

The Maronite Voice

A Publication of the Maronite Eparchies in the USA



Volume IX

Issue No. III

March 2013



Pope Benedict XVI's Bold Invitation

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This past month we all awoke to the surprise news of the Holy Father's renunciation of the Petrine Ministry in the Church, to which he was elected by the College of Cardinals eight years ago. I cannot think of the Church without him at the helm, nor could I have thought eight years ago of the Church without Blessed John Paul II. Nonetheless, we live in Christian hope and we are all called to have the same deep trust in God that Pope Benedict has in making this difficult decision.

In his carefully planned talk to the Cardinals, the Holy Father spoke of the Church as a ship, and the one who serves at the helm, the Pope, serves in Peter's, the fisherman's, place. He needs strength of soul and body to do so. Moreover, the Pope said, even though there is suffering and prayer associated with the Petrine ministry, in the modern day a Pope needs much strength to carry the Church's mission well. Pope Benedict examined his conscience many times, and he said he came to a certainty that this is his time to "let go." This is bold, loving and wise.

(Continues on page 20)

Schedule of Bishop Robert Shaheen

March 8, 2012

Lecture at Maronite Heritage Center, Saint Louis, Mo.

March 19, 2013

Feast of Saint Joseph, Evening Liturgy at St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

March 20, 2013

Blessing of Holy Oil with Clergy of the Diocese. Saint Raymond Cathedral, ST. Louis, Mo.

March 24, 2013

Palm Sunday Liturgy at 10:00 a.m., St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis., Mo.

March 25 - 27, 2013

Saint Raymonds Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

March 28, 2013

Liturgy of the Washing of the Feet at 7:00 p.m., St. Raymond Cathedral will be open till midnight, St. Louis, Mo.

March 29, 2013

Pre-Sanctified Liturgy at 11:00 a.m., and Burial of the Lord at 7:00 p.m., St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

March 30, 2013

Opening of Tomb and Solemn Liturgy of the Resurrection at 10:00 p.m., St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

March 3, 2013

Easter Sunday, St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo.

April 4 - 6, 2013

Eparchial Convocation, St. Louis, Mo.

April 7, 2013

Closing of the Convocation, Solemn Liturgy, St. Raymond Cathedral, St. Louis, Mo. □

The Maronite Voice

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Sts. Peter and Paul Maronite Church

Tampa, Florida

July 3 - 7, 2013

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

Eparchial Condolences



Mr. Wakim Boutros Wakim, the father of Reverend Rodolph Wakim, Pastor of Our Lady of Victory Maronite Church, Carnegie [Pittsburgh], Penn., passed away in Lebanon with his priest son and family next to him. In addition to Father Rodolph, Wakim is survived by his wife, Suzanne, his son, Oscar, his brother, Father Francis Wakim, an Antonine priest, and several brothers and sisters. The Funeral was held on Tuesday, February 5, 2013, at Saint Sasseen Church in *Beit Mery*, Lebanon.

Condolences may be sent to Father Rodolph Wakim, Our Lady of Victory Church, 1000 Lindsay Road, Carnegie, PA 15106.

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

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

Eparchial Appointment

His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, appointed Marise Frangie for a two-year term as Director of the Eparchial Office for the Family and Sanctity of Life, effective December 1, 2012. Mrs. Frangie, a parishioner of Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn, New York, replaces Deacon Nicholas Mammi, who served the office the past two years. She will coordinate all eparchial pro-life matters, promote chastity education, encourage marriage enrichment programs and promote natural family planning in the parishes. □

Brooklyn, New York 88th Annual St. Maron Day Banquet



In his remarks to the Community, Bishop Stephen reminded us all to be steadfast in our adherence to the Liturgy and our Heritage. It sets us apart; it confirms and defines who we are...the loyal members of *Beit Maroun*! He thanked all the people at his many posts for their love, encouragement and prayers. We thanked him for being such an inspiring part of our lives and community of faith.

At our annual celebration the NAM sponsored Silver Massabki and Faith of the Mountain awards are announced to the parish. They represent recognition for exceptional service to the Maronite Community. Mr. Mike Naber, Executive Director of NAM presented the Silver Massabki award to

Paula Achkar, and the Faith of the Mountain was awarded to Giorgio Malouf.

We were honored and delighted to share the evening with some familiar faces which graced the dais. Msgr. Maroun Asmar, Chorbishop Joseph Kaddo, former Vicar General of the Eparchy of Saint Maron, our dynamic Rector, Msgr. James Root, the Honorable Consul General of Lebanon in New York, Majdi Ramadan, and the Pastor of the Melkite Church of the Virgin Mary, Rev. Antoine Rizk.

Joseph Shaia, Sr., a Cathedral Trustee, ably served as master of ceremony for the evening and offered some entertainment in the form of a funny story uttered in his "home" Arabic to the delight of the audience. The banquet was beautifully organized and executed by Ms. Claire Habib, Trustee, and Mrs. Norma Haddad.

Following the formal program Eddie Osama and his musicians entertained the crowd, who danced away until the wee hours. It had been a grand evening filled with pride and joy. □

by Salma T.Vahdat

After a disappointing postponement of our St. Maron Day celebration of February 9, 2013, due to the *Nemo* Blizzard, Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn, New York, was more than ready to come together to honor its patron saint on February 23. The Community gathered at The Excelsior Grand in Staten Island, N.Y., and brought their enthusiasm with them.

The celebration had a twofold purpose: one, to honor St. Maron; and two, to recognize and honor our esteemed Bishop Emeritus of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, His Excellency Stephen Hector Doueihy.

Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral has been celebrating St. Maron's Day for eighty-eight years. It has been a wonderful event to look forward to and participate in...and one which all of the parishioners embrace. This year, the anticipation was heightened by the plan to honor our Emeritus Shepherd. Coupled with the Golden Anniversary of the National Apostolate of Maronites, which Bishop Stephen has so ardently supported throughout his

tenure in the United States, the Cathedral Community has contributed student scholarships to be awarded in his name to students of Lebanese-Syrian heritage who apply to NAM for them. How fitting! Scholarships awarded in the name of a man, a priest, a teacher and a lover and champion of his Maronite heritage. He has demonstrated his dynamism by the zeal with which he undertook liturgical reform and translation. After serving in Mexico, he came to the United States to minister to Maronite communities in Illinois, Pennsylvania and the Seminary in Washington, D.C., and on to Texas. It was then that our Cathedral was blessed with his guidance and pastoral skills when he was appointed Rector and subsequently the second Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron.

He was introduced by our Rector, Msgr. James Root, who reminisced of his introduction to *Sayedna* when he was a seminarian in Washington. His love of the Liturgy was infectious and impressed the young seminarian as well as the other students. It, no doubt, was a challenge to translate and transmit the depth of the Liturgy to these English speaking students. However, it was well done!

THE ORDER OF SAINT SHARBEL



Annual Members

★ **Mr. James Abdo**

★ **Mr. Joseph Abdo**

★ **Mrs. Joni Moses**

*St. Maron Maronite Church,
Minneapolis, Minn.*

★ **Mr. George Ayoub**

*Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral
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★ **Mr. Edward Salem**

★ **Mr. Christopher E. Salem**

★ **Mr. Robby T. Ayoub**

*St. John Maron Church
Anaheim, Calif.*

★ **Mary Elizabeth Salame**

*St. Anthony Maronite Church,
Danbury, Conn.*

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 write to:

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

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

St. Louis, Missouri *Saint Maron Feast Day*



From left: Msgr. Moussa Joseph, Charlie and Theresa Miller, Bishop Robert Shaheen and Diana Deeba.

by Shelly Vitale

The St. Raymond Maronite Cathedral in Saint Louis, Mo., joined His Excellency Robert Shaheen and Msgr. Moussa Joseph, Rector, to celebrate the Feast of St. Maron on February 10, 2013.

