



**EPARCHY OF SAINT MARON OF BROOKLYN
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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

This Christmas season is the perfect time to strengthen and affirm something so very dear to all of us: **marriage**. This past year in each pastoral visit I made, I have tried to “tell it like it is” about the lofty beauty and the practical difficulties of marriage. What I have found over and over again is that marriage is worthy of every effort.

In the **National Pastoral Initiative for Marriage**, the United States Catholic Bishops call attention to the meaning and value of married life for the Church and for society. Bringing Catholic belief into dialogue with contemporary needs, the Bishops urge all Catholics to become a community of hope and help for marriages and to join others in building a culture of marriage. The Initiative weaves together the Catholic faith tradition and the experience of married couples in order to offer guidance and resources to promote, strengthen, sustain and restore marriages. More information about the Initiative can be found at www.usccb.org/laity/marriage/npim.

The Maronite Church also realizes our obligation to join in this common Initiative. Drawing from our rich tradition and from contemporary wisdom, we are able to offer much on the subject of marriage. To see how the Eparchy of St. Maron is trying to do its part, please visit www.stmaron.org. See especially the new Office for Family and the Sanctity of Life, as well as the articles on Family Life.

The greatest spouses of all time, Saint Joseph and the Virgin Mary, are a great source of spiritual support for all spouses who seek their help. May their prayer help each of us to do our part to protect, strengthen and restore marriage as the sacrament revealing God’s life giving love and peace in the world.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Gregory John Mansour

GJM/cm