mysteries). The Holy Spirit and the Mysteries thus became our ordinary means to communion with Christ and the Father, and if we chose to believe, we need to look carefully, for the truth is not easily observable.

Why would God so hide his tracks? Why work in such a way to carefully preserve and honor our freedom? Since God created and redeemed in

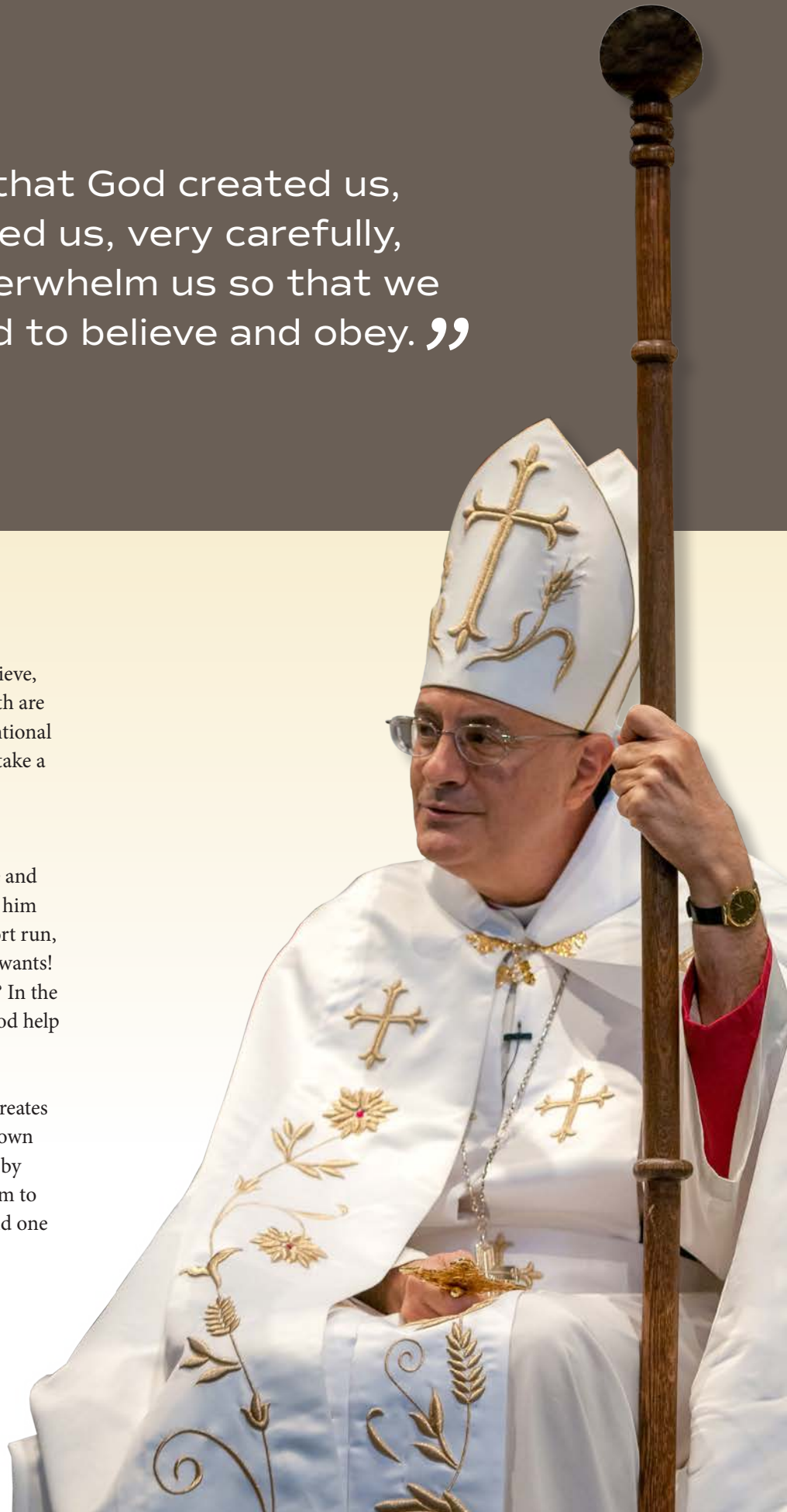
“ The same way that God created us, he also redeemed us, very carefully, so as not to overwhelm us so that we would be forced to believe and obey. ”

such a way that we are neither forced to believe, nor to love, then our obedience and our faith are completely our own choice, a free and intentional decision on our part, an invitation to truly take a risk, make a leap of faith.

In the long run, this may be the best way to gently secure our own free and faithful love and obedience, for if we do so, we would follow him by choice, not by force. However, in the short run, it leads to everyone doing whatever he/she wants! O God, why do you allow us such freedom? In the long run, it is good, but in the short run, God help us!

What an awesome God we have, one who creates and redeems, yet all the while respects our own free will, our dignity as sons and daughters by choice! Come Holy Spirit, lead us in freedom to love, honor and serve God in this world, and one day to be happy with him in the next. ■

Bishop Gregory John Mansour



Schedule BISHOP GREGORY J. MANSOUR

- 17 JULY** Brooklyn, NY | Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral | Presbyteral Ordination of Deacon Peter Frangie
- 18 JULY** Brooklyn, NY | Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral
- 20 JULY** Virtual | Humanae Vitae Conference with Maronite Sisters
- 25 JULY** Newtown Square, PA | St. Sharbel Church | Pastoral Visit
- 1 AUGUST** Brooklyn, NY | Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral
- 2-9 AUGUST** Silent Retreat
- 12 AUGUST** Conway, PA | St. Theresa of Calcutta Mission | Pastoral Visit
- 13-15 AUGUST** North Jackson, OH | Our Lady of Lebanon Shrine | Assumption Pilgrimage
- 22 AUGUST** TBA
- 29 AUGUST** TBA
- 3-5 SEPTEMBER** Chicago, IL | MYA National Workshop
- 12 SEPTEMBER** Brooklyn, NY | Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral
- 18 SEPTEMBER** Pittsburgh, PA | Our Lady of Victory Church | 25th Anniversary of Fr. Rudy Wakim
- 19 SEPTEMBER** Uniontown, PA | St. George Church | Pastoral Visit

SAVE THE DATE – OCTOBER 7, 2021

Please join Bishop Gregory Mansour and friends
for the
Twelfth Annual Benefit Event
of the
Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn
A virtual event via [Zoom](#)



This benefit will help strengthen our Eparchy in its service to its people here and for the vulnerable in Lebanon.

We gratefully honor and recognize the many dedicated people and organizations who serve and support the people and country of Lebanon during these difficult times.

Details to follow.

EPARCHY OF SAINT MARON OF BROOKLYN

718-237-9913 • www.stmaron.org • saintmaron@yahoo.com

Caritas Lebanon

POST CARD

TOGETHER FOR A BETTER LIFE

With Your Support Lebanon Will Survive

Donate Today!

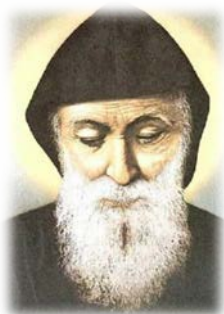
Caritas.org.lb
+961 79 182477

2021

Schedule **BISHOP A. ELIAS ZAIDAN**

- 16-18 JULY** Clinton Township, MI | St. Sharbel Church | Pastoral Visit
21 JULY Virtual | Lecture of Roger Akhrass about St. Jacob of Serugh
23-25 JULY Austin, TX | Our Lady's Church | Pastoral Visit and Elevation of Msgr. Don Sawyer to Chorbishop
29 JULY Virtual | In Defense of Christians Religious Advisory Board Meeting
1 AUGUST Los Angeles, CA | Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon Cathedral
8 AUGUST St. Louis, MO | St. Raymond Cathedral
13-15 AUGUST North Jackson, OH | Our Lady of Lebanon Shrine | Assumption Pilgrimage
16-17 AUGUST Cincinnati, OH | Saint Anthony of Padua Church | Pastoral Visit
18 AUGUST Virtual | Lecture of Kelli Bryant Gibson about St. Jacob of Serugh
22 AUGUST Los Angeles, CA | Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon Cathedral
3-4 SEPTEMBER Chicago, IL | MYA National Workshop
4-5 SEPTEMBER Millbrae, CA | Our Lady of Lebanon Church | Pastoral Visit
6 SEPTEMBER Happy Labor Day!

JOIN THE ORDER OF SAINT SHARBEL



ORDER OF SAINT SHARBEL SUNDAY

All parishes are asked to promote the Order on Sunday, October 10, 2021.

The Order supports Maronite Seminarians preparing to become priests.
Please prayerfully consider joining the Order.

Enroll at www.orderstsharbel.org or ask your parish priest.

Saint Elias: Prophet and Miracle Worker

by Rev. David A. Fisher

Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab:
“As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve...” — 1 KINGS 17:1

Elias the Saint

“For if the mystery concealed of old is made manifest to the Apostles through the prophetic writings, and if the prophets, being wise men, understood what proceeded from their own mouths, then the prophets knew what was made manifest to the Apostles.” — *Origen of Alexandria*

The prophet Elijah is venerated in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Christians refer to him as a *saint*, a title generally reserved to Christian figures. On 20 July, the Church celebrates Elijah or “Elias” in Greek, meaning “Yahweh is my God.” From this perspective, we can better appreciate the unity of the Old and New Testaments, as a unitary revelation, the Sacred Scripture. As Luke illustrates in the appearance of Jesus to his disciples on the road to Emmaus: “Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures” (LUKE 24:27).

The memory of Saint Elias is dear to the Maronite Church and its faithful, for Lebanon being a biblical land, the personages of the Sacred Scripture are not distant figures of long ago in a foreign land. For the Christians of Lebanon today, they were men and women who lived among our ancestors, walked upon our land, and were heralds of God’s revelation here. For example, the Monastery of Mar (Saint) Elias in the region of Hadchit is thought to have been visited by the great prophet himself.

Elias the Prophet

Saint Elias lived approximately 900 years before Christ during the reigns of Kings Ahab and Ahaziah in the northern kingdom of Israel. His prophetic message is recorded in 1 Kings 17-19 and 2 Kings 1 and 2.

Because they both proclaimed that it was forbidden to worship other gods in any manner, Elias is counted with Moses as the two greatest prophetic defenders of the worship of Yahweh. While strict monotheism (the belief in one God) did not exist in Judaism until the Babylonian and subsequent Second Temple Period; Moses and Elias are indeed practical monotheists, because the people chosen by Yahweh were not to worship other gods. This is beautifully illustrated when Elias shows how powerless the prophets of Baal are when confronted by himself as the sole prophet of Yahweh:

Elijah approached all the people and said, “How long will you straddle the issue? If the Lord is God, follow him; if Baal, follow him.” But the people did not answer him. So Elijah said to the people, “I am the only remaining prophet of the Lord, and there are four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. Give us two young bulls. Let them choose one, cut it into pieces, and place it on the wood, but start no fire. I shall prepare the other and place it on the wood, but shall start no fire. You shall call upon



the name of your gods, and I will call upon the name of the Lord. The God who answers with fire is God.” All the people answered, “We agree!” — 1 KINGS 18:21-24

The prophets of Baal are not able to bring their god to consume their sacrifice, no matter how hard they tried, even to the point of slashing themselves with swords and spears. Then Elias, reminiscent of what Moses did during the Exodus, said to the people:

“Come here to me.” When they drew near to him, he repaired the altar of the Lord which

had been destroyed. He took twelve stones, for the number of tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the Lord had said: Israel shall be your name. He built the stones into an altar to the name of the Lord, and made a trench around the altar large enough for two measures of grain. When he had arranged the wood, he cut up the young bull and laid it on the wood. — 1 KINGS 18:30-33

When all was ready for the sacrifice, Elias called upon the name of the one true God and said: “Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, Lord!” (1 KINGS 18:36-37). The Lord came and consumed in fire, the offering of Elias, and the people of Israel cried out, “The Lord is God! The Lord is God!” (1 KINGS 18:39).