During the Divine Liturgy, Bishop Shaheen bestowed the Silver Massabki Awards to Diana Deeba and Charlie and Theresa Miller for their many years of hard work and service to the St. Raymond community. The Bishop and Monsignor Joseph thanked them for their great devotion. Monsignor Joseph, in turn, congratulated Bishop Shaheen for celebrating twelve years as a Bishop. He was consecrated as a Bishop on February 15, 2001. On behalf of the Parish, Monsignor Joseph presented the Bishop with a gift to thank him for his dedication, sacrifice and leadership. After the Liturgy, the parishioners gathered at the Cedars Hall for a luncheon in honor of St. Maron. □

Eparchial Assignments

His Excellency Bishop Robert Shaheen, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, has made the following Eparchial appointments effective on March 20, 2013:

- **Fr. Tony Massad** as Pastor of Saint Rafka Maronite Mission in Livonia, Mich. Fr. Massad leaves St. Maron Church in Cleveland, Ohio, where he served as Parochial Vicar.
- **Msgr. Ignace Sadek** (retired) as temporary Administrator of Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Flint, Mich. **Rev. Paul Tarabay, OMM**, Pastor, is returning to his Monastic Congregation in Lebanon. □

Fort Lauderdale, Florida *Parish Picnic*



by Deacon John Jarvis

In Fort Lauderdale, Florida, the rain subsided just in time for the second annual parish picnic on Sunday, February 10, 2013, at the Heart of Jesus Maronite Church. Under brightening skies and after the Divine Liturgy, close to three hundred people enjoyed Lebanese and American food, music, and good conversation. It was a wonderful day for the parishioners and visitors. All the food was prepared and served by the women of the church as the men grilled. Many parishioners assisted with the setup and cleanup. □

Brooklyn, New York *Renewal of Marriage Vows*

by Salma Vahdat

February 2, 2013, was a very special and illuminating evening for approximately seventy-five married couples, members of the Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Cathedral in Brooklyn, N.Y.

The Spiritual Life Committee of the Cathedral's Pastoral Council offered an evening to include a Divine Liturgy, renewal of marriage vows followed by a social gathering comprising a candlelight dinner and dancing.

What a beautiful evening it was! Msgr. James Root, Rector, with the able assistance of Tresa Van Heusen and Joan Napolitano, organized and executed a very touching and memorable event for the participants. Midway through the liturgy, we were guided through the recitation of our vows and re-exchanged our wedding rings. White roses were distributed to the ladies and boutonnieres to the gentlemen. The finale was the distribution of certificates of participation in the Marriage Enrichment evening. Citing the longest and shortest married couples was received with applause. The longest went to Dr. Massoud and Salma Besheer Vahdat at fifty three years and Roger and Vera Shamas at three years.

Msgr. Root greeted us with a lovely letter of congratulations tendered by Bishop Gregory Mansour. He

lauded us for our commitment to each other citing that it took a great deal of humility and selflessness to meld into the one unit required to make marriage and home life a viable reality. Msgr. Root echoed those sentiments also.

The dinner following the Liturgy was prepared by Msgr. Root and his staff and served by the Cathedral's MYO. DJ Charlie Haddad offered the music for the dinner and then for the dancing. Upon leaving this very special celebration the participants were greeted by a light snowfall in a silent night that gave the evening a magical ending. □

Waterville, Maine *Lenten Meal*



John M. Joseph plays the harmonica.

by Fr. Larry Jensen

On February 10, 2013, parishioners and friends of the St. Joseph Maronite Church, Waterville, Maine, came to celebrate the entrance into the Lenten Season by having their annual *Mjadra* Dinner and Talent Show. After a meal of *mjadra*, macaroni and cheese, salad, and dessert; everyone sat back to enjoy the parish's talent. From the youngest to the oldest, this family of Maronites every year on Cana Sunday shares a talent. From everyone singing the "Ten Days of Lent" using the Arabic words for different foods to one of the Sisters playing the spoons to the tune of a polka, there was much laughter. A four-year old gave her rendition of dancing to a Beatles song, there were skits, violin playing, show tunes, banjo playing, modern dance, joke telling by the Deacon, Peter, a sing along with Fr. Larry accompanied by his accordion, and one of the over ninety-year olds playing a melody on his harmonica. Thank you to Marie Deeb the Choir Director, and choreographer of the program. Thank you to the Nale family who provides the *Mjadra* Dinner in memory of their mother Caroline, to Kevin Michaud who prepares the macaroni and cheese, and last but not least the many who shared the many talents to provide the entertainment of the evening. □

Newtown Square, Pennsylvania *Massabki Award*



Charlotte and Bill Bijansky, surrounded by Fr. Paul, daughter Lisa, grandchildren, Tim, Emily, Alexandra, and Charlotte's sister, Janet.

by Lillian Shahade

On February 10, 2013, Fr. Paul Mouawad, Pastor of St. Sharbel Church, Newtown Square, Penn., presented the Silver Massabki Award to Charlotte Bijansky and thanked her for her love for her church and her willingness to help out in anything asked of her.

Charlotte has been an active member of St. Sharbel since it started as a Mission four miles away from its present location. She has been active on almost all of the committees at all events of the Parish. She is an active member of NAM and chaired the hospitality committee at the 2011 Convention hosted by St. Sharbel Church.

Charlotte has already sent a thank you to Fr. Paul expressing her gratitude and honor in receiving this award and showing her humbleness by stating that so many others are more deserving and how fortunate she is to be a member of the Saint Sharbel family community. Thank you, Charlotte, for your faith and commitment to Saint Sharbel. □

Sydney, Australia *Maronite Servants Friend-Raiser*

by Mother Marla Marie Lucas

The Sisters of the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light were invited to a "friend-raiser" luncheon hosted at the home of Colette Assif, a parishioner of Saint Joseph Maronite Church in Sydney, Australia. The Sisters spoke on Great Lent and on the charism of the Congregation to forty friends invited by the hostess. This event spread awareness of the Maronite Servants' mission, gaining the support of new friends who promised to assist the Sisters in spreading the word about vocations. Also, many of the women generously offered donations to help the work of the Maronite Servants. For more information on the charism and



Mother Marla Marie and Sister Touma with a group of friends in Sydney, Australia.

mission, refer to the website: maroniteservants.org.

If you are interested in hosting a similar "friend-raiser" event in your home on behalf of the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light, please contact Sister Marla Marie at (508) 996 -1753 or email sister@maroniteservants.org. □

Minneapolis, Minnesota *A Milestone!*



Archbishop Harry Flynn at Saint Maron Church in Minneapolis, Minn.

by Joanne Moses

"Cherish your most beautiful Liturgy, your prayers, your music, your art, your tradition, and your community! Handle these treasures with care and instill their value in your children, grandchildren, and the yet

unborn generations," advised Archbishop Harry Flynn, Archbishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, on the occasion of the 110th Anniversary of the Parish of Saint Maron of Minneapolis, Minn.

"Achievement without sacrifice is meaningless." Archbishop Flynn continued by delivering a brief history of our Maronite church, "an ancient tradition and the only church among the twenty-two branches of the universal Catholic Church named after a man, of which you should be proud." Early immigrants came to Minneapolis from Lebanon in the late 1880s. Soon after settling in, they established their church as a priority. First in a home in the late 1800s, a humble church in 1903, then finer structures, through the sacrifice of our founders until the present day setting. The sacrifice and generosity of parishioners has made this possible.

Sunday, February 10, 2013, crowned a weekend of joy with a solemn Liturgy on the occasion of the 110th Anniversary. The Order of Saint Sharbel stood guard as our special guest entered the sanctuary. Parishioners filled the church in spite of a snowy blizzard hazarding their drives in. A dinner followed the Liturgy.

A large mural (12" x 13") depicting the forest of the Cedars of Lebanon was unveiled in memory of the late Mickey Nasseff and was blessed by Archbishop Flynn.

Monsignor sharbel Maroun, Pastor, fosters growth in faith and social ties among the community. Members of Saint Anne and Saint Rafka Clubs prepared traditional foods and decorations for the *Hafli* and dinner held Saturday night. Samer Ackleh band and DJ UB provided the music. Elena Elkhoury, Chairperson of the event, delivered a message to cherish the treasures of the parish community and keep them in tact for generations to come.

