The Feast of the Sacred