Later, Elias again had to defend the exclusive worship of the God of Israel to King Ahaziah, who sought the power of a foreign god to heal him of an injury

“Saint Elias: Prophet and Miracle Worker”

Continued from page 9

incurred from falling from a roof. Ahaziah sent out detachment after detachment of soldiers to kill Elias, but each time the Lord struck them down. Finally, Elias went and confronted the king:

He declared to the king: “Thus says the Lord: Because you sent messengers to inquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron—do you think there is no God in Israel to inquire of?—you shall not leave the bed upon which you lie; instead you shall die.”

Ahaziah died according to the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah. Since he had no son, Joram succeeded him as king, in the second year of Joram, son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. — 2 KINGS 1:16-17

Elias, the prophet of the one, true God was also one through whom the Lord worked miracles, so that the people would know that they were God’s chosen ones.

Elias the Miracle Worker

During the punishing drought in Israel, Elias was sent to a widow and her son at Zarephath of Sidon, who had almost nothing left to eat. He asked the widow to make him a cake of the little flour and oil she had left. He told her not to fear, that God would take care of her and her son:

For the Lord, the God of Israel, says: “The jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, until the day when the Lord sends rain upon the earth.” She left and did as Elijah had said. She had enough to eat for a long time—he and she and her household. The jar of flour did not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, according to the word of the Lord spoken through Elijah. — 1 KINGS 17:14-16

Later the woman’s son stopped breathing and it seemed as if he were dead. The prophet called upon the Lord God for a miracle:

He called out to the Lord: “Lord, my God, let the life breath return to the body of this child.” The Lord heard the prayer of Elijah; the life breath returned to the child’s body and he lived. Taking the child, Elijah carried him down into the house from the upper room and gave him to his mother. Elijah said, “See! Your son is alive.” The woman said to Elijah, “Now indeed I know that you are a man of God, and it is truly the word of the Lord that you speak.” — 1 KINGS 17:21-24

God’s glory shown in Elijah for one last time as he passed the mantle of prophetic ministry to his disciple Elisha.

When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, “Request whatever I might do for you, before I am taken from you.” Elisha answered, “May I receive a double portion of your spirit.” He replied, “You have asked something that is not easy. Still, if you see me taken up from you, your wish will be granted; otherwise not.” As they walked on still conversing, a fiery chariot and fiery horses came between the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind, and Elisha saw it happen. He cried out, “My father! My father! Israel’s chariot and steeds!” Then he saw him no longer. — 2 KINGS 2:9-12

Saint Elias was one of the most dynamic prophets of ancient Israel. Like Moses, a defender of faith in Yahweh, like Isaiah and Jeremiah, fearless in his prophetic vocation. He is a “type” of the apostles of the Lord Jesus; we see the spirit of Elias in the Acts of the Apostles and the fearless martyrs of the Christians of the first centuries of the Church. ■

Rev. David A. Fisher is Maronite priest of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon and Adjunct Professor of Eastern Christian Thought at St. Charles Seminary.



Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord.

ROBERT DORAN

Bishop Gregory J. Mansour received the sad news of the passing of Mr. Robert Doran, the father of Father James Doran. Robert Doran was predeceased by his wife, Sharon, in March. Sharon and Robert leave behind Fr. James Doran and his sister Kathleen and her family. Sharon is also survived by her sister Gayle, and Robert, by his brothers Bruce and Dennis.

Condolences or the acknowledgement of prayers or the offering of a Divine Liturgy can be sent to Rev. James Doran at St. Joseph Church, 3 Appleton Street, Waterville, ME 04901.

On behalf of the clergy, religious and laity of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, Bishop Gregory offers to Father James and his family, heartfelt condolences and prayerful support. May Robert and Sharon rest in God's peace.



Maronite Jewelry
As unique as it is Beautiful!

- A. Large Antiochene Cross
- B. Small Antiochene Cross
- C. Rubbula Cross
- D. Saint Sharbel in Circle Cross
- E. Saint Sharbel Medal
- F. Large Saint Sharbel Medal
- G. Solid Rope Chain
- H. Solid Heavy Rope Chain
- I. Camel
- J. Gents Cedar Tree Ring
- K. Cedar Tree Cuff Links
- L. Small Circle Cedar
- M. Large Cedar Tree
- N. Serpent Bracelet
- O. Bangle Bracelet
- P. Antiochene Cross Ring

All available in Gold & Silver
Due to the fluctuation in gold & silver
please call for daily pricing

Available only at

cappiellojewelers.com



The Order of Saint Sharbel
New Member

ANNUAL

EMILY BOOHAKER ISSA | *St. Elias Church | Birmingham, AL*

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

For more information about the Order ask your Pastor, visit
www.orderstsharbel.org or write to:

EPARCHY OF SAINT MARON | 109 Remsen Street | Brooklyn, NY 11201
or

EPARCHY OF OUR LADY OF LEBANON | 1021 South 10th Street | St. Louis, MO 63104

Saint Elias Maronite Cathedral in Aleppo: A Sign of Hope and Rebirth

by Macarios Jabbour and TMV Staff

Michael the Syrian, in his twelfth-century Chronicle, mentions that Maronites were in Aleppo, Syria, in the first half of the eighth century only to be later expelled.

Almost a millennium later, there was an immigration of Maronites to Aleppo, where they built a church dedicated to the Prophet Elias.

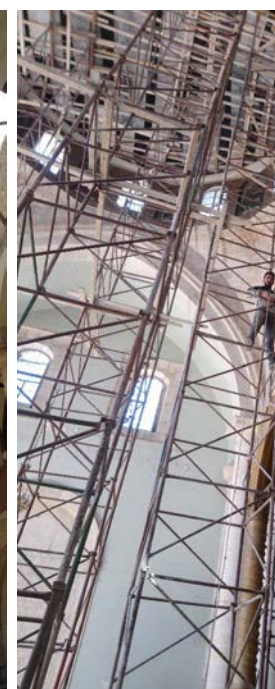
While Aleppo had a bishop, the names of the early ones are lost in history. Perhaps the best known of the Maronite bishops of Aleppo was Gabriel of Blaouzani, later elected patriarch of the Maronite Church in 1704. Germanos Farhat was the first bishop born in Aleppo and the first to reside permanently in the city. Today, the Maronite community of 4,000 has Archbishop Joseph Tobji as its shepherd.

Documents in the archives of the Cathedral, written in Syriac, Arabic, Turkish and Garshouni (Arabic written in Syriac characters) chronicle the challenges

and hardships faced by the Maronites of Aleppo for hundreds of years. The records mention a fire that broke out in the church in 1634. The city was under the control of the Ottoman Empire, with its central government, the “Sublime Porte” in Istanbul. The Ottomans controlled every detail of the life of the Christians. A 1669 document reveals that the Ottomans gave the Cathedral permission to open its back door, while in 1820, the Ottomans gave permission to “paint the walls of their church without enlargement or reduction.” (It is likely that such a permission required an official and unofficial “fee.”)

The Ottoman recognition of the Maronite Church as a millet allowed for the restoration of the ancient cathedral of Saint Elias. In 1849, Bishop Joseph Mattar began the construction of the present-day cathedral. (It was Bishop Mattar who established a Maronite Printing House, the first of its kind in Aleppo.)

The building project faced many challenges. Bishop Mattar negotiated the donation of a piece of land from





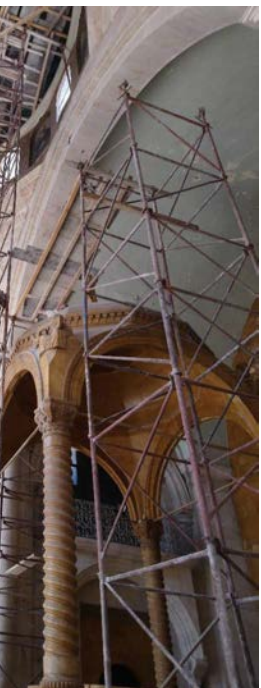
the Kobbah family and purchased another plot from Rosa Diab. In 1878, the roof was found to be unstable and in danger of collapse. The Cathedral suffered further structural damage from an earthquake in 1883. Bishop Paul Hakim began the completion of the Cathedral, only to be set back by a cholera epidemic. With the death of Bishop Hakim, work again halted.

In 1912, the Cathedral was still under construction. Disaster again struck on 9 August 1913, when a fire destroyed part of the Cathedral. The unstable wood dome was replaced with reinforced concrete. Later, two towers and a clock were installed. Finally, on 6 April 1924, Archbishop Michael Akhras dedicated the Cathedral.

The hardships of Saint Elias Cathedral were not over. In 2012, war broke out in Syria. The Maronite community had to abandon the Cathedral because it was in the battling forces' line of fire. In 2014, bombs destroyed the roof and other parts of the Cathedral. At that time, the

community worshipped in churches offered for their use by other Catholic communities. In 2016, despite the freezing cold and the dangerous rubble, the Maronite faithful gathered in Saint Elias Cathedral to celebrate Christmas. After restoring their homes so that the faithful could return, in 2018, plans for the restoration of the Cathedral began. With large support from the pontifical foundation "Aid to the Church in Need", Saint Elias Cathedral was restored. The community also benefited economically from the project because local professionals and laborers carried out the work.

Archbishop Tobji explains that the Christians find themselves facing great hardship, not even able to obtain medicine. "We do not know what will happen to our future, and so many are aiming for the Western dream — to escape from here and hunger." Despite all this, Saint Elias Cathedral stands as a sign of hope and rebirth. ■



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

2021



Our Lady of the Cedars | Fairlawn, Ohio

(L-R, front) Natalie Marie Rafka Nemr, Leila Ghorayeb, Kristen Risha, Sarah Mary Abu Elias (L-R, Back) Anthony Rami, Oliver John Sabbagh, Rami Joe Hamad; Teachers: Jessica Ghorayeb, Msgr. William Bonczewski, Deacon Tom Maroon, Claudine Sabbagh, Not Pictured: Maria Stewart, Subdeacon Paul Boulos



St. Joseph | Atlanta, Georgia

Top row, left to right: Deacon Bob Calabrese, Abouna Tony Akoury, Masami Uemoto (MCF teacher); Middle row, left to right: Eliseo Viljoen, Leo Najm, James Daho; Bottom row, left to right: Giuliano Viljoen, Kristy Ghazal, Fabiana Sayegh, Dominic Nicolas



Our Lady of the Cedars | Boston, Massachusetts

From Left to Right: Rosa Maria Saliba, Chantal Bou Haya, Tracy Harb, Agatha Tady Ibrahim, Marielle Lara Frem, Tony Zoommar



Heart of Jesus | Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Chorbishop Michael Thomas, Christina Bousemaan, and John-Paul Nesrallah



St. Sharbel | Clinton Township, Michigan



St. Maron | Detroit, Michigan

Jaiden Bashi, Anthony Geagea, and Kam Jude Geagea



On 1 May 2021, Chorbishop Alfred Badawi and Deacon Mike Magyar were pleased to celebrate the Divine Liturgy for 26 children to receive First Holy Communion.



St. Anthony | Danbury, Connecticut

Julia Al Hayek, Eva DiGilio, Layana Hage, Naya Hage, Skyann Kvale, Madelyn Madkour, Yazmine Mikhael, Daniel Quindazzi, Yara Radi, Arya Shaheen, Thiago Sous, Fr. Naji J. Kiwan, Pastor, Nancy Michael, Teacher



St. Ephrem | El Cajon, California

Sophia Arasimowicz, James Barker, Fenner Henry, Emma Kirchoff, Alan Kupiec, Filip Kupiec, Jakub Kursa, Nathaniel Luszcz, Victoria Luszcz, Kornel Miechowicz, Nadia Miechowicz, Marysia Milkowski, Alexander Moore, Sharbel Naber and Richard Toma, Pastor, Rev. Toufic Nasr, Teacher, Liliane Massery



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

2021



St. Anthony | Glen Allen, Virginia

Nolan Roberts, Eli Walton, Braxton McIvor, Bayne Sheriff, Sami Sakr, Caroline Ledin, Gabriella Fabiato, Amina Howard, Francine Maynes and Subdeacon Michael Maynes, teachers. Chorbishop John D. Farris is the pastor.