In addition to the Anniversary weekend events, Saint Maron parish will hold one hundred ten hours of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from the eve of Tuesday March 12, to Sunday morning, March 17, 2013. Saint Maron Parish will continue the celebration of its 110th Anniversary with Bishop Robert Shaheen on May 12, 2013.

Seminarians' Endowment

by Msgr. sharbel Maroun

A most generous gift was granted to the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon to help educate its seminarians. Mr. John Nasseff of St. Paul, Minnesota, gave a gift of one million dollar, to be used as endowment to educate future Maronite priests.

This endowment will be established under the name of the Parish of St. Maron of Minneapolis, Minnesota, for the benefit of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon. A check with interest will be issued on or around February 9, the Feast of Saint Maron, each year.

The education of the Seminarians is one of the main concerns of the Eparchy and the bishop. Having well-educated priests gives a better future for the Eparchy and the Church in general.

The generous donor did not wish his name to be on the endowment. He says, "God knows."

Saint Maron Parish pledges to pray for John and for all the living and departed of the Nasseff family. Along with Bishop Robert Shaheen and the whole Eparchy of Our Lady



Mr. John Nasseff hands Msgr. Maroun a check to found the Seminarians' Endowment for the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon.

of Lebanon, St. Maron Parish expresses its deepest gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Nasseff for his most generous gift of education of the future priests in the United States. □

Houston, Texas Youth Director

by Tom Gordova

Our Lady of the Cedars Maronite Church in Houston, Texas, recently introduced Melanie Tannous as the new Director of Youth Ministry.

Melanie was born in Houston, and was raised in Rosenberg, Texas. She graduated from B.F. Terry High School in Rosenberg and then attended the University of Houston where she received both her undergraduate and graduate degrees. Professionally Melanie has taught on the high school level and currently is an elementary school counselor for Fort Bend ISD.

Melanie is married to Saeid "Steven" Tannous. They have three children ages nineteen, fifteen and twelve. Prior to accepting the position as Youth Director, Melanie volunteered as an adult leader with the parish youth group and has taught faith formation. As the Youth Director Melanie is responsible for planning and carrying out youth activities and teaching high school faith formation. □





Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon

by Chorbishop Alfred Badawi

A Diocesan Convocation to gather the religious and laity of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon will be held in St. Louis, Mo., on April 4 - 7, 2013. This Diocesan Convocation will be a time to

reflect upon the Eparchy and to look toward the future.

In conjunction with Pope Benedict XVI's declaration that this be a "Year of Faith," which began on October 11, 2012, and will conclude on November 24, 2013, the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon has accepted the Holy Father's great gift as a time of reflection and renewal of our faith. The year is a summons to "an authentic and renewed conversion to the Lord, the One Savior of the world" as he expresses in "Porta Fidei."

The Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon has created a Year of Faith logo which symbolizes its undertaking of this commissioning by our Holy Father: Re-Commitment, Aggiornamento, Renewal, and Evangelization.

As shepherds and those entrusted with the care of His people, we need to show that our lives, especially as Catholics, are to be lived out in faith and to have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ is at the very heart of our faith. The new evangelization calls us to communicate the joy and

hope of the Christian faith, which is discovered through our own personal encounter with Christ.

As a church that is always moving forward in this journey of faith, it is our privilege and responsibility to share Christ with others. There are many activities going on throughout the Year of Faith that can help us grow and become renewed in our love and commitment to Jesus Christ, and strengthen in our commitment to the Church and her teachings. The Diocesan Convocation will be an excellent opportunity to make a difference by forming the future together.

Every pastor is being asked to appoint two delegates to represent his parish community to attend the Diocesan Convocation. □



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

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

Send all changes of address, news, pictures and personal correspondence to: The Maronite Voice

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Pictures must be original. Digital pictures must be in "JPG" format and in high resolution. The Maronite Voice is also available online, in PDF format, at www.stmaron.org. □

Effective Ways You Can Help Your Eparchy!

Please consider the following ways in which you can help the Maronite Church!

Planned Giving: Consider Your Legacy

This is a creative way to support the Church. Planned giving can involve contributing through your will, insurance policy, or retirement assets. Also, it can be a way to make a donation and to provide yourself with a steady source of income; a charitable remainder trust is one example of this.

Suggested wording for a bequest to the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

"I give and bequeath to the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, located in Brooklyn, New York, _____% of the residue of my estate [or: the sum of \$_____]."

Suggested wording for a bequest to the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon

"I give and bequeath to the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, located in St. Louis, Missouri, _____% of the residue of my estate [or: the sum of \$_____]."

Tax-Smart Giving of Appreciated Stock or other Assets

The gift of an asset such as common stock or mutual fund shares is a smart way to make a contribution and receive maximum tax benefits based on the value of the asset. Gifts of other appreciated assets such as land, antiques, and homes, can also be utilized as potential gifts with valuable tax benefits. Gifts of these assets should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

For more information on any or all of these options, please contact Stewardship Director John F. Kurey, Esq., MBA, at 718-237-9913 or 314-231-1021; or by e-mail at johnkurey@yahoo.com or at maroniteswest@yahoo.com. □

San Antonio, Texas A Christmas Gift



From left: Ross Mery, Fr. Ghassan Mattar and Jamal Tawil.

by Debbie Fernandez

On December 9, 2012, the parishioners of St. George Maronite Church in San Antonio, Texas, enjoyed two memorable events. The day began with the Sunday Liturgy and then the parishioners attended a Christmas Pageant given by the Faith Formation classes. Throughout the play, the parishioners participated in singing Christmas carols led by the children. At the end, Santa Claus surprised the children with a special appearance.

But this was not the end. For a few weeks prior to the pageant, Fr. Ghassan Mattar, Pastor, had been leaving hints of a surprise to come. He wanted to share something important with the parish. Here was an opportunity to give the parishioners a special Christmas gift. Fr. Ghassan, along with the Presidents of the Parish Council, Ross Mery, and the Stewardship Committee, Jamal Tawil, took to the stage and were handed a rather large, wrapped box, leaving all to wonder what surprise was in store. When it was opened, random notes were pulled out as Fr. Ghassan teasingly denied each one. Lo and behold a note with numbers appeared before us. With great pride, and through his tireless leadership, he announced that we were able to burn the parish's \$3,000,000 mortgage, leaving St. George debt free after six years. He went on to thank everyone for all the years of hard work, commitment, and efforts of time, talent and treasure to accomplish such an achievement. □

Food For Thought

"Lent stimulates us to let the Word of God penetrate our life and in this way to know the fundamental truth: who we are, where we come from, where we must go, what path we must take in life..."

Pope Benedict XVI

Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

March 6, 2013

Rutgers University Syriac Library, New Brunswick, N.J.

March 8 - 10, 2013

Pastoral Visit to Saint Sharbel Mission, Raleigh, N.C., and to the Maronite Community in Charlotte, N.C.

March 12 - 14, 2013

Catholic Relief Services Board of Directors Meeting, Baltimore, Md.

March 16 - 17, 2013

Pastoral Visit to St. Joseph Church, Waterville, Me., and Silver Anniversary of Fr. Larry Jensen

March 18 - 19, 2013

Visit to Our Lady of Lebanon Seminary and Catholic University Trustees meeting, Washington, D.C.

March 20, 2013

Chrism Mass at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

March 23, 2013

Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y., MYA Day of Recollection

March 24, 2013

Palm Sunday Liturgy at 11:00 a.m. at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y., and 3:00 p.m. at Blessed John Paul II Mission in White Plains, N.Y.

March 25, 2013

Service of Coming to the Harbor at St. Sharbel Church, Somerset, N.J.

March 26, 2013

Chrism Mass for the Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, N.Y.

March 27, 2013

Rite of the Lamp at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

March 28, 2013

Liturgy of the Washing of the Feet at Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Easton, Penn.

March 29, 2013

Good Friday Service at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

March 30, 2013

Holy Saturday Service at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

March 31, 2013

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

April 6 - 7, 2013

Pastoral Visit to St. Jude Maronite Church and Ordination of Jack Manhire to the Diaconate, Orlando, Fla.

April 9 - 11, 2013

Meeting with Eastern Bishops, St. Louis, Mo.

