

Maronite History Committee

*History balances the frustration of "how far we have to go" with the satisfaction of "how far we have come."
-Author unknown*

In the late 19th century a significant wave of Maronites found their way to the United States to escape the famine and oppression taking place in the Middle East. While many of the immigrants did not plan on staying, more than one hundred years later second, third and fourth generations of Maronites and friends find themselves in search of their history and building upon the roots established by those early immigrants.

In 2016 we will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Maronite Exarchate in Detroit, Michigan, the first time we were given a Maronite Bishop to serve the Church here in the United States. It was in 1966 that Archbishop Francis M. Zayek became our first Maronite Bishop. When he came, he found a vibrant collection of Maronite parishes under the jurisdiction of local Latin bishops. There was already established the National Association (later Apostolate) of Maronites, a National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in Ohio, a Maronite Seminary in Washington D.C., and a desire on the part of many roll up their sleeves and serve.

While many efforts have been made to tell the history of the Maronites in the United States, there is now a **Maronite Historical Committee** in place that will document the history of the first one hundred plus years and unfold that history not only within the pages of a book format but also in various media formats familiar in today's technical arena.

There is also now a website in which we are beginning to post the histories obtained. If you are interested in watching this work in process develop (and add your own stories) check out our site at www.usmaronites.com. Because the Church is people this is a story of all who have found their home in the Maronite Church and continue to seek a stronger relationship with God in the beautiful tradition and mysteries of the Maronite Church.

The Maronite Historical Committee met recently in St. Louis on Saturday, October 16th and charted the next tasks in their mission to tell the story. The Committee agreed upon a Parish History Outline. This outline represents the minimal information sought from each parish/mission.

Early history of the parish (Immigration to establishment)

- Places (villages) of origin of the early immigrants
- Visiting priests who served
- First resident priest
- First places of worship
- First waves of immigrants
- Assimilation over the years into the United States
- Major challenges of parish development
- Information relative to land/property
- Clergy – chronology and bio of those who served the parish
- Historical demographics

Current parish

- Recent immigrants and members assimilation into parish community
- Current clergy bio
- Parish population

- Organizations and groups affiliated with parish
- Significant events in the parish
- Profile of parish property/complex including cemeteries (if applicable)
- Current challenges or opportunities
- Role of the parish in the larger community

Future of parish

- Plans for renovation or expansion
- Plans to increase parish interest or expansion
- Plans for parish outreach

Our next big push will be to collect pictures, videos, recordings, etc. that help to tell the story of our Maronite Church within the United States. If you would like to contribute to our efforts by sharing pictures, recordings or anything else you may have of historical value please contact Ramona Milford at ramonamarie@gmail.com. Your original items will be returned to you after copies are made and you will be credited with your contribution.

We thank God for the generous time and talents of the Historical Committee made up of members of both eparchies in the United States, assigned by Bishops Gregory Mansour and Robert Shaheen, namely, Joanne Andara, Rosanne Solomon, Jeanette Wyrick, Randa Hakim, Evelyn Karam Small, Louis Ragy, Chorbishop Seely Beggiani and Fr. Abdallah Zaidan, M.L.M.. Please keep our work and this project in your prayers.

Ramona Milford