St. Sharbel | Portland, Oregon

Olivia Yvette Brigid Bekahi, Victoria Elizabeth Lucia Rask, and Fr. Christopher Fabre



Our Lady of the Cedars | Houston, Texas

Andrea Rafca Boutros, Loucie Merhi, William Rajji, Ellia Moufarrej, Sophie Selouan, Christelle Khoury, Aden Choufani, Mark Chehade, Noah Selouan, Matteo Abousawan, Edryan Amrieh, John Paul Yammine, Maryann Gareeb Jan, Jacob Abi Salloum, and Nicolette Nemry. Father Milad Yaghi, Father Edward Hanna, Susie Hage, Theresa Abdallah, and Rima Chehade.



St. Maron | Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Claudia Capaldi, George Dabbour, Christelle Matar, Elissa Saad, Mrs. Rosemarie Marrone, CCD Director and Fr. Andrawos Fadi El Tabchi



Our Lady of Lebanon | Lewisville, Texas

On the first Sunday of May, we honored the feast of Our Lady of Lebanon with a beautiful First Communion celebration for our 27 First Communicants. This year, despite COVID-19 not allowing us to have regular classes, we were able to have two separate classes; one online and one in person. Congratulations!



St. Maron | Jacksonville, Florida

Téa Touma, Maria Naddaf, Paulina Tawk, Jason Akl, Zoe Akl, Ella Farha, Elio Khoury, Joe Attieh, and Carol Farha, teacher.



Our Lady of Purgatory | New Bedford, Massachusetts

Edward Coury, Leilani Silveira, Helen Higgins, Saffron Hitchings.



St. Rafka | Livonia, Michigan

Jacob Jay Saad, Samir El Asmar, Paul Hallis, Robert Eggenberger, Charbel Matar, Yara Ayoub, Bella Alam, Alyssa Albarchini, Carla Kandah, Gabriella Jouraj, Jouliyana Gerges, and Rev. Dr. Rodrigue Constantin.



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

2021



Our Lady of Victory | Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Maya Romah, Cameron Tweardy, Savanna Capan, Selina Capan, Joseph Irani, Subdeacon Bahige Alchoufete, Fr. Samir Chebli (Pastor), Fr. Lou Vallone



St. Raymond | St. Louis, Missouri

Allise Paez, James Julia Rask, Claire Hurley, and Maryam Kamil



St. Ann | Watervliet, New York

Mia Evelyn Kassabian, Elizabeth Nancy Ryan



St. John Maron | Williamsville, New York

Steven Sebaali, Gianna Maalouf, Jude Sabha, Henri Houry, Clara Honeine, and Veronica Boctor



St. George | Uniontown, Pennsylvania

Kaiden Fabian, Jack Phillips, Hazel Warino, Eli Sisson, Sam Padula, Donna George, MCF Instructor, Subdeacon Mallard George, Fr. Aaron J. Sandbothe, Pastor, and Subdeacon Chuck Michael



St. Louis Gonzaga | Utica, New York

Gabriella Tanoury, Gianna Follano, Drew Vanderzell, Matthew Virkler, Sydney LoConti, Deacon Peter Hobaica, Fr. Boutros Al Hachem, and Deacon Paul Salamy. Not pictured: Darin and Mitch Mimassi



St. Joseph | Phoenix, Arizona

St. Joseph Church was blessed to welcome Bishop Elias Zaidan for the parish's celebration of First Holy Communion on 8 May 2021. During his homily, Bishop Elias shared memories with the children of his First Communion, 49 years ago. He reminded the children that Communion is the "greatest gift you can ever have because everything else in life comes from this."



St. Maron | Youngstown, Ohio

With a challenging year in the books, the 2021 First Communion students excelled. The 10 recipients started off the year in person, then went remote until the last few weeks of the year, when they came back in person. Fr. Tony Massad had some different expectations this year for our students and they met them with flying colors. Congratulations to these children who have received their last Mystery of Initiation!



National Apostolate of Maronites
 Official Lay Apostolate of
Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn
Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon

Dear Maronites:

Welcome to a new beginning where we can go outside, see our families, and breathe a breath of fresh air. Many are filled with hope again, trying to move on in health and faith. Life has gotten better for the most part and we can say Summer is here.

Now that most restrictions have been lifted, we can return to in-person Liturgies and praying with our church families. It is so refreshing both emotionally and spiritually. NAM has kept the faith and we are struggling to survive, and we will, God willing. Thank you for the wonderful support of our Spring Raffle, and we await the Scholarship results. We hope that you will participate in the continuing Vocations Contest, ending 31 August.

Unfortunately, **there will not be a NAM Convention in Philadelphia** this year as planned.


Next year we will be in **Minneapolis, MN**, 13-17 July 2022!

Rose Sahyoun
 NAM President
 Interim Executive Director

Chorbishop Seely Beggiani: Maronite Priest, Rector and Scholar

by Brandon Shulleeta

“The word of God cannot be contained in one culture.”

 lot has changed since Chorbishop Seely Beggiani was ordained a priest in 1961. Back then, anti-Catholicism was prevalent in the U.S.; the Second Vatican Council had not yet taken place (it would come a year later); and mass was in Latin.

However, in the Maronite Rite, one thing has remained true over his past 60 years as a priest, Beggiani said: For a Maronite parish to thrive, it has to be “the best church on the block.”

“It’s a challenge that Maronite clergy have to overcome in the U.S. — considering that Maronite churches are far outnumbered by Latin Rite churches. Nonetheless, it’s important to maintain the Maronite faith and its culture in the U.S.,” Beggiani said.

The richness of the Maronite tradition has been one of the major focuses for 86-year-old Beggiani, a man whose Catholic resume overflows — he was a pastor for 12 years, rector of the Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary in Washington for more than 40 years, a university teacher of Catholic theology for more than 50 years, and an author of several theological books. He retired from his role as rector in 2013.

He noted that the challenges are heavy burdens for Maronite priests as they try to develop strong parishes, while parishioners face the question: “Why should I drive an hour to go to Church on Sunday, when there’s a Latin church 10 minutes away?”

For some parishioners, they drive past Latin Rite churches to attend a Maronite church, partially because of the liturgy, he said.

“We’re more poetic,” he contended of Maronite priests. “We’re warmer in our language, in our descriptions. We’re more tied into the scriptures. We have a different worldview,” he said. “You always have to be the best priest on the block, and that’s a challenge. ... That’s why I admire all the Maronite priests that we have in the U.S., because they have to prove themselves.” The cause is worthwhile, he said.

“The word of God cannot be contained in one culture. It’s not hyperbole to say that more than one church is apostolic,” Beggiani said. “The Catholic Church ... is supposed to be multicultural, and if you just narrow the Catholic Church to one culture or just one Western view of things, then you’re limiting the mission of Christ on Earth.”

He noted that the Maronite traditions rooted in Middle Eastern culture date back to the early days following Christ’s death. He often asks lay people: “How do you think the Blessed Mother celebrated liturgy? She didn’t do it in Latin or Greek.”

He recalled once giving a talk in Washington, DC, at a Latin parish, when a man raised his hand afterward and said: “You know, Father, that’s a beautiful talk you gave, and I really have a high regard for your rite. But we’re here in the United States, and being Catholics, we don’t want to confuse people. Wouldn’t it make sense for all of us to practice the same liturgy?”

“And I said: ‘You’re absolutely right. We should all be Maronite,’” he laughed.

While being a Maronite priest carries its challenges, it’s also rewarding, he said, contending that Maronite

parishes often carry a family-like bond, and the parishioners tend to treat priests like family members.

He said he's also encouraged to see some parishes in which a large portion of the parishioners aren't Middle Eastern and don't originally come from Maronite backgrounds. In many of those cases, he said parishioners are attracted to the community and the liturgy.

For Beggiani, he began considering priesthood in his youth. His great-uncle was a priest and was held in high regard by his parents. His great-uncle even helped his family migrate from Lebanon and settle in Youngstown, Ohio.

"I kept coming to the idea that I wanted my life to make a difference," he said, adding that as a priest, "your whole life is trying to make a difference."

Beggiani became the pastor of Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church in Washington, DC, in 1967. Just one year into becoming pastor, he was appointed rector of the seminary. The two roles overlapped through 1979, until he was asked to focus on the heavy responsibility of rector; he was also a professor of Catholic theology at The Catholic University of America for more than 40 years.

As rector of the seminary, he ultimately held the responsibility of deciding which of the seminarians whom he led to recommend to the bishop for ordination as priests. He estimated that he recommended more than 80 priests for ordination over the years and guided others away from the priesthood; though he said most of those seminarians were good people but not necessarily well-suited for the priesthood.

"What makes a good priest is being completely available to his people; his parishioners have the highest priority," he said. That means visiting the elderly and ill, going out of the way to be available to parishioners, and also going above and beyond to give a good homily. For him personally, part of the approach was sometimes being self-deprecating at times to make himself relatable; he made a point to preach with passion. However, even those priests who aren't particularly elegant can

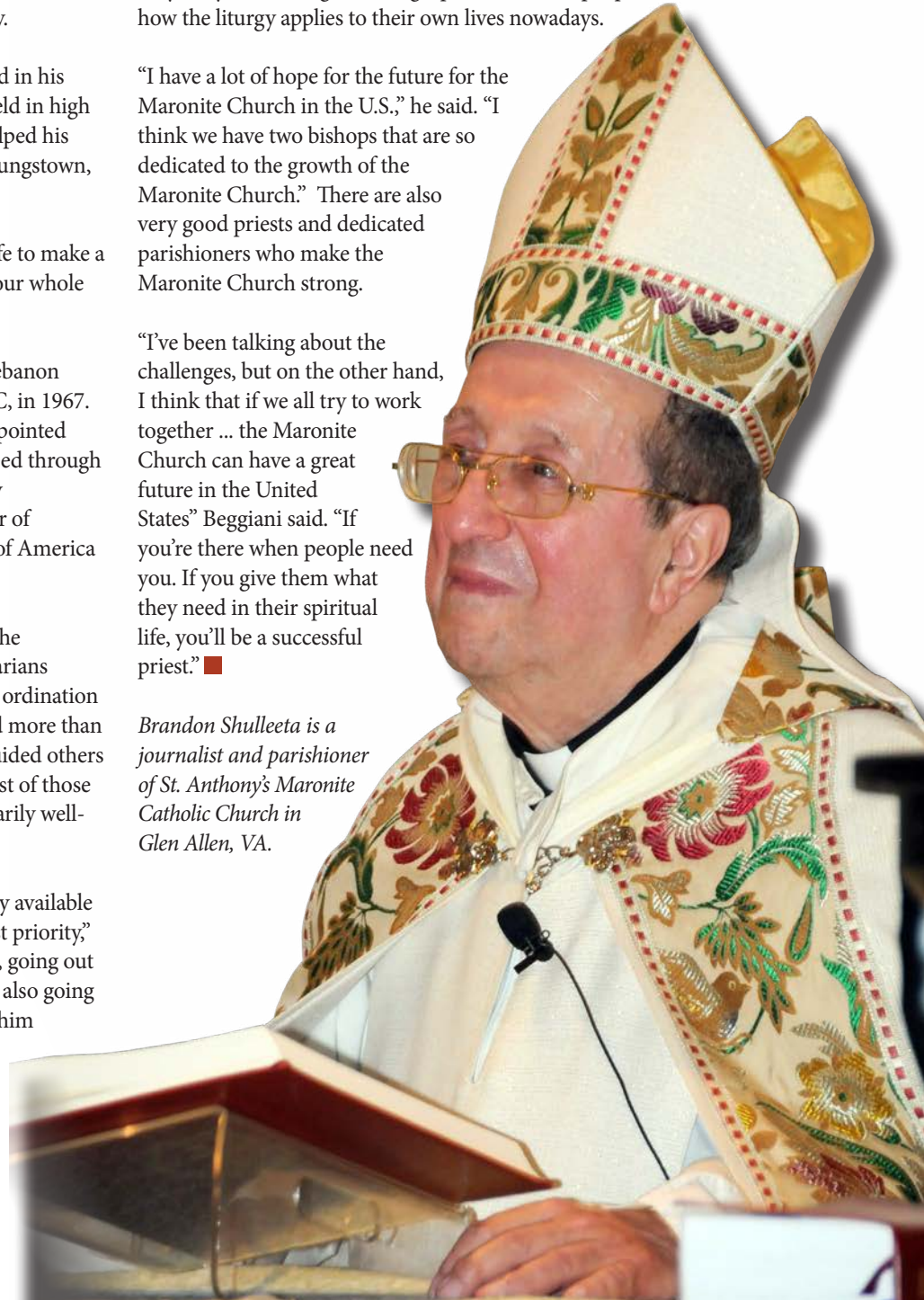
give good homilies, he argued, including by being very well-prepared and understanding scripture.