April 13, 2013

Dedication of the New Parish Center, Philadelphia, Penn. □

The Resignation and Election of A Pope

by

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

On February 11, 2013, Pope Benedict XVI stunned the world with the announcement that he intended to resign, effective February 28, 2013. In worldly terms, Pope Benedict gave the Church his “two-week notice.” (*The announcement was made in Latin and the press often literally translated the term *renuntiat* as “renounce.” In canon law, the term is translated as resign; as a canonist, I shall employ that term. However, the translation of the term as renounce allows us to appreciate the theological richness of relinquishing the “Keys of Peter.”*) The reason he gave was that he no longer had the capacity because of his advanced age to carry out the responsibilities of the papacy. The pope will turn 86 on April 16.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger was elected to the Chair of Peter by the cardinals on April 19, 2005. He was the only cardinal present in the conclave (more about the word *conclave* later) who had not been appointed as Cardinal by his predecessor Pope John Paul II, but had been appointed by Pope Paul VI in 1977.

This resignation is an *act of faith and trust* that the Holy Father has in God; so many of us have the false opinion that the world depends on us. We place our confidence not in Divine Providence, but in our own feeble abilities. The resignation is also an *act of humility*: Pope Benedict came to realize that he was no longer capable of carrying out the responsibilities of his office and placed the interests of the Church above his own. The resignation is also an *act of courage*; the last resignation of a pope took place six centuries ago, the Holy Father was not afraid to make such a decision.

The Pope expressed his desire to continue to serve the Church by devoting himself to prayer and reflection. He will do so in a residence (a former cloistered monastery) in the Vatican.

Resignation of A Pope

While there is no required retirement age for the Pope (it is set at 75 for bishops), Church law provides for the possibility of a papal resignation: Canon 332 §2 of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* states: “If it happens that the Roman Pontiff resigns his office, it is required for validity that the resignation is made freely and properly manifested but not that it is accepted by anyone.” In everyday language, the Pope cannot be forced to resign, nor can anyone stop him from retiring.

We saw it on February 11: Pope Benedict XVI announced his intention to resign and indicated the date that it will take effect. That is all that is needed.

In a 2010 interview, Pope Benedict XVI, when asked about



Pope Benedict XVI

the possibility of a papal resignation, affirmed it might even be the obligation of a pope to resign: “Yes, if a Pope clearly realizes that he is no longer physically, psychologically, and spiritually capable of handling the duties of his office, then he has a right and, under some circumstances, also an obligation to resign.”

Church law requires that a resignation be freely made: CIC c. 187: “Anyone responsible for oneself (*sui compos*) can resign from an ecclesiastical office for a just cause.” A grave problem would arise if the Pope were to be afflicted with Alzheimer’s or dementia: because he was not *sui compos*, he could not resign. There are no provisions in the law of the Church for such a case.

While the last resignation was in 1415 (by Pope Gregory XII at the request of the Council of Constance to help resolve the Great Western Schism), historians tell us that as many as ten popes have resigned. A more well-known case is that of Pope Celestine V (1294). The poor man, known as Peter the Hermit, was eighty years old when the cardinals elected him by acclamation after a two-year impasse. He was incapable of carrying out the administrative and diplomatic responsibilities of the papacy and resigned after only five months. Even then his fortunes did not improve: his successor imprisoned him out of fear that the monk-hermit would attempt to reclaim the papacy. Some speculate that Dante portrayed the Celestine in the antechamber of Hades, condemning him for cowardice.

Governing the Church During the Vacancy

When a pope dies or resigns, the See of Peter is *vacant*. This was the case on February 28. Most of the Church will not be directly affected. The Eucharist will continue to be

celebrated, baptisms will take place, people will be married, etc. However, for the central government of the Church, much activity is suspended. With only two exceptions, every one in the Roman Curia (the central offices of the Apostolic See), loses office!

Pope John Paul II issued a document in 1996 entitled *The Entire Flock of the Lord (Universi Domincii Gregis)* subtitled *On the Vacancy of the Apostolic See and the Election of the Roman Pontiff*. This document replaced the 1975 procedures established by Pope Paul VI. Pope Benedict XVI later amended the document in 2007 with regard to the election requirements.

Even without a pope, there are certain activities that must continue. Preparations for the election of a new pope need to be made; in the case of the death of the pope, the funeral must be arranged. The responsibility for the governance of the Church falls on the College of Cardinals with the Chamberlain (*Camerlengo*) of the Catholic Church acting under its direction. The College of Cardinals either meets in a *general congregation* (which even the cardinals who are over the age of eighty can attend) to handle affairs of major importance and or in a *particular congregation* (comparable to an executive committee) with the Chamberlain and three other cardinals carrying out ordinary matters.

Election Of The Pope

It is likely that cardinals from all over the world are now making flight reservations and clearing their schedules; in the near future they will be called to Rome to participate in the election of Pope Benedict's successor. His Beatitude Bechara Peter Rai, the Patriarch of the Maronite Church, was appointed a cardinal on November 24, 2012, and thus will be summoned to cast his vote.

Most bishops of the Catholic Church are *appointed* by the Pope. Procedures for the designation of the Bishop of Rome—the Pope—are different: he is *elected* by the cardinals, who are technically part of the clergy of Rome. With the exception of the Eastern Catholic patriarchs who are appointed cardinals, each cardinal is entrusted with a "titular church" in Rome. There are 211 cardinals in the Catholic Church today, but not all of them will participate in the election of Pope Benedict's successor. Only cardinals under the age of eighty are qualified to vote; the maximum number of cardinal electors is 120—a limit exceeded by Pope John Paul II in 2001 and 2003. On February 11, there were 118 cardinals who were under eighty, but on February 21, Cardinal Lubomyr Husar, the former Major Archbishop of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church turned eighty, [and] will therefore be disqualified. Sixty-seven of the Cardinal Electors were appointed cardinal by Pope Benedict XVI, while the other fifty were appointed by Pope John Paul II.

The election process is known as a *conclave* ("under lock and key"), a secret assembly of the cardinals. The original regulations stated that the conclave could not begin until fifteen days after the See became vacant. However, Pope Benedict issued a decree on February 13, 2013 that allows the cardinals to change the opening date of the conclave. The

cardinals will stay in the Vatican guest house, the *Casa Sanctae Marthae* (which will be scanned for bugging devices), and will be transported to and from the Apostolic Palace, the official residence of the pope. The Cardinals must take an oath of secrecy and are not permitted to have any contact with the outside world during the conclave. The election will take place in the Sistine Chapel, first used for the election of the pope in 1492 and used for every election since 1878 with the election of Leo XIII.

The election takes place with two ballots in the morning and two in the afternoon. A two-thirds majority is required for the election of the new pope. The ballots are burnt in a way to notify the outside world of the results: black smoke (no election) or white smoke (someone has been elected).

After someone is elected, the Dean of the College of Cardinals approaches the man and asks: *Do you accept your canonical election as Supreme Pontiff?* As soon as he has received the consent, he asks him: *By what name do you wish to be called?* At the moment of his acceptance, the person, if he is an ordained bishop, has all papal authority. The cardinals are not restricted to electing one of their own, but can elect anyone. So, if the person is not yet a bishop, he must be ordained immediately.

There is, then, ceremony on the balcony of Saint Peter Basilica when the election is announced to Rome and the world. The cardinal announces in Latin:

I announce to you a great joy: We have a Pope! (In Latin: Habemus Papam!) The Most Eminent and Most Reverend Lord, Lord [First Name] Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church [Last Name], Who takes for himself the name of [Papal Name].

You Are Peter

At one point, Jesus asked His disciples who people thought He was. Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Jesus told Peter that he knew this only through divine inspiration and then said, "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:18-19).

The Papacy is about power: power to do the right thing. No matter the obstacles (even the gates of hell), the Pope has the power to shepherd the Church to safe pastures. The Pope is entrusted with the power to keep us united and to guide the Church with the confidence that we are living in the truth. It is indeed a source of great joy that we Catholics can say, *Habemus Papam!* □

About the Author

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

Pope Benedict's Message to the 48th World Day of Prayer for Vocations

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

The 48th World Day of Prayer for Vocations [which was celebrated on May 15, 2011], invites us to reflect on the theme: "Proposing Vocations in the Local Church." Seventy years ago, Venerable Pius XII established the Pontifical Work of Priestly Vocations. Similar bodies, led by priests and members of the lay faithful, were subsequently established by bishops in many dioceses as a response to the call of the Good Shepherd who, "when he saw the crowds, had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd", and went on to say: "The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest!" (Mt 9:36-38).

The work of carefully encouraging and supporting vocations finds a radiant source of inspiration in those places in the Gospel where Jesus calls His disciples to follow Him and trains them with love and care. We should pay close attention to the way that Jesus called his closest associates to proclaim the Kingdom of God (cf. Lk 10:9). In the first place, it is clear that the first thing He did was to pray for them: before calling them, Jesus spent the night alone in prayer, listening to the will of the Father (cf. Lk 6:12) in a spirit of interior detachment from mundane concerns. It is Jesus' intimate conversation with the Father which results in the calling of His disciples. Vocations to the ministerial priesthood and to the consecrated life are first and foremost the fruit of constant contact with the living God and insistent prayer lifted up to the "Lord of the harvest," whether in parish communities, in Christian families or in groups specifically devoted to prayer for vocations.

At the beginning of His public life, the Lord called some fishermen on the shore of the Sea of Galilee: "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men" (Mt 4:19). He revealed his messianic mission to them by the many "signs" which showed His love for humanity and the gift of the Father's mercy. Through his words and his way of life he prepared them to carry on his saving work. Finally, knowing "that His hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father" (Jn 13:1), He entrusted to them the memorial of His Death and Resurrection, and before ascending into heaven He sent them out to the whole world with the command: "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19).

It is a challenging and uplifting invitation that Jesus addresses to those to whom he says: "Follow me!" He invites them to become His friends, to listen attentively to His Word and to live with Him. He teaches them complete commitment to God and to the extension of His kingdom in accordance with the law of the Gospel: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (Jn 12:24). He invites them to leave behind their own narrow agenda and their notions of self-fulfilment in order to

immerse themselves in another will, the will of God, and to be guided by it. He gives them an experience of fraternity, one born of that total openness to God (cf. Mt 12:49-50) which becomes the hallmark of the community of Jesus: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35).

It is no less challenging to follow Christ today. It means learning to keep our gaze fixed on Jesus, growing close to him, listening to his word and encountering him in the sacraments; it means learning to conform our will to His. ... The Lord does not fail to call people ... to share in His mission and to serve the Church in the ordained ministry and in the consecrated life. The Church is "called to safeguard this gift, to esteem it and love it. She is responsible for the birth and development of priestly vocations" (John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 41).

Particularly in these times, ... every Christian community, every member of the Church, needs consciously to feel responsibility for promoting vocations. It is important to encourage and support those who show clear signs of a call to priestly life and religious consecration, ... as they respond "yes" to God and the Church.

It is essential that every local Church become more sensitive and attentive to the pastoral care of vocations ...

I address a particular word to you, my dear brother Bishops. ... you should "foster priestly and religious vocations as much as possible ... The Lord needs you to cooperate with Him in ensuring that his call reaches the hearts of those whom he has chosen.

The Second Vatican Council explicitly reminded us that "the duty of fostering vocations pertains to the whole Christian community, which should exercise it above all by a fully Christian life" (*Optatam Totius*, 2). ...

Dear brothers and sisters, your commitment to the promotion and care of vocations becomes most significant and pastorally effective when carried out in the unity of the Church and in the service of communion. ...

The ability to foster vocations is a hallmark of the vitality of a local Church. With trust and perseverance let us invoke the aid of the Virgin Mary, that by the example of her own acceptance of God's saving plan and her powerful intercession, every community will be more and more open to saying "yes" to the Lord, who is constantly calling new labourers to his harvest. With this hope, I cordially impart to all my Apostolic Blessing. □

He is Risen! So When Do We Celebrate?

This Is The Day that Lord Has Made; Let Us Rejoice and Be Glad In It (Psalm 118:24).

by Chorbishop John D. Faris

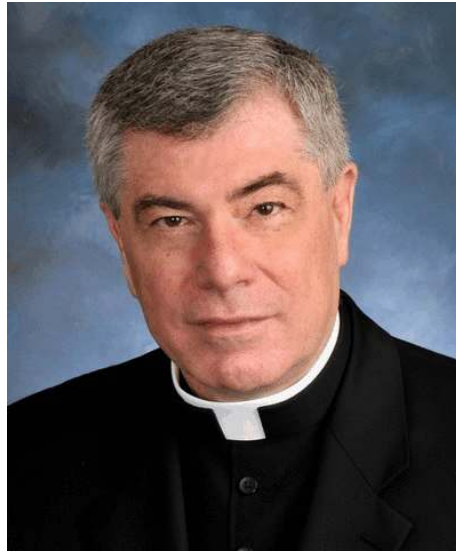
St. John of Kronstadt Russian Orthodox Church is a lovely church across the street from Saint Louis Gonzaga Catholic Church. Last year on Easter Sunday, an altar server asked me why there was so little activity at the Orthodox Church. Hoping to get off easy, I explained that the Orthodox Church would celebrate Easter the following Sunday. He found that to be odd and asked, "We're both Christians, right?" I had to admit that, yes, both churches placed their hope in the Resurrection of Jesus, but that we cannot agree on when to celebrate it. (This year, we celebrate Easter on March 31; for the Russian Orthodox Church, it is May 5!)

The disputes over when to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus go back to the very early Church. Before examining the long and complex history of the disputes, let us reflect on the very first "Holy Week." Like the eyewitness accounts of any event, the Gospel writers differ on details, so we must make a few presumptions and slightly simplify things.

Crucifixion and Resurrection

Jesus was crucified on a Friday. (This is why Christians hold Friday to be a day of penance: *But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day* Mark 2:20). Jewish law required that the corpse not be left on the cross overnight because a crucified person was under God's curse and would defile the land (Deuteronomy 21:22-23), so His Body was removed from the Cross before sunset.

Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man and a secret disciple of Jesus, approached Pilate and asked for the body (John 19:38-42). Pilate, after confirming that Jesus had been dead for some time, gave permission. Joseph then prepared for a traditional Jewish burial; he



Chorbishop John Faris

purchased fine linen that would serve as a shroud and Nicodemus, another disciple, bought spices (John 19:38-42 and Mark 15:46). They, then, went to Golgotha to remove the body from the Cross and prepare it for burial. Because the Sabbath - when no work could be done - was soon to begin, they hurriedly took the body from the Cross, applied the spices to it, wrapped it in the linen and placed it in a tomb that had already been prepared for Joseph and his family. An utterance made earlier by Jesus proved true even in death, *Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head* (Matthew 8:20). Mary Magdalene and another woman named Mary sat near the tomb (Matthew 27:61).

Jesus predicted that He would remain in the tomb for three days, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up* (John 2:19). It is interesting that the opponents of Jesus, the chief priests and the Pharisees recalled this statement and asked Pilate to post a guard at the tomb so that the disciples of Jesus could not steal the body and claim that Jesus rose from the dead (Matthew 27:62-65).

The Bible does not contain an account of the moment of the Resurrection, so we do not know when Jesus arose from

the dead. We do know that on Sunday, the first workday for the Jews, some women went to the tomb in order to prepare the body properly. They were concerned as to who would roll the large stone closing the entrance of the tomb. To their shock, the stone was rolled away and the body was gone. A young man, dressed in white said to them, *Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; He is not here. Look, this is where they laid Him* (Mark 16:5-6).

Later Jesus was to appear to Mary Magdalene and other disciples, but it is this, the day of discovery of the empty tomb that was fixed in the minds and hearts of His followers. It was on this day that we discovered that death had been conquered! This day is the cause of our joy, our celebration...but when to do so?