"The whole idea is to give them something to walk away with," he said, adding the weak homilies rely on cliches that parishioners can predict, while stronger homilies not only relay the messages of the gospel but also tell people how the liturgy applies to their own lives nowadays.


"I have a lot of hope for the future for the Maronite Church in the U.S.," he said. "I think we have two bishops that are so dedicated to the growth of the Maronite Church." There are also very good priests and dedicated parishioners who make the Maronite Church strong.

"I've been talking about the challenges, but on the other hand, I think that if we all try to work together ... the Maronite Church can have a great future in the United States" Beggiani said. "If you're there when people need you. If you give them what they need in their spiritual life, you'll be a successful priest." ■

Brandon Shulleeta is a journalist and parishioner of St. Anthony's Maronite Catholic Church in Glen Allen, VA.



The Order of Saint Sharbel: A Mission for Maronite Seminarians and Priests *by Anna Salloum*

 A visible sign of the Holy Spirit is fire, perhaps a tiny spark that turns into an ever so powerful wildfire. The story of the Order of Saint Sharbel started with such a spark.

In the early 1960s, there was no Maronite Bishop in the United States. The Maronite parishes (and faithful lacking a parish) were under the jurisdiction of the Latin diocese. In 1966, Bishop Francis M. Zayek, a native of Cuba with a Lebanese background serving as auxiliary bishop in Brazil, was appointed by Pope Paul VI to be the first Maronite bishop in the United States.

At the time, there were 26 parishes, independent, isolated and under the authority of the local Latin bishops. Bishop Zayek knew that it was going to be difficult to create a bond among these parishes.

His second challenge was to support Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary in Washington, D.C., founded in 1961. The first days of the new bishop capsulized the challenge: The gala banquet on the occasion of the

installation of the new bishop earned a net profit of \$2,000. At the end of the celebration, the rector of the Seminary told Bishop Zayek that the Seminary was in debt—by \$2,000.

It was a struggle that was worth it. Many of the priests who collaborated with the Bishop in the establishment and organization of the new Maronite community received their formation at the vibrant Seminary under the direction of Father (later Chorbishop) Beggiani.

And then, in 1982, Bishop Zayek met Monsour “Monnie” Ferris, a native of Fall River, MA, and a parishioner of Saint Anthony of the Desert. Monnie and his family were active in the parish and even had a priest in the family, Father Norman Ferris. Bishop Zayek mentioned in passing the challenge of supporting the Seminary. Monnie, the owner of the Venus de Milo Restaurant, one of the largest banquet halls in the country, commented that he was never aware—but that he was going to organize something to support the Seminary and our retired priests.

The spark had alighted. Monnie was inspired to gather a committed group of people who were interested in the future of the Maronite Church in this country. Monnie had a vision: he saw the need to form American-born Maronite priests. The Order of Saint Sharbel was founded 1984. Monsignor George J. Webby was the first spiritual director.

The first goal was to enroll as many like-minded people as possible, with an annual contribution of \$500. For those who had a bit more money, a lifetime membership became available for \$5,000. This group of people would be the Bishop’s support group for the Seminary. Even today, the perpetual money goes to a permanent fund, whose earnings support the seminarians.

People liked the idea and stepped forward. Monnie recruited everyone he knew—he even managed to sign on Harrah’s Casino as a founding member. There were supporters who even signed up all their family members for perpetual memberships: children and



grandchildren and even future grandchildren in their wills. Medals have been worn with pride showing support for the Order. Today, the Order has 257 permanent members and 499 annual members, all who are committed to the support of the education of future priests.

The order of St. Sharbel works as a sister organization of the National Apostolate of Maronites (NAM). NAM is focused on the lay apostolate while the Order concentrates on the support of seminarians and retired priests who served our Church for a long time and deserve a dignified retirement.

Over the years, many members have joined. Many priests belong to the order of St. Sharbel. They believe in the cause and support of the seminarians. They understand how

much the Bishop paid to educate the seminarians. Laypeople continue to promote vocations and support priests through the Order.

The NAM Convention is where the Order's annual meeting takes place. Members of the Order serve as the honor guard for the Bishop at the Divine Liturgy. Each eparchy has a VP nominated by the Bishop, and the Order's Steering Committee manages the annual meeting and takes care of events throughout the year. Every October, when the poster showcasing our Maronite Seminarians

is displayed, you can connect faces to your support of the Order.

Saint Sharbel, bless the generous people of the Order that bears your name.

For more info, please visit: <https://www.orderstsharbel.org/>

A big thanks to Rosanne Solomon, supporter of the Order of St. Sharbel, who participated greatly in providing history of the Order. ■

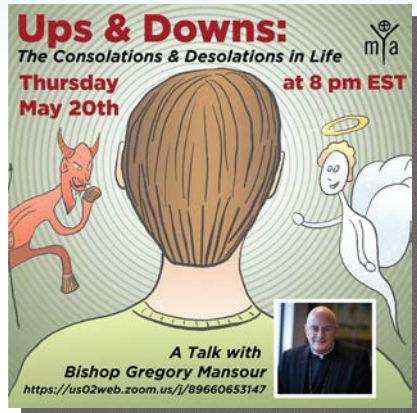
Anna Salloum is a parishioner of Our Lady of Lebanon in Miami, Florida.

Keeping Up with the National MYA



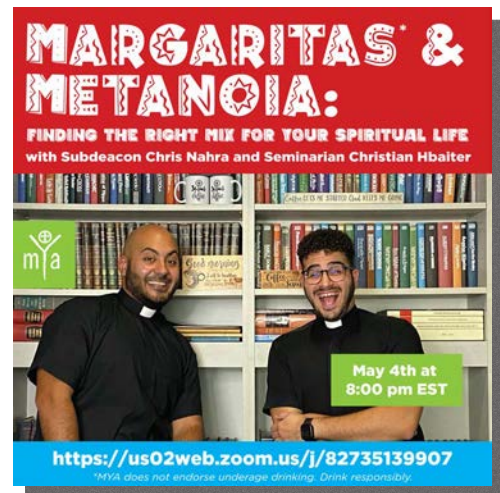
MYA Virtual Talk with Bishop Gregory

Bishop Gregory gave a fruitful discussion about consolations and desolations in life with the Maronite Young Adults in May. He shared on consolations: any uplifting movements within, such as an increase in joy, peace, hope, faith and love that helps one to feel God's presence and closeness. Whereas desolations can be feelings of discouragement, sadness, restlessness, sloth or temptations pulling one away from God. In the discussion, the group also discussed how meaningful it can be to offer up one's suffering and sadness as a form of prayer, and a way to grow in deeper trust and communion with God.



Margaritas and Metanoia

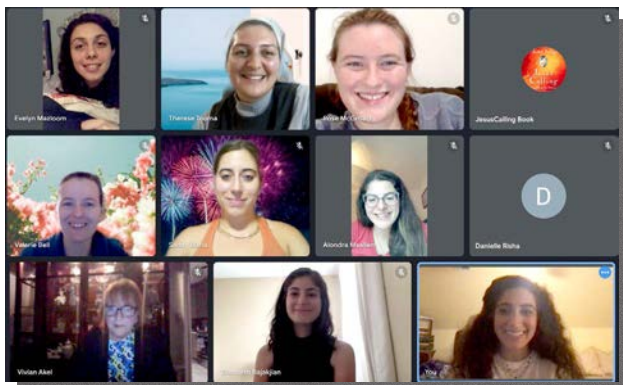
Maronite Seminarians Subdeacon Chris Nahra and Christian Hbaiter hosted a virtual talk titled "Margaritas and Metanoia" and discussed the importance of harmonizing all the aspects of our lives. Specifically, they emphasized the significance of integrating our faith in all areas and having a healthy balance when it comes to work, prayer, and our social and spiritual lives so that we can be deeply fulfilled.



"Gals for God"

"The World does not need what women have but what women are." — Saint Teresa Benedicta

Some of the National MYA Board members, along with the guidance of Sr. Therese Maria, have begun a small series of Zoom meetings for young adult ladies called "Gals for God" to discuss the Feminine Genius. This phrase "Feminine Genius" was coined by Pope Saint John Paul II to describe the special capabilities of women and they include: generosity, receptivity, sensitivity, and maternity. Our first meeting in May focused on the capacity of women to live out generosity and make a genuine and total gift of oneself in service to others. Many of the women who participated shared personal stories of how they have experienced generosity in their own lives. It was a very inspiring discussion as we delved deeper into the special ways that women make a positive difference in our world today.



Consecration to Saint Joseph

Throughout April and May, the National MYA hosted a Consecration to Saint Joseph with young adults joining from all over the country. What a blessing it was to come together to learn more about our spiritual father, Saint Joseph, and engage in stimulating discussion. Saint Joseph the Worker, pray for us and all our young adults! ■



Maronite Youth Share their Plans for a Recreational Summer

We asked five of our Maronite youth from across the country to share how they will be spending their summer to help them to rejuvenate spiritually, physically, and emotionally. Here are their awesome responses:

Sharbella Jacobs *from* ST. SHARBEL CHURCH, SOMERSET, NJ

This summer, I am looking forward to embracing a quieter headspace from the busyness of high school life—a much better environment for finding God. Taking the time to bond with those I love—my friends and family—is an essential part of recreating myself, allowing me to let go of the daily struggle of life and live in the moment. It also encourages my well-being, and allows me to take a step back and embrace the world God created for us. I can recenter myself by watching the sunset, or find relief in taking a walk outside with a friend. In addition to replenishing my emotional and spiritual self, my physical person definitely needs some rest, and I'm talking about the basics: sleep! The summer holds valuable opportunity for us all to restore ourselves inside and out—truly a gift from God!



Kierstin Salinas *from* ST. GEORGE CHURCH, SAN ANTONIO, TX:

This summer, I plan to spend lots of time outdoors with nature. Spending time outdoors is one of my favorite ways to relax and pray. It is also good for my physical health as well as my spiritual health. In my experience, being in nature has always allowed me to connect with God's beautiful earth. My goal for this summer is to spend more time outdoors reflecting on all my blessings as well as journaling my prayers and intentions. By doing this, I hope to become stronger in my faith as well as stronger spiritually.



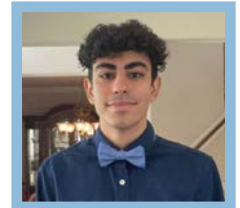
Andro Alkhwande *from* ST. ANTHONY OF THE DESERT CHURCH, FALL RIVER, MA

This summer, I am going to study Scripture! I remember reading somewhere while I was on a retreat with the Maronite Monks of Adoration in Petersham, MA, that if we can memorize some scripture verses for when we feel anxious or depressed we will feel God's loving mercy. Another thing I will be doing is trying to go to Adoration on Thursdays until midnight. Thanks to Msgr. Jim Root, he has the church open on Thursdays for Adoration. I want to spend as much time as I can with our Lord to really understand what he wants from me, and attend daily the best prayer of all—the Divine Liturgy. I will ask less from Him and give our Lord more thanks for keeping me alive through these hard times.