Disputes Over the Day of Celebration

In the early centuries, not everyone celebrated the Feast of the Resurrection on a Sunday. The early Church focused on the fact that Jesus was crucified on 14 Nisan in the Jewish calendar, the day before Passover (a moveable feast based on the lunar calendar which can occur either in March or April). Some Christians in western Turkey, wanting to retain the Old Testament tradition, celebrated the *Christian Passover* on the day before Jewish Passover - no matter what day of the week it fell on - and came to be known as "the Fourteeners" (recalling the 14th day of the month of Nisan). The tradition seems to be quite ancient. Saint Polycarp, a bishop in the region, defended the practice in 120 AD, arguing that he had learned of the practice from Saint John the Apostle.

This was not, however, the practice for the majority of Christians, who celebrated the Resurrection on the *first Sunday after Passover*. At first variation in the day of the celebration was tolerated, but Pope Victor I in 195

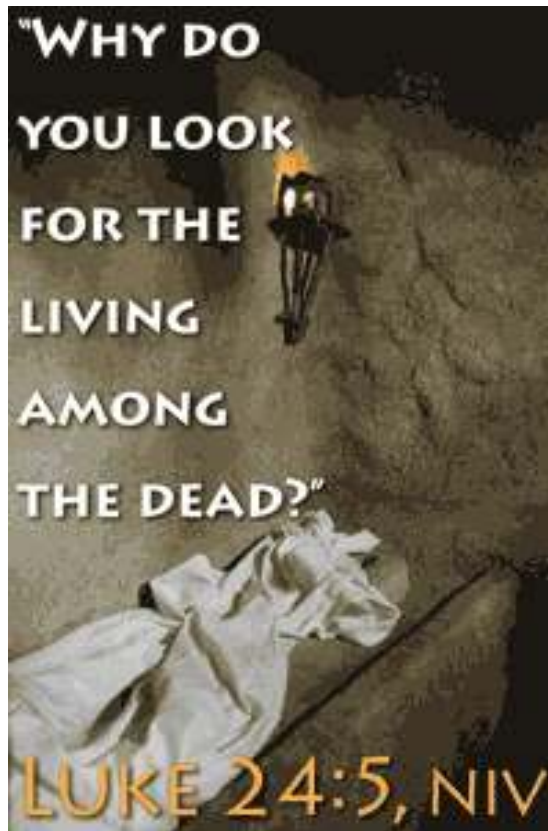
AD, wanted to bring a uniformity of practice throughout the Church. Letters were exchanged and heated meetings were held, but eventually the Pope relented since the custom was an ancient one. The practice of celebrating Easter on a day other than Sunday eventually died out by the fourth century, but controversies about the date of the celebration did not end.

Council of Nicea

Throughout history bishops have assembled with their experts to discuss significant issues; such assemblies are called *ecumenical councils*. The Catholic Church has conducted twenty-one ecumenical councils, the most recent one being Vatican II (1962 - 65). In 325 AD, an ecumenical council was conducted in Nicea (Iznik, in present-day Turkey). One of the questions facing the assembly was the date of Easter.

By that time, all Christians were celebrating Easter on the same day - Sunday - but there was diversity in the dates. The Syriac Christians subject to Antioch celebrated Easter on the Sunday after the Jews celebrated Passover. The rest of the Christians in the Roman Empire observed the practice of Alexandria and calculated the date of Easter for themselves. Such a divergence of methods of calculations meant that the date of Easter in Antioch and Alexandria did not always coincide. A meeting of bishops in Arles, France, in 314, called for a uniform date and recommended that the Bishop of Rome send out a letter every year announcing the date of Easter.

The bishops at the Council of Nicea decided to calculate Easter without regard for the Jewish calendar and its computation of Passover. The basic principle formulated at Nicea is that Easter is to be celebrated on the Sunday following the full moon after the spring equinox. The determination of the full moon and the vernal equinox was not made through astronomical calculation, but rather, the spring equinox was fixed to fall on March 21, while a full moon was fixed at the fourteenth day of the lunar month.



Julian And Gregorian Calendars

In 46 BC, Emperor Julius Caesar reformed the Roman calendar, and his system, the *Julian Calendar*, was used for the next 1600 years. (As a reward, a month, *July*, was soon named after him; his successor *Augustus* was honored with having the next month named after him in 8 BC.) There was a problem with the Julian calendar: it calculated the year to be 365.25 days, eleven minutes short of the actual orbit of the earth around the sun. This difference resulted in a drift of three days for every 400 years. In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII introduced a new calendar to correct the ten day drift - the spring equinox was then occurring on March 11, instead of March 21, as fixed at the Council of Nicea. The new calendar (named after the pope, hence *Gregorian Calendar*) skipped ten days, which meant that the year 1582 would proceed normally until October 4; the next day was October 15. This anomaly meant that Saint Teresa of Avila died on the night of October 4 - 15, 1582.

The Gregorian calendar was adopted by most Catholic countries at some point in 1582, but other non-Catholic countries and churches were resistant to the change. For example, the British Empire (which at the time included the east coast of North America) wanted nothing to do with this Catholic contrivance and adopted the calendar only in 1752 (by that time, there was a need to skip eleven days). Most of the Orthodox Churches continue to resist the adoption of this Catholic calendar and still follow the Julian calendar, and this is the reason that the Orthodox church across the street observes Easter on another date.

A Common Date For the Celebration of Easter

A difference in the dates of Easter is not the gravest problem facing the Church of Christ today. In fact, there might be something positive to it: it allows us to celebrate the great event twice each year! However, it is problematic that we are unable to agree on it.

There has been much discussion on establishment of a common date: One proposal for resolution is to establish a fixed date each year. This is problematic because it ignores a tradition established in the second century that Easter would always be celebrated on a Sunday. Another proposal is that Easter be celebrated on a Sunday within a range of seven dates; the second Sunday of April has been discussed.

The Orthodox Church attempted to revise its calendar in 1923; the proposal was never implemented, but schisms (divisions) within the Orthodox Church arose. In the context of preparations for the Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church, the Orthodox Church has examined the issue since 1961, but no plan has been implemented. The World Council of Churches proposed a method of computing the date of Easter at a summit in Aleppo, Syria, in 1997; again, it was never to be implemented.

(Continues on page 17)

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania *A New Beginning*



by Amal Kouyoumdji

Whispers of anticipation and relief flew swiftly through the Church when, on February 10, 2013, Father Vincent Farhat, Administrator, announced to the congregation that "next week, the hall will be open... forever," and that the annual St. Maron Feast Day celebration, although slightly delayed, would be held the following week, in keeping with a long standing tradition here at St. Maron Church in Philadelphia, Penn.

Since November 17, 2012, the Church Hall had been undergoing a much needed renovation, and so on Sunday, February 17, 2013, immediately following the Divine Liturgy, a gentle but steady stream of parishioners came flowing through the hall entrance still awaiting a door to adorn it. For the first time in weeks, the smell of *kibbeh* and grape leaves overpowered that of paint and spackle. Before he blessed the meal prepared by the Ladies of St. Maron, Father Vincent was quick to point out that the hall was not complete, and that several final touches remain to be added over the course of the following weeks.

Although delighted by the prospects, the attendees did not seem concerned by the 'how' and the 'when'. For everyone now knows that the Church Hall is so much more to the parishioners than freshly painted walls, beautifully laid tiles, new stairways, and shiny fixtures. It is where they gather, where they connect, where they make future lunch and dinner plans. It is where new friendships are born and old ones continue to flourish. It is where their children come together to Sunday school to learn and grow in their faith.

So clearly, today, we don't only celebrate our Patron Saint's Feast Day, but we also celebrate being part of a vibrant community that strives to innovate itself while strongly holding on to traditions, a community that looks ahead while lovingly preserving its heritage.

But isn't all of that what makes a home? Isn't home, after all, a safe haven where future and past meet, where memories, old and new, mingle? Isn't home that familiar

place that, when all is said and done, withstands the sometimes cruel unpredictability of our lives?

Today we are all home, reminiscing and dreaming at the same time, proud as can be of every speck of dust that still lingers in this room. Today we are home reveling in an all-new understanding of the beautiful words engraved on the statue of St. Maron now standing in the Vatican, words that transcend both history and geography. "The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon." □

Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania *Saint Maron Feast Day*



Members of the Pastor's Advisory Board along with Reverend Hanna Karam, Pastor. First row left to right: Theresa Kasmak, Maryann Nockley, Theresa Shiner, Sabah Demace, Peter Atie, Joe Blaum, Father Hanna Karam. Second row left to right: Rosa Kahlife McCracken, Edward Shiner, Subdeacon Crosby Sparks, James Ellis, John Berezna. □

On Sunday, February 10, 2013, parishioners and friends of St. Anthony/St. George Maronite Church, Wilkes-Barre, Penn., celebrated the Feast of St. Maron. Following the Divine Liturgy dinner was held at the Wyoming Valley Country Club in Hanover Township. Mr. Edward Shiner, former Executive Director of the National Apostolate of Maronites, was the guest speaker. His talk, "What Is St. Maron Thinking," was dedicated to the late Mr. Albert G. Albert, parishioner and proud Maronite. □

Food For Thought

"I hear this Word of God addressed to me in a special way during this moment of my life. Thank you! The Lord is calling me to "scale the mountain," to dedicate myself still more to prayer and to meditation. But this does not mean abandoning the Church - on the contrary, if God asks this of me, it is to serve the Church with the same dedication and the same love with which I have tried to do so hitherto, but in a way that is more adapted to my age and my strength."

Pope Benedict XVI, Final Angelus Address of his Papacy

Birmingham, Alabama Annual Festival

by Wanda Elkhourie

The St. Elias Maronite Catholic Church in Birmingham, Alabama, is having its Fifteenth Annual Lebanese Food and Cultural Festival on April 12 - 13, 2013. There is no admission charge.

The Festival will feature Lebanese delicacies as well as Lebanese sweets and Lebanese ice cream.

Many cultural events explaining the rich history and tradition of the Maronite Catholic faith, which originated in Lebanon, will be held during the two day event. Some of the cultural events will include a Heritage Room where demonstrations of the Birmingham Lebanese Community and cultural displays from Lebanon will occur. Also, daytime tours of the newly renovated Church will be held each day. The tours will include a discussion of the famous stained glass windows surrounding the Church and the use during Church services of Aramaic, the native language spoken by Jesus.

Nightly entertainment will again feature the renowned Amin Sultan Band from New York outside in a tent with music and dancing from 6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. The public is also invited to attend the Liturgy service which will start at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday. Inside the main Hall, Friday night and Saturday, on stage, the youth will perform traditional Lebanese dances.

Beginning on Friday night and concluding Saturday at 8:30 p.m., a Silent Auction will be held. Donations to the silent auction include two original works of art by the renowned artist Nall, designer sink and faucet, jewelry, Lebanese Dinner for twelve, and a Website Design and Management package.

Twenty-five percent of all proceeds for the Festival will go to local and national charities other than St. Elias. In the last fourteen years St Elias has donated over \$275,000 to other charities from Festival proceeds. Check out our website at: http://www.stelias.org/festival_2013.html. □



Gregory III Laham of Antioch on February 21. "No one has the right to make excuses and deny responsibility for the massacre, destruction, explosions, riots, nor for the current crisis, hatred, rancor and enmity between the children of the same homeland."

"We renew our appeal to the whole world to end the influx of weapons to Syria," he added. "We ask the international community and the world's more powerful countries to support Syria in its efforts to implement the way of dialogue and reach a diplomatic solution to the crisis ... We extend our appeal to Russia and the United States of America to continue their sincere efforts to support progress towards dialogue and a comprehensive political solution. The patience of Syrians is exhausted: their suffering is exacerbated in every detail of their daily life."

"We ask His Holiness the Pope and leaders of the Holy Apostolic See of Rome to launch a diplomatic initiative of the Catholic Church based on its global spiritual influence," he continued.

Patriarch Gregory, 79, has led the Melkite Greek Catholic Church since 2000. The Eastern Catholic church, which is in full communion with the Holy See, has 1.35 million members. □ (CWNews, February 26, 2013)

From the Book Shelf

Book of Offering: The new translation of our beautiful Maronite Divine Liturgy in English, Arabic and Syriac has been promulgated by the Maronite Patriarch for use in all of the English speaking eparchies throughout the world.

- **The congregation's copy** (5" x 6", 1950 pages, soft leather-like cover) covers the entire Liturgical year.
- **The celebrant's copy** (8.5" x 11" Hard cover) is three volumes:
 - **Volume one:** from the Sundays of the Church up to Ascension Thursday.
 - **Volume two:** from Pentecost Sunday to the end of the Liturgical year.
 - **Volume three** is the Book of Anaphoras.

The Book of Offering is available through Saint Maron Publications for \$25 (congregation version) and \$200 for the celebrant version. Shipping is extra.

To order your copy (ies) please write to:

Saint Maron Publications
4611 Sadler Road
Glen Allen, Virginia 23060

For a complete list of books carried by Saint Maron Publications, please visit: www.stmaron.org. □

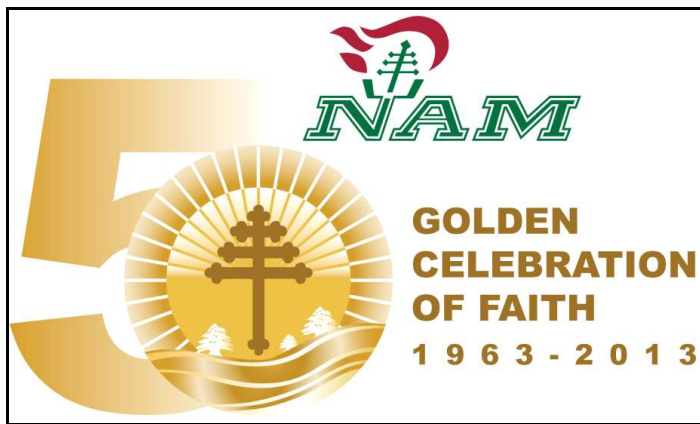


Melkite Patriarch Pleads For Peace in Syria

Following explosions in Damascus that killed 53 and injured 235, the head of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church has urged the international community to stop sending arms to Syria.

"We make a heartfelt appeal to the conscience of everyone worldwide, to heads of State, especially of Arab countries, leaders of institutions and international assemblies, peace activists, His Holiness the Pope and Christian bishops everywhere, imploring them to hear our cry and the sufferings and pain of the Syrian people," said Patriarch

NAM Annual Spring Raffle



The National Apostolate of Maronites [NAM] Presents its 21st Annual Spring Raffle - 2013. Only four hundred tickets are printed. Donation is \$100 per ticket. The Raffle consists of the following cash prizes:

- \$10,000 for First Prize
- \$3000 for Second Prize
- \$2000 for Third Prize
- \$1500 for Fourth Prize
- \$1000 for the Fifth Prize.

This year's drawing will be held at the conclusion of the Spring Board meeting on April 21, 2013, at St. Therese Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The Spring Raffle is an important part of the NAM annual budget. To purchase a personal ticket(s) or to help NAM in selling tickets please contact:

Mike J. Naber, Executive Director
NAM, P.O. Box 717, Yonkers, NY 10702
914-964-3070 (phone), 914-964-3071 (fax)
nam@namnews.org, www.namnews.org

All requests and payments must be received by April 12, 2013. You can purchase your tickets online using a credit card, or request that it to be mailed to you. □

Scholarships Available

The National Apostolate of Maronites (NAM) is happy to announce its annual Scholarship Program:

- **The John A. Solomon Memorial NAM/MYO Scholarship** is available for high school seniors who are active members of MYO.
- **The Naomi and Paul Kassouf Scholarship** is available for high school seniors whose parents are members of NAM.
- **The Thomas and Jennie Ayoob Memorial Scholarship** is available for students who are already in college.
- **CNR Scholarship:** Two scholarships to the College of New Rochelle, N. Y., are available for high school seniors whose parents are members of NAM. CNR is offering a

scholarship of \$7000 to its School of Arts and Science (Women only) and a \$7000 scholarship to its School of Nursing (co-ed).