Paul Moubarak *from* OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS, HOUSTON, TX

Now that the pandemic is beginning to die down, I can enjoy summer to the fullest and be recreated spiritually, emotionally and physically. One way that I'm going to achieve this goal is by staying active: swimming, playing basketball, and hiking in the mountains of Lebanon. In order to rebound spiritually, I will start going back to church on a regular basis and apply the teachings I read and lessons I learn in the Bible to everyday life. Also, I will help the people in need through volunteering and build and strengthen my relationships with my friends, family, and God.



Michael Urban *from* ST. TERESA MISSION, CONWAY, PA

Over the course of this summer, I will have the time I need to relax and recharge before senior year. With the hecticness of student life finally coming to a close, I will be focusing on having more authentic and meaningful moments of prayer and contemplation with Our Lord, such as attending frequent Adoration. Spending time outside in God's creation is such a peaceful way to recenter my life on deep spirituality and faith. Just being with my friends almost every day for a run allows me to detach for a few hours. Spending more time with my family or just sitting down to read a good book will help me be recreated. God gives each of us the time we need to grow closer to Him, and this summer break will allow me the opportunity to enjoy the wonderful life God has given me.



Rita Yammine *from* ST. SHARBEL CHURCH, CLINTON TOWNSHIP, MI:

As the robust milieu of the school year winds down, activities that strengthen the mind, body, and soul are at the top of my summer plans. Besides keeping up with MYO events, such as the Maronite Youth Days, I have always enjoyed expressing my emotions through poetry and music. During the summer, my recreation physically stems from prayer and spending time in nature, such as walking, biking, and swimming with my sister. Additionally, physical recreation for me comes from participation in the life of the church. Finally, I have wrapped up my 8th grade year, so high school is the next thing in store for my education. This is a big step, and I plan to recreate myself emotionally over the summer by simply believing. Just believing in the person I can become through God's grace. Therefore, this summer, I plan to reinforce my positive perspective believing that all struggles, when overcome through the Lord, can lead to my path to holiness. ■



Parish News

ST. ANTHONY CHURCH | LAWRENCE, MA

MYA Scavenger Hunt

St. Anthony Church's MYA met on Thursday, 17 June for a Biblical Scavenger Hunt. Four teams of four began at St. Basil's Seminary, searching for clergy members who had riddles and questions for the teams to answer. After correctly performing each activity, the teams received a Bible book, chapter, and/or verse number. The final activity was finding which two verses in the Book of Joel and the Acts of the Apostles were identical to each other. After our first and second place teams completed the scavenger hunt and the final activity, we all came together to enjoy a dinner together! ■



DETROIT, MICHIGAN

Saint Maron Church

In lockstep with the return to normal from COVID-19, St. Maron Church in Detroit had an active month of May to kickoff Spring and Summer. The parish continues to thrive and Liturgy attendance has returned to pre-COVID rates. Our pastor, Fr. Roby Zibara, expects nothing less as he fosters spirituality and belonging among the parishioners. Likewise, the parishioners express their appreciation by joining in numbers.

First and foremost, we honored the Mother of God throughout the whole month, which is indeed dedicated to her. Parishioners gathered twice per week to pray the Rosary in front of a display they built to venerate and honor the Virgin Mother.



The month was capped with an outdoor procession circling the church property on 30 May. Not only was the outdoor procession a beautiful way for us to express our love for the Mother of God, but it was also

a public profession of our Catholic faith. People entering and exiting the adjacent Chrysler-Jeep assembly plant took notice and paused for a moment. We are hopeful our practice and witness made a positive impact on their day. More so, we are confident our prayers make a positive impact on everyone's lives.

On Mother's Day, 9 May, we recognized the ladies that raised us. In cute fashion, we asked all the mothers to wear their "Sunday's best" hat. This was a new concept for St. Maron Church and it was quite popular with all of the ladies. It was especially heartfelt to see our parish display motherhood spanning generations, with mothers standing next to their own mothers. At both of the Mother's Day Liturgies, we prayed for all of the mothers of our parish family, so that the Lord may keep them all in good health and enlighten their minds so that they will bring forth and raise a new generation that preserves our Catholic faith and values. ■



UNIONTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

Parish Events

by Dr. Mabel George Howard

On 25 April 2021, St. George Church celebrated its Patronal Feast of St. George accompanying many other festive occasions. That weekend, the First Communion class received their First Communion, a Baptism was performed, a number of Chrismations were celebrated for those who hadn't received the Mystery before, and the parish community gathered together under the church portico between the Sunday liturgies for bagels and mimosas in honor of the feast day.

On 16 May 2021, the Ladies Guild members of St. George Church in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, celebrated their annual Memorial Liturgy honoring the deceased members of the Guild. The Ladies Guild has continued this beautiful tradition for many years so that the spiritual, cultural, and financial contributions of their loved ones are remembered for countless generations. The ladies began the memorial



celebration with display boards listing the names and dates of the deceased members. The rosary and litanies were recited followed by attending the Liturgy together. Flowers were distributed to place at individual gravesites or to adorn the commemorative engraved bricks of the deceased Guild members in the St. Rafka

Grotto on the church grounds. This event was a wonderful opportunity for quiet prayer and reflection. The Memorial Service pays tribute and appreciation to the legacy of many special women who not only served God and their church but have touched our hearts forever.



During the Pentecost weekend of 22-23 May 2021, Bishop Gregory made a pastoral visit to Our Lady of Victory Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Among his several activities, a highlight of Bishop Gregory's visit was the time he devoted to meeting with the youth and young adults (MYO & MYA) of St. George and Our Lady of Victory Churches. The MYO and MYA members of Our Lady of Victory invited the youth members from St. George Church in Uniontown to participate in a spiritual session with Bishop Gregory. The MYO and MYA groups attended the Saturday liturgy together concelebrated by Bishop Gregory, Fr. Samir Chebli and other clergy. Following the liturgy, Bishop Gregory led the youth groups in a Q&A styled thought-provoking discussion on various perceptions of "Heaven." The Bishop encouraged them to reflect upon their personal experiences and life goals. They considered life's challenges, struggles, consolations, desolations, sadness, joy, comfort, support, compassion, solitude, encouragement, and an array of other emotions. Bishop Gregory emphasized the importance of making healthy decisions and sound spiritual choices which will help lead each person to his/her "Special Heaven." ■

LIVONIA, MICHIGAN

Pastoral Visit

by Madlein Kobrossi

It was with great pleasure that St. Rafka Church in Livonia, Michigan, welcomed our shepherd, Bishop Elias Zaidan, at the occasion of Saint Rafka's feast day. On Saturday, 20 March, Bishop Elias, along with our pastor, Fr. Rodrigue Constantin, met with our Parish and Finance Council members. During a dinner reception, Bishop Elias held an open forum that was attended by the following clergy from neighboring parishes: Chorbishop Alfred Badawi, Fr. Pierre Bassil, Fr. Roby Zibara, Fr. Hanna Tayyar, Fr. Joseph Khalil, Fr. Nabil



Habchi, Deacon Michael Magyar, and Deacon Joseph Pavlovich. After a very difficult year for all, Bishop Elias gave us words of encouragement and blessings. He informed us of the vision and direction

of our Maronite Church here and in our homelands. He reminded us of the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ to work together for His Bride, our Holy Church, and assured us of his continued prayers. On the following day, Sunday 21 March, Bishop Elias celebrated the Divine Liturgy, assisted by our pastor, Fr. Rodrigue, and Fr. Hanna Tayyar, O.M.M. Bishop Elias' visit to us in the midst of the pandemic is a blessing, and we look forward to the day when he returns to celebrate again with our amazing annual St. Rafka banquet, which we had to cancel because of the pandemic. May God's blessings be bestowed upon all your parishes and families through the intercession of Saint Rafka! ■

Parish News

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

Heart of Jesus Church Celebrates Patronal Feast

by Anna Salloum

On Friday, 11 June, Fort Lauderdale's Heart of Jesus Maronite Church celebrated its patronal Feast of the Sacred Heart with a procession with the Blessed Sacrament, followed by a Solemn Divine Liturgy, and a Lebanese luncheon. Johnnette Williams, founder and host of ETWN's Women of Grace, was the guest speaker at the luncheon.



When asked if Johnnette had a message for the Maronite community, she replied, "It is so wonderful that within our great Church we have opportunities to express our love to Him, our devotion to Him, and to participate in the Liturgy in such varieties of ways, and it's always a joy for me to attend Liturgy here at Heart of Jesus Catholic Church and to be with my brothers and sisters in the Maronite Tradition."

Johnnette's talk was titled "Journeying Into Love: The Hearts of Jesus and Mary." Most of those in attendance were EWTN radio listeners and this was their first time attending a Divine Liturgy in the Maronite Church. It was a sold-out event and attended by young and old alike. Even visiting priests from neighboring parishes took notes which were later used during their homilies, because the words spoken that afternoon truly emanated a light that can only come from his most Sacred Heart. "We should have an insatiable appetite for the things of God," Johnnette exclaimed. She further explained that it is a movement of grace within us and shows a receptivity of heart that the Lord wants to fill. She also gave everyone an image of what it was like to sit before the Blessed Sacrament. "You are looking at the body, blood, soul and divinity in its totality."

Johnnette was joined by her husband, Jack, and her daughter, Thea, who is a parishioner at Heart of Jesus with her husband, Micah and their seven children.

To hear Johnnette on Women of Grace, tune in to EWTN Radio through the EWTN App, YouTube, or Facebook, Monday through Friday at 11 am EST. ■

CONWAY, PENNSYLVANIA

St. Teresa of Calcutta

On Tuesday, 27 April 2021, Fr. Antoine Kairouz and the community of St. Teresa of Calcutta Church in Conway, PA, welcomed priests and other clergy from Southwest Pennsylvania and Ohio for a continuation of a series of monthly gatherings. The Maronite clergy and visiting priests from the Diocese of Pittsburgh gathered for a hearty spread of Lebanese food followed by Midday Prayer in the church.



CLINTON TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

Mother's Day

by Khouloud Maroun-Yammine

On Sunday, 9 May 2021, the pastor of St. Sharbel Church, Clinton Township, Michigan, Chorbishop Alfred Badawi, assisted by Deacon Michael Magyar, celebrated the Divine Liturgy, with intentions being offered for living and deceased mothers. Additionally, after the homily, all mothers and mothers-to-be, were invited to approach the sanctuary and were given blessed icons of the Divine Mercy. All who attended in-person and via live-stream were overjoyed by this wonderful presentation for the mothers in the community. May the Mother of God watch over all our mothers! ■



MYO Bonfire

by Rita Yammine

On Saturday, 15 May, the MYO of St. Sharbel Church, Clinton Township, MI, gathered for a socially-distanced bonfire! Much joy and excitement were experienced by all in attendance. The MYO had not come together in-person since last summer, so it was a great delight to see the faces of youth not seen in over a year! Due to COVID-19, two bonfires were made to encourage social distancing, but both were wonderful and warmed all MYO members. Different activities, such as soccer, also entertained and prevented much phone usage. The night's final hour was filled with pre-packaged smores, considered by all to be a fantastic way to close the night. All youth, from ages 12-18, had a terrific time. It was truly a night to remember! ■



PHOENIX, ARIZONA

St. Joseph Church

On Sunday 8 May 2021, Bishop A. Elias Zaidan visited St. Joseph Church in Phoenix, AZ. On this Sunday, the parish honored the Mother of God and all our earthly mothers by celebrating a special Mother's Day Liturgy at both of the Sunday Divine Liturgies. He also celebrated First Holy Communion with the parish. Between liturgies, Bishop Elias visited each Catechism Class and spent time talking and getting to know the students and their teachers. Father Wissam Akiki, his family, and all of St Joseph's parishioners were honored and grateful to have Bishop Elias visit the parish after almost a two-year absence due to COVID. ■

Parish News

HOUSTON, TEXAS

Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

by Eliana Abou-Jaoude

On Holy Week, Our Lady of the Cedars opened her door for full capacity welcoming back her faithful parishioners. We thank Fr. Milad Yaghi and Fr. Edward Hanna who, given the prevalence of Church closures, have exhausted all efforts to prevent negative pastoral consequences. Despite the different and restricted gatherings, and the availability of online options, OLC parishioners attended, in person, the Divine Liturgies during the Holy Week. To the priests' joy, all pews were occupied. People were reunited under one Spirit, the Holy Spirit, to hear the Word of God taught by our beloved priests, and to resonate with our Risen Lord and with each other. Fr. Edward delivered an inspirational series of homilies entitled *Wake the world up: to commitment, to healing, to service, and to love*.

The Lord gave us the occasion of a few joyful events: during Saturday Easter Vigil Mass, Alex Bou Kheir, received the Sacraments of Initiation after a lengthy year of studying the Maronite Catholic Faith. We pray that he will develop a deeper understanding of his calling to Christ and His Church. We congratulate remarkable couples, Aline and Dib Dib, Nisrine and Fadi Droubi, Tera and Nabil Ghossoub, and Joumana and Pierre Merhi on being awarded the Silver Massabki Award. We greatly appreciate their generosity and service to OLC. OLC proudly acknowledged both Judy Eid, active member of the MYA organization and recipient of 2019 Faith of the Mountain award, and George (Gio) Elmessan, Houston MYA president, recipient of the 2020 award, for their effort, dedication, and good work.

The days of love and joy are upon our Church with the graces of the Resurrected Lord Who enables us to witness to Him and profess our faith as one Body under one Spirit. ■

Awards

by Marcella Georges

In mid-January, almost a year after we originally planned, two of our parish couples, Aline and Dib Dib, along with Nisrine and Fadi Droubi, were recognized for their dedication and involvement in the parish by being awarded the Silver Massabki Medal. These couples have the remarkable ability to take on any task asked of them. Their timeless acts of kindness go beyond participation in the church's regular activities.



Aline and Dib have recently taken the reins of the Family Retreat, and are credited with pioneering the *Remember Me in Your Kingdom* Liturgies which are held on the first Tuesday of every month. Aline is active with our CCE and Arabic programs, constantly volunteering to help with the MYO activities and she never shies away from any volunteer work we may have. Dib is an active member of the Knights of the Cedars and, without hesitation, always lends a hand in the kitchen and at events.

Nisrine can be found volunteering for, and can be credited with, being a staunch supporter of the formation of the MYKids program. Fadi is also no stranger to our parishioners. He is always ready to roll up his sleeves and take charge in preparing our amazing shawarma for our events and lending his restaurateur expertise and leadership skills behind the scenes anytime we have any events at church.

Another notable award recipient is Judy Eid. She is the 2019 recipient of the "Faith of the Mountain Award". Judy served the MYA in a special way with her creative ideas, productive presence, and beautiful smile. She remained an active and completely dedicated member of the MYA Organization until moving from Houston to complete her studies as a Physicians Assistant. She was also recognized on 31 January for her exemplary youth leadership for the contribution of her time and talent within our parish and the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon.

Congratulations to all of the award recipients. They are well deserved! ■



DARTMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS

“Heart to Heart” with Saint Joseph

by Sr. Therese Maria, MSCL



The Maronite Servants of Christ the Light from Dartmouth, Massachusetts, held monthly virtual “Heart to Heart” gatherings with women (ages 35+) that focused on the Year of St. Joseph. The five sessions concluded in June with a consecration to St. Joseph (see prayer below). The goal of these sessions was to learn more about Saint Joseph, to grow in devotion to him, and to consecrate and entrust our lives to him. Women from several of the Maronite parishes in the Eparchies participated in the “Heart to Heart” program. With the guidance of the Maronite Servants, the women were able to pray together, make new friends, share their hearts and strengthen each other in solidarity (especially during the pandemic). This was a time to follow Saint Joseph’s example of patience, obedience, silence, and trust. Fr. Donald Collaway’s book “Consecration to Saint Joseph” was our guide and resource. The participants in this religious program gained a spiritual father and a deeper relationship with St. Joseph!

The Consecration Prayer to St. Joseph:

O Glorious Patriarch and Patron of the Church! O Virgin Spouse of the Virgin Mother of God! O Guardian and Virginal Father of the Word Incarnate! In the presence of Jesus and Mary, I choose you this day to be my father, my guardian, and my protector. O great St. Joseph, whom God has made the Head of the Holy Family, accept me, I beseech you, though utterly unworthy, to be a member of your “Holy House.” Present me to your Immaculate Spouse; ask her also to adopt me as her child. With her, pray that I may constantly think of Jesus, and serve him faithfully to the end of my life.

O Terror of Demons, increase in me virtue, protect me from the evil one, and help me not to offend God in any way. O my Spiritual Father, I hereby consecrate myself to you. In faithful imitation of Jesus and Mary, I place myself and all my concerns under your care and protection. To you, after Jesus and Mary, I consecrate my body and soul, with all their faculties, my spiritual growth, my home, and all my affairs and undertakings. Forsake me not, but adopt me as a servant and child of the Holy Family. Watch over me at all times, but especially at the hour of my death. Console and strengthen me with the presence of Jesus and Mary so that, with you, I may praise and adore the Holy Trinity for all eternity. Amen. ■

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Pastoral Visit

by Dr. Mabel George Howard

Fr. Samir Chebli and the parishioners of Our Lady of Victory Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, welcomed His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour on his pastoral visit during the Feast of Pentecost on 22-23 May 2021. Throughout his visit, Bishop Gregory concelebrated the liturgies with Fr. Samir Chebli (Pastor), Chorbishop Michael Kail, Fr. Lou Vallone (Diocese of Pittsburgh), Fr. Tony Gargotta (Diocese of Pittsburgh), and Subdeacon Bahige Choufete. Bishop Gregory met with the clergy and several church representatives to discuss parish events, activities, and projects in progress. Bishop Gregory was very pleased with the property closing of the former OLOV church campus, and he was equally impressed with the opening of the church in its new Pittsburgh location and with the parish house renovations. Bishop Gregory, Fr. Samir, and parishioners discussed future plans for their church organizations. Their objectives are to reinstate the Pastoral Council, organize the Finance Committee, reorganize the MYO and MYA groups, and reestablish the St. Rafka Women’s Organization and the St. Sharbel Men’s fellowship. The faithful of Our Lady of Victory were very happy to share in the joy and blessings of Bishop Gregory’s visit. ■



Parish News

OLEAN, NEW YORK

Through the Heart of Saint Joseph

On Saturday, 29 May, St. Joseph Church in Olean, New York, hosted a one-day spiritual retreat focused on Saint Joseph. Our retreat master was Fr. Boniface Hicks, OSB, a Benedictine Monk, who is also bi-ritual with faculties to celebrate the Maronite Liturgy.

On 8 December 2020, Pope Francis officially called this year to be the “Year of Saint Joseph”. As such, Saint Joseph Church decided to do something to focus on our patron saint. It just so happened that Fr. Boniface Hicks, OSB, had written a book on Saint Joseph, entitled *Through the Heart of Saint Joseph* and it was released on 19 March 2021 (Feast of Saint Joseph). It seemed our “Star”, Saint Joseph, was guiding us in putting this retreat together.



Fr. Boniface graciously agreed to come visit us on Memorial Day Weekend, give us a one-day spiritual retreat on Saint Joseph, as well as celebrate the Divine Liturgies.

We began the retreat program with some hymns and prayers to Saint Joseph, including chanting the Litany of Saint Joseph, the Ziyah (Procession) and Blessing with the Icon of Saint Joseph. Following the first talk, we had an hour of Eucharistic Adoration, in which we sat in silence adoring the Mystery of the Incarnation, in imitation of Saint Joseph, who did so daily before Our Lord Jesus Christ. After a lunch break, we had a second talk, book signing and concluded with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, commemorating the “Revelation to Saint Joseph”.

During his talks, Fr. Boniface chose a few of the themes from his book, such as Saint Joseph as: Protector, Model of Obedience, “Veil of the Mystery”, Model of the Interior Life, Master of Dreams, “A New Abraham”, and the “Joseph Option”. Through these examples, Fr. Boniface not only “revealed” Saint Joseph as an example for us in our spiritual life, but how Saint Joseph is our protector, spiritual foster father, and guide. To put it simply, Saint Joseph is walking with us daily on this spiritual journey.

Fr. Boniface was only able to scratch the surface of these themes in his talks, but his book allows the reader to dive deeper into them and meditate on them. *Through the Heart of Saint Joseph* is not a history book, but like Saint Joseph himself, it is a spiritual guide.

Fr. Boniface’s book, *Through the Heart of Saint Joseph* is available at: <https://stpaulcenter.com/product/through-the-heart-of-st-joseph/>. ■

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

Kindness Rock Painting

by Nikki Casaceli

St. Stephen Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, held a “Kindness Rock Painting Tutorial” on 7 March 2021. Twenty-five parishioners enjoyed a virtual rock painting tutorial led by Nikki Casaceli. “Kindness Rocks” are part of the *Random Acts of Kindness* trend, and anyone may participate in the project. The participants paint rocks with inspirational images, messages, or sayings that are uplifting. The rocks are then distributed in public places for strangers to find. The intention of this activity is to spread kindness, hope, and love around the world. The “Kindness Rock” tutorial featured a colorful sunset with a three-cross silhouette. This



is a beautiful reminder of the true reason for the Easter season. Everyone had fun extending this kind gesture to the community. Church members are planning to conduct another “Kindness Rock Painting Tutorial” at their church picnic.

Mother’s Day Celebration

St. Stephen Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, celebrated a Mother’s Day liturgy to show the appreciation and importance of a mother’s role in the family and in society. While displaying the Icon of the Mother of God, Father Rudy Wakim gave a final blessing to the parishioners. The mothers attending liturgy were honored with a bouquet of flowers and a prayer card. ■



PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Janie's Joy Foundation

In 2016, a woman by the name of Janie Robertson entered the hearts of the community of St. Maron Church in Philadelphia, PA. She was not an ordinary parishioner, but one who made the community stop and see the face of God. Janie was a homeless woman who roamed the streets of South Philly. She suffered from mental illness, which caused people to keep their distance. Janie became a friend and a shining example to all at St. Maron Church. The community embraced her, helped her, and the youth groups held bake sales so that they could purchase food and gift cards for her throughout the year. Janie was always remembered at Christmas time with a thoughtful gift that made her feel loved and special.



Janie Robertson



Christina Kouyoumdji

Janie passed away 8 January 2020, on the steps of St. Rita Basilica in Philadelphia. Some people attended her funeral, including parishioners from St. Maron. It was there that Christina Kouyoumdji's heart was moved even more than before. Janie held several degrees including a Master's Degree from Villanova University in Philosophy. She taught at local colleges and spoke Greek, Latin, and French. She was a faithful Catholic and visitor to the local Churches in the area. However, circumstances beyond her control led her to the situation that she would experience for many years.

Christina knew she wanted to do something in Janie's memory. Christina and many others at St. Maron's Church embraced Janie and showed her love, dignity, and respect, when others did not. After Janie's death, Christina started a foundation in memory of Janie at Bishop Eustace Prep School in New Jersey. They named it the Janie's Joy Foundation. The goal of this foundation is to bring awareness to mental health issues and to alleviate the stigma that is often attached to it.

We never know what happens in people's lives to make them homeless or suffer from mental illness. However, one thing Christina and the community of St. Maron Church know for certain is that an unlikely candidate had changed their lives forever. They saw firsthand what it means to see the face of God in every person. Now Christina wants to make a difference in society. She hopes that people will also see that every person should be treated with dignity and respect. One statement could summarize Christina's experience: "We receive more than we give; you (Janie) have given us much." Thank you, Christina, for being an example to all of us and making a difference for the homeless and those who suffer with mental illness. ■

HOUSTON, TEXAS

Honoring High School and College Graduates in Houston

On Sunday 23 May, Our Lady of the Cedars honored all parish graduating seniors with a Liturgy and distribution of scholarships for all active MYO members. The parish Youth Coordinator, Melanie Tannous, called the names of 19 high school graduating seniors, announcing their college destinations, and 11 college graduates, naming their degrees and future plans.