Lebanon Scholarships Semester Abroad

- **USEK Scholarship:** The University of the Holy Spirit - Kaslik, Lebanon, is offering five scholarships to college students who are members of NAM or children of members. Each scholarship includes full tuition and dormitory and \$500 once a semester is completed.
- **NDU Scholarship:** Notre Dame University-Louaize, Lebanon, is offering two scholarships for the Spring or Fall semester, available to college students who are members of NAM or children of members. Each scholarship includes full tuition and dormitory and \$500 once a semester is completed.

The deadline for applications is May 15, 2013. This is a "hard and fast deadline" and, in fairness to all applicants, no applications will be accepted after this date. Please ask your pastor for an application. Send all applications to the NAM office at P.O. Box 717, Yonkers, NY 10702. The scholarship winners will be announced at the NAM convention. For more information call Robert Zugby, Chairman, Education Committee, at 301-345-2065 or by email at rczugby@aol.com. □

Pleasantville, New Jersey Flowers Project

The community of Our Lady Star of the East Maronite Mission, Pleasantville, N.J., celebrated the feast of Saint Valentine at the church hall with food and music. Father Vincent Farhat, Pastor of Saint Maron in Philadelphia, Penn., and many of his parishioners also attended. In addition, the Ladies of Our Lady Star of the East with the Youth Organization and the Young Adults sold flowers in nearby stores and would like to thank all who supported this successful project. □

He Is Risen

Continued from page 14

The Catholic Church declared a willingness to assign the feast of Easter to a fixed Sunday that would be agreeable to all Christians (*Constitution on the sacred liturgy*, Appendix, December 4, 1963).

There is an increasing amount of pressure from civil authorities to have a fixed date that can be incorporated as a holiday in civil calendars. It is interesting that in the Middle East, where a variety of Christian denominations co-exist - and there is a critical need for a united Christian witness - there is an openness to a common celebration of Easter. Let us hope that this spirit can spread throughout the Church of Christ. □



**Pride in our Past
Faith in our Future**

July 3-7th 2013
Tampa, Florida



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Camera-Ready Art: Good, clean, black & white (or color), images & text.

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P.O. Box 717
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If payment by check, include with this form made
Payable to : **NAM 2013 Journal**
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No ads will be accepted after June 1, 2013

Please check the ad requested and fill in the total cost.

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(No additional charge for photos)

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July 3-7
2013
Tampa, Florida



**GOLDEN
CELEBRATION
OF FAITH**

Pre Registration Deadline: Monday, June 10, 2013

Please complete all information, or Register online at www.namnews.org

Incomplete forms will not be processed. Please PRINT legibly - You will receive an email confirmation.

Primary Registrant - Please add additional family members on reverse side

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ **Check all that apply:**
 Address: _____ [] NAM Member [] NAM Delegate
 City/State/Zip: _____ [] NAM Board [] Ord. St. Sharbel
 Phone: _____ Email: _____ [] Conv. Comm. [] Child [5 - 11]
 Parish: _____ [] Youth (12-18) [] Yng Ad [18-35]
 Package/Program purchased: _____ [] Vegetarian Age: _____

PACKAGES ONLY - Enter # of packages desired and make sure to fill-in totals and grand Totals.
 The "Covenant of Behavior" MUST be completed and SIGNED for all Child and Youth Registrants.
 NAM members, whose 2013 dues have been paid, will receive \$15 off of the Full Adult Package and \$10 off other packages.
 This discount is void after the pre-registration deadline of 10 June 2013. If you wish to pay your dues or become a member with this registration, please send a separate check payable to NAM.
 Day programs for Young Adults, and Young Adult Professionals are additional and not included in the packages.
 Individual event registrations are available online only.

Package Options Does not include Hotel Rooms	ADULT 18 YEARS OLD +		Youth 12 to 18 yrs.		CHILD 5 to 11 yrs.		Entertainment Only 35 and under - No Meals Included Entry after 10 PM - Valid Student ID required	
	PRE	LATE	PRE	LATE	PRE	LATE	PRE	LATE
FULL (WED. - SUN)	#___ @ \$300	#___ @ \$330	#___ @ \$270	#___ @ \$300	#___ @ \$185	#___ @ \$215	#___ @ \$120	#___ @ \$150
LONG WEEKEND (THU. - SUN)	#___ @ \$270	#___ @ \$300	#___ @ \$240	#___ @ \$270	#___ @ \$160	#___ @ \$190	#___ @ \$100	#___ @ \$130
WEEKEND (FRI. - SUN)	#___ @ \$240	#___ @ \$270	#___ @ \$210	#___ @ \$240	#___ @ \$140	#___ @ \$170	#___ @ \$80	#___ @ \$110
SATURDAY & SUNDAY	#___ @ \$185	#___ @ \$215	#___ @ \$155	#___ @ \$185	#___ @ \$95	#___ @ \$125	#___ @ \$60	#___ @ \$90
TOTALS	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

DAY PROGRAMS

Thur. thru Sat. • Child #___ at \$45* • Fri. and Sat. Child #___ at \$30*
• Thur. thru Sat. Young Adults #___ at \$100* • Fri. and Sat. Young Adults #___ at \$50*

** These events are age specific. Onsite and late registration will incur a \$20 late fee*

OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS

THURSDAY, JULY 4 - Tampa Shopping Tour [Transportation & Tour] 1:30 PM - 5:30 PM	#___ X \$20 = \$
FRIDAY, JULY 5- Salvador Dali Museum [Transportation & Tour] 1:30 PM - 5:30 PM	#___ X \$30 = \$
SATURDAY, JULY 6 - Ybor City tour [Transportation & Tour] 9:30AM - 11:45 AM	#___ X \$20 = \$

GRAND TOTAL \$

Make checks payable to "NAM Convention: and mail to: NAM - P.O.Box 717 - Yonkers, NY 10702-4611. Fax: 914 964 3071

If using a credit card - complete the information below - DO NOT SEND CASH

Credit Card: [] Visa [] MC [] AMEX [] Discover **Acct#** _____ **Exp. Date:** _____

V-code [3 or 4 digit# on front / back of card] _____ **Signature** _____

OFFICE USE ONLY: AMT. PD: _____ **DATE:** _____ **CHECK#:** _____ **REG#:** _____

For Hotel Reservation call
 Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel & Marina 813-221-4900 - code: NAM Convention
 \$99 per night, single/double/triple/quad. Rate valid until June 10, 2013.

Pope Benedict XVI's Bold Invitation

Continued from Page 1

Notice that the Pope does not "resign." Patriarchs and bishops resign, because they send in their resignation to the Pope. But the Pope used the word "renounce," which is the same word we also embrace during Lent, to renounce our own individual will and embrace God, and to let go of whatever does not lead us, or those we serve, to be closer to God. What an act of humility and love for the Church!

The Holy Father asked all of us once again to entrust the Church to the True Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and he asked the Blessed Mother to intercede for the Church's Cardinal electors, so that by the Holy Spirit they may now elect a worthy successor. In another gesture of humility and love he asked God and us to forgive his shortcomings, and pledged to live the rest of his life in devoted service to the Church through prayer.

What a great witness to faith in God, and in his Church! The Holy Father's talk to the Cardinals, a beautiful talk given in Latin (so we know that this was quite freely and soberly thought and prayed out), can be read here:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2013/February/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20130211_declaratio_en.html

I hope everyone will read it and during this Lent be inspired by our Holy Father's bold, loving and wise action, which can help inspire all of us to renounce our own will and embrace whatever we firmly believe is the will of our loving God.

May God bless Pope Benedict the man, the Christian, the Bishop, the Pope, and the faithful "Servant of the Servants of God," and bless the Church, the ship of Peter, as she

continues to live and preach the Good News of Jesus Christ.☐

+ Gregory Mansour
Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

San Francisco, California, Silver Massabki Award



by Nicole Rishwan

Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Church community in the San Francisco Bay area, Calif., celebrated St. Maron's Day festivities on Sunday, February 10, 2013.

During the Liturgy, all officers and members of the different parish organizations and committees received a blessing for this coming year. At the end of the Divine Liturgy, Ibrahim and Louisa Sahyoun received the Silver Massabki medals. Elian Boukhalil received the Faith of The Mountain award. A reception was held afterward, in the Maronite Educational Center, and was sponsored by the Maroun family. ☐