In alphabetical order: from area **high schools**, Joshua Abboud, Karl Basbous, Sima Dib, Mariana Elmessan, Yasmeeen Feghali, John Ghousseb, Gabriel Habib Jr., Yasmeeen Hage, Saleem Joubran, Emanuel Makris, Leora Maksoud, Edgar Merhi, Abriana Nader, Thereza Nicolas, Paul Nmeir, Mina Philip, Christopher Saliby, Noor Wakim, Alissar Youssef; and **college graduates**, Albert Baaklini, Christopher Chaftari, Matthew Clark, Christopher Jabbour, Anees Joubran, Gabrielle Joubran, Rylan Maksoud, Mark Mouhayar, Joe Zaghrini, Tony Zaghrini, and Clarice Zehri.

Congratulations to all our graduates and may God bless you. We are so proud of our community's accomplishments!! Best wishes for a bright future. ■





**EPARCHY OF SAINT MARON OF BROOKLYN
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP**

109 Remsen Street
Brooklyn, New York 11201-4212
Tel: (718) 237-9913 Fax: (718) 243-0444
chancervstmaron@verizon.net www.stmaron.org

June 25, 2021

Prot. No. 276/1/21
Circ No. 21.12

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Attached please find a summary of the **2020 Audited Financial Report** for the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn. The full audited financial statements are available at the Chancery.

This past year we continued to invest in educating our five seminarians, we paid monthly pensions for our sixteen retired priests, assisted our youth and young adults, afforded continuing education for our fifty-eight deacons and subdeacons, assisted all our parishes with COVID-19 relief, and we reached out to support our brothers and sisters in Lebanon, Syria and the Middle East. At the same time we sought to augment income by means of donations, grants, and our Annual Benefit Dinner in New York, which was done virtually this year. Even with all this, the Eparchy showed again this year a net gain after expenses in 2019. Nonetheless, we are still in need of your help, we hope to do even more.

Our finances were audited by the independent accounting firm of Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP. Likewise, all of our parishes and missions have been directed to have an independent accountant approve their annual financial report, have their parish finance council review finances every quarter, and publish their annual report in the parish bulletin.

I thank the members of the Eparchial Finance Council for giving wise advice and helping implement good internal controls for all eparchial financial matters: Mr. Edward Massoud, our Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Raymond Espinal, Compliance Officer, Mr. Albert Ashkouti, Chorbishop Seely Beggiani, Dr. Peter Gabriel, Mr. John Schlageter, Esq., Chorbishop Michael Thomas, Judge Dianne Yamin and Deacon Steven Marcus. Their help has been invaluable.

I also thank our Eparchial Stewardship Director, Mr. John Kurey, along with the members of the Order of Saint Sharbel, and all our Eparchial donors who are always so very generous with their financial help. I also thank every pastor and parishioner of the Eparchy for their compliance to Eparchial policies and their generous support and encouragement.

Thanks to our careful investments and savings over the years, our small eparchy was able to make ends meet, as well as help collect funds for Lebanon and Syria to assist our fellow Christians.

I thank all who have assisted to enable the Maronite Church to fulfill the mission that our Lord gave to her, to be the "light of the world" and "salt of the earth." (Matthew 5:13)

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ 
+ Gregory J. Mansour

Attachment (1 PDF)

Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

Statements of Financial Position
December 31, 2020 and 2019

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 614,781	\$ 527,574
Pledges receivable, current portion	230,458	240,458
Loans receivable, current portion	341,423	291,423
Other receivables	35,267	8,947
Investments	5,041,739	4,492,156
Assets whose use is limited	1,109,604	971,984
Prepaid expenses	11,365	11,456
	<u>7,384,637</u>	<u>6,543,998</u>
Total current assets	7,384,637	6,543,998
Pledges Receivable, Long-Term, Net	-	93,035
Loans Receivable, Long-Term	-	50,000
Land, Buildings and Equipment, Net	<u>3,589,190</u>	<u>3,726,703</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 10,973,827</u>	<u>\$ 10,413,736</u>
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 130,959	\$ 8,998
Funds held for others, second collections and mideast assistance	90,022	38,131
Funds held for others, disability fund	1,109,604	971,984
Mortgage payable, current portion	65,400	62,840
	<u>1,395,985</u>	<u>1,081,953</u>
Total current liabilities	1,395,985	1,081,953
Mortgage Payable	<u>572,223</u>	<u>839,185</u>
Total liabilities	<u>1,968,208</u>	<u>1,921,138</u>
Net Assets		
Net assets without donor restrictions	8,725,126	8,096,100
Net assets with donor restrictions	280,493	396,498
	<u>9,005,619</u>	<u>8,492,598</u>
Total net assets	9,005,619	8,492,598
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 10,973,827</u>	<u>\$ 10,413,736</u>

See notes to financial statements

Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets
Year Ended December 31, 2020
(With Comparative Totals for 2019)

	2020			2019 Total
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	
Revenues, Gains and Other Support				
Diocesan assessments	\$ 411,440	\$ -	\$ 411,440	\$ 505,900
Contributions	268,886	-	268,886	412,211
Grants	-	326,922	326,922	406,785
Bequests	-	-	-	197,750
Diocesan appeal	178,489	-	178,489	182,501
Contributed use of facilities	120,000	-	120,000	120,000
Special events	166,969	-	166,969	184,225
Less direct cost of benefits to donors	(20,911)	-	(20,911)	(42,636)
Other	16,794	-	16,794	33,554
Total	1,141,667	326,922	1,468,589	2,000,290
Net assets released from restrictions	442,927	(442,927)	-	-
Total revenues, gains and other support	1,584,594	(116,005)	1,468,589	2,000,290
Expenses				
Eparchial program	1,057,520	-	1,057,520	1,447,866
Chancery	230,637	-	230,637	220,593
Stewardship office	135,000	-	135,000	123,000
Total expenses	1,423,157	-	1,423,157	1,791,459
Changes in net assets before other items	161,437	(116,005)	45,432	208,831
Other Items				
Investment income	550,208	-	550,208	567,041
Interest income on noninterest-bearing loans	11,096	-	11,096	18,778
Contribution of interest on non-interest-bearing loans	(11,096)	-	(11,096)	(18,778)
Interest expense, Heart of Jesus	(33,581)	-	(33,581)	(37,401)
Depreciation and amortization, Heart of Jesus	(49,038)	-	(49,038)	(49,038)
Changes in net assets	629,026	(116,005)	513,021	689,433
Net Assets, Beginning	8,096,100	396,498	8,492,598	7,803,165
Net Assets, Ending	<u>\$ 8,725,126</u>	<u>\$ 280,493</u>	<u>\$ 9,005,619</u>	<u>\$ 8,492,598</u>

See notes to financial statements

Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

Statement of Functional Expenses
 Year Ended December 31, 2020
 (With Comparative Totals for 2019)

	2020				2019 Total
	Program	Administrative Chancery	Fundraising	Total	
	Eparchial Program		Stewardship Office		
Clergy salaries	\$ 67,200	\$ 16,800	\$ -	\$ 84,000	\$ 84,000
Lay salaries	49,410	12,353	-	61,763	60,660
Payroll taxes	12,860	3,215	-	16,075	22,031
Clergy benefits	4,959	1,240	-	6,199	12,959
Lay benefits	1,136	284	-	1,420	1,396
Vocations	79,924	-	-	79,924	410,508
Grants	208,700	-	-	208,700	274,650
Bishop appeal disbursements	178,675	-	-	178,675	137,672
Donations	60,445	-	-	60,445	56,729
Clergy support	23,616	-	-	23,616	15,548
Religious expenses	3,166	-	-	3,166	3,168
Rent	96,000	24,000	-	120,000	120,000
Professional expenses	15,117	100,677	-	115,794	115,662
Conferences	7,450	-	-	7,450	15,603
Stewardship expenses	-	-	135,000	135,000	123,000
Travel	23,386	-	-	23,386	36,518
Household	23,751	5,938	-	29,689	31,343
Office	34,800	8,700	-	43,500	47,414
Insurance	-	26,348	-	26,348	25,271
Maintenance and repairs	23,646	5,911	-	29,557	50,824
Utilities	10,887	2,722	-	13,609	13,596
Telephone	10,468	2,617	-	13,085	13,035
Publications	42,584	-	-	42,584	24,712
Depreciation and amortization	70,780	17,695	-	88,475	88,475
Other	8,559	2,138	-	10,697	6,685
Total	\$ 1,057,520	\$ 230,637	\$ 135,000	\$ 1,423,157	\$ 1,791,459

See notes to financial statements

EPARCHY OF OUR LADY OF LEBANON

Statement of Activity January - December 2020

	TOTAL
Revenue	
40000 Restricted Income	508,428.50
40100 Bequest	11,962.40
40500 Parish Assessments	498,000.00
40700 Eparchial Appeals	
40702 Lenten Appeal	164,797.47
40705 Christmas Appeal	64,330.00
Total 40700 Eparchial Appeals	229,127.47
41000 Second Collection	
41055 Eparchial Charity	9,199.00
Total 41000 Second Collection	9,199.00
42000 Donation Income	
42100 Individuals	51,055.70
42200 Businesses	60.00
42300 Organizations	10,003.61
Total 42000 Donation Income	61,119.31
44000 Grants Income	
44100 Catholic Extension Grant	1,000.00
44105 Missions	25,000.00
44110 Vocations	10,000.00
44115 Youth Office	20,000.00
44120 Stewardship Office	40,000.00
44125 Fiscal Management	10,000.00
44130 Stipends	15,975.00
44150 Seminarians	57,500.00
44170 Communications Office	5,000.00
Total 44100 Catholic Extension Grant	184,475.00
44400 Koch Foundation	10,000.00
44500 Dan Murphy Foundation	
44510 Sts. Peter & Paul Mission	12,500.00
44515 Youth Camp LA	12,500.00
44520 Seminarians	25,000.00
Total 44500 Dan Murphy Foundation	50,000.00
44600 CHM Grant	140,000.00
44900 Nassef Endowment Grant	60,878.50
Total 44000 Grants Income	445,353.50
45000 Maronite Voice	41,480.00
45500 Retreat Income	9,600.00
46000 Order of St. Sharbel	4,685.00
46050 Annual Membership Dues	68,920.00
46070 Youth Membership	250.00
46100 Perpetual Membership Dues	97,000.00
Total 46000 Order of St. Sharbel	170,855.00

	TOTAL
49000 Miscellaneous Income	37,435.27
51000 Eparchial Publications & Media	
51900 Vocation	3,817.37
Total 51000 Eparchial Publications & Media	3,817.37
Lebanon Funds	490,552.02
PPP Loan	347,900.00
Total Revenue	\$2,864,829.84
GROSS PROFIT	\$2,864,829.84
Expenditures	
(R) Restricted Expenses	
61000 Grants	
61100 Catholic Extension	
61105 Missions	50,000.00
61110 Vocations	25,800.00
61130 Stipends	15,975.00
Total 61100 Catholic Extension	91,775.00
61300 Dan Murphy Foundation	
61310 Sts Peter & Paul Mission	12,500.00
Total 61300 Dan Murphy Foundation	12,500.00
Total 61000 Grants	104,275.00
62000 Eparchial Appeal Disbursements	
62100 Missions	2,355.91
62200 National Shrine of Our Lady	22,600.00
62300 Eparchial Offices	
62315 Priestly Vocations	5,866.18
Total 62300 Eparchial Offices	5,866.18
62400 Brochure Package Printing	18,970.06
62500 Postage	376.66
Total 62000 Eparchial Appeal Disbursements	50,168.81
63000 Charity Expense	
63200 Seminarians	27,000.00
63300 specific purpose	61,538.00
Total 63000 Charity Expense	88,538.00
Total (R) Restricted Expenses	242,981.81
(U) Operating Expenses	
72000 Salaries	
72100 Bishop	39,600.00
72300 Chancellor	10,769.22
72500 Administrative Assistant	42,888.42
72550 Fiscal Officer	68,538.42
72575 Director of Communication	57,600.00
72600 Housekeeper/Janitor	17,976.00
72700 Bishop Assistant	14,400.00
72800 Archivist Scanner	27,860.00
Total 72000 Salaries	279,632.06
73000 Payroll Expenses	35,554.88
74000 Benefits	
74100 Health Insurance	29,617.07

	TOTAL
74200 Retirement	7,100.00
74300 Medical Expenses	1,747.63
Total 74000 Benefits	38,464.70
75000 Building	
75100 Utilities	23,302.54
75200 Telephone & Fax	4,539.60
75300 Maintenance & Repairs	29,668.42
Total 75000 Building	57,510.56
7600 Insurance	
76200 Volunteer Accident	1,500.00
76400 workers compensation	5,051.00
Total 7600 Insurance	6,551.00
77000 Office Expense	
77100 Supplies	12,829.32
77200 Office Equipment	
77210 Copier Lease	2,762.11
77215 Postage Meter	2,310.60
77220 Repairs & Maintenance	589.99
Total 77200 Office Equipment	5,662.70
77300 Subscriptions	29,132.23
77500 Printing	1,240.77
Total 77000 Office Expense	48,865.02
79000 Professional Fees	
79100 Legal Fees	65,046.13
79200 Accounting	23,619.00
79400 Stewardship Office	72,000.00
79600 Archivist	8,080.32
79700 Membership Dues	10,817.00
79800 Other	4,124.53
Total 79000 Professional Fees	183,686.98
80000 Diocesan Office	
80100 Archivist	1,074.96
80200 Stewardship	3,565.56
80500 Immigration	45,758.47
80600 Ministry	
80610 Office of Religious Education	2,104.90
80620 MYO	33,255.28
Total 80600 Ministry	35,360.18
80700 Office of Protection of Minors	8,758.49
80710 Background Checks	3,569.00
Total 80700 Office of Protection of Minors	12,327.49
Total 80000 Diocesan Office	98,086.66
81000 Automobile Expense	
81100 Insurance	8,859.92
81200 Registration/Title	545.00
81300 Maintenance	948.54
81400 Fuel	1,242.03
Total 81000 Automobile Expense	11,595.49

	TOTAL
82000 Religious Supplies	4,436.42
83000 Table Expense	24,013.45
83100 Household Expense	5,787.09
84000 Maronite Voice	32,500.00
86000 Real Estate Taxes	6,666.58
86500 Travel/Conference	
86510 Airlines	23,227.62
86520 Accomodations	4,673.83
86530 Fees	2,464.40
Total 86500 Travel/Conference	30,365.85
86600 Honorariums/gifts	40,925.00
86700 Bank Service Charges	11,578.32
86800 Retreat Expense	
86810 Priests	22,709.88
Total 86800 Retreat Expense	22,709.88
88000 Seminarian Expenses	
88100 Assistance	43,000.00
88200 Supplies	5,110.54
88300 Health Ins & Medical Expense	19,918.62
88400 Room & Board and Books	53,450.49
88500 Tuition & Fees	203,318.35
88600 Travel Expense	1,804.32
88700 Miscellaneous	13,904.78
Priests Education	96,271.03
Total 88000 Seminarian Expenses	436,778.13
89000 Papal Honors & Dues	5,000.00
90100 Miscellaneous Expense	56,699.09
Total (U) Operating Expenses	1,437,407.16
63100 Maronite Patriarcat obligations	
63110 Bishops Retirement Fund-Lebanon	18,900.00
63120 Aid to institutions	1,000.00
63130 Patriarch Liturgical commissio	1,500.00
Total 63100 Maronite Patriarcat obligations	21,400.00
98050 Loan Interest - Knights of Columbus	14,049.46
Lebanon Funds Disbursement	491,568.00
Manning House	1,785.00
Payroll Expenses	
Taxes	370.04
Wages	1,038,000.00
Total Payroll Expenses	1,038,370.04
Payroll Expenses Wages	0.00
PPP Salary Refund	135,750.00
Raleigh Home Expenses	131,548.83
Total Expenditures	\$3,514,860.30
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$ -650,030.46
Other Revenue	
98000 Investment Gains/Losses	440,501.40
98100 Interest Income	3,795.36
98150 Dividend Income	52,213.51

	TOTAL
Total Other Revenue	\$496,510.27
Other Expenditures	
99000 Investment Fees	26,258.55
Total Other Expenditures	\$26,258.55
NET OTHER REVENUE	\$470,251.72
NET REVENUE	\$ -179,778.74

- At the beginning of 2020, the Eparchy started directly paying all the priests in the Eparchy their monthly salaries.
- Lebanon Funds: The Eparchy raised, on its own, over \$490,000.00 to help Lebanese families, hospitals and Churches following the Beirut port explosion. This money was distributed through charitable institutions in Lebanon. More funds were raised by its parishes and forwarded directly to Lebanon for charitable causes in addition to over one million dollars sent through Caritas Lebanon USA.
- Through the Economic Stimulus Act, the Eparchy was granted a PPP Loan which was used to underwrite the salaries of its employees and clergy, in addition to other different parishes need.
- The Eparchy, through the generosity of a parishioner in Los Angeles and other benefactors, acquired a chancery /office in Los Angeles, which became an additional fixed asset for the Eparchy.

Maronite Catholic Foundation

Profit and Loss

January - December 2020

	TOTAL
Income	
42000 Donations	
42100 Individuals	439,377.20
42200 Businesses	6,000.00
42300 Organizations	75,000.00
Total 42000 Donations	520,377.20
Total Income	\$520,377.20
GROSS PROFIT	\$520,377.20
Expenses	
65000 Bank Charges	5,519.57
66000 Campaign Fees	145,232.08
68500 Office Expense/Postage	6,876.00
Total Expenses	\$157,627.65
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$362,749.55
Other Income	
98000 Other Revenue	
98150 Dividend Income	24,893.79
98200 Investment Gains/Losses	153,334.44
Total 98000 Other Revenue	178,228.23
Total Other Income	\$178,228.23
Other Expenses	
99000 Other Expenditures	
99100 Investment Fees	13,505.89
Total 99000 Other Expenditures	13,505.89
Total Other Expenses	\$13,505.89
NET OTHER INCOME	\$164,722.34
NET INCOME	\$527,471.89

Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon Retirement & Health

Profit and Loss

January - December 2020

	TOTAL
Income	
Bank Interest	17.86
Claims Account	25,241.27
Premiums	
Health Insurance Premium	682,029.40
Total Premiums	682,029.40
Realized Gain (Loss)	92,745.07
Retirement Contribution	328,850.00
Wachovia Income	
Dividend Income	20,396.31
Total Wachovia Income	20,396.31
Total Income	\$1,149,279.91
GROSS PROFIT	\$1,149,279.91
Expenses	
Contribution to Retirement Acc	340,066.00
Health Insurance Cost	552,269.95
Investment Fees	9,920.26
Retirement Monthly Payout	144,000.00
Total Expenses	\$1,046,256.21
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$103,023.70
NET INCOME	\$103,023.70

The Life of a Seminarian *by Vincent Michael*

Being in seminary is different from a vocation, since it is not permanent; it is ordered to the discernment of the priesthood. It is not a place in which one stays, but a period in which one is formed and prepared for the priesthood, if that is indeed one's calling. The preparation is not just intellectual, though this is critical, but spiritual: We allow ourselves to be formed according to God's will, not to erase our unique personality, but to bring it to perfection.

It is one of the benefits of living in community that I see myself more clearly through my brothers. My brothers can point out to me what is true in myself as well as the faults and foibles that stand between me and God's will. We are being prepared to be, in a way, the face of the Church as priests, and must allow Christ to shine through us. As such, my faults do not only have the potential to harm just myself, but those in my spiritual care. While this is most obvious in the case of ministry, this is true for all of us, for there are those God has put in our influence or care for whom we have a spiritual responsibility.

The life of a seminarian is not just a "negative" process, that of taking away, but is one that builds up. There are so many blessings in this life, being able to focus so much on the things of God, his Holy Mysteries, and to serve his people and eventually, God willing, his altar. Sometimes, in the midst of studies and responsibilities and studies it can be easy to forget this joy, or to hear the voices of discouragement. But God intends what is best for us, that which will bring us greatest joy. Not only that, but he fully supplies us for what he has commissioned us. I have found it critical to always

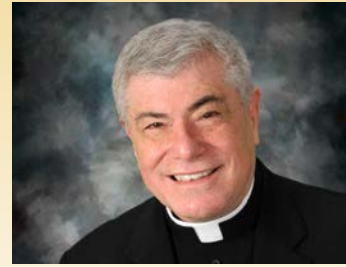
remember this truth. Thus, there is no need to fear, no need for gloom, if we trust in God's love. In doing so, I can open myself up to being a witness to God's joy and love.

All witness to Christ begins and ends with his love for us and our love for him. It is not enough to be free of scandal or faults that harm the flock, but I must allow God's love to flow through me to others. I am convinced that holiness cannot be faked: the sense of the faithful knows the truth before long. Thus, one cannot witness to Christ unless one knows him and is transformed by him. I have found this incredibly powerful, knowing that even my own spiritual life is not for myself but for those I am to serve. This gives a responsibility to always tend to the spiritual life, and is a strong antidote against temptations to be slack. Prayer—no matter how simple—is absolutely necessary; without it we cannot know and love God.

The very life of a seminarian is a witness in itself of trusting in God's calling and leaving everything behind and following him. But this means nothing without a love and self-sacrifice that is like that of Christ, our model of obedience to the will of the Father. In the end, what makes for being a witness to Christ as a seminarian is the same as for anything else: love of God, a willingness to trust him and follow him where he calls, and to take heart and joy in his goodness, for he wants what is good for us better than we do. There is no secret—just love. ■

Vincent hails from Aliquippa, PA and will be ordained a subdeacon in August.

From the Editor



In economics, there is a principle of the risk-return ratio, which states the potential return rises with increased risk. In life, many of us are uncomfortable with this reality and want to find a way around it: we want a great **return** with as little **risk** as possible. Life may appear to cooperate, but only for a while.

A 1963 ballad by the Kingston Trio tells of a man who came upon an old water pump with a message on it:

This pump is old, the note began, but she works so give 'er a try
I put a new sucker washer in 'er, you may find the leather dry

You've got to prime the pump, you must have faith and believe
You've got to give of yourself 'fore you're worthy to receive
Drink all the water you can hold, wash your face, cool your feet
Leave the bottle full for others, thank you kindly, Desert Pete.

Desert Pete promised that the pump would give water in abundance. The man had a choice. The man could *take the risk* and use the water in his canteen to prime the pump or be cautious—keep riding and drink stale water.

The whole decision is based on one factor: **Do we trust Desert Pete?** Is he a good man who wants us to have fresh water? Or, a cruel trickster who may be endangering our lives? On his words alone, would we risk the water we have in our canteen for the possibility of fresh water?

Jesus explained to the Samaritan woman at the well:

“But whoever drinks the water that I will give him will never become thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become a well of water for him, springing up to eternal life.”

Jesus offers us water far greater than anything found in a well—but at a much higher price. In exchange for the water of eternal life, Jesus asks us to risk everything.

The decision is ours: **Do we believe the promise of Jesus?**

The Church is not a place for the timid or the cautious: **the biggest gamblers are the saints.** ■



Chorbishop John D. Faris

THE MARONITE VOICE
ST. ANTHONY'S MARONITE CATHOLIC CHURCH
4611 SADLER ROAD
GLEN ALLEN, VIRGINIA 23060-6108

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 1370
GLEN ALLEN, VIRGINIA



BASILICA & NATIONAL SHRINE
— of Our Lady of Lebanon —

A PILGRIMAGE OF REMEMBRANCE & THANKSGIVING

**SAVE THE
— DATE —**

AUGUST 13-15, 2021

**PLAN TO JOIN US FOR THE 56TH ANNUAL
ASSUMPTION
PILGRIMAGE**

For more information on the event or accommodations, please contact The Shrine office at (330) 538-3351!

2759 N Lipkey Rd North
Jackson, Ohio

(330) 538-3351

office@lolshrine.com
www.ourladyoflebanonshrine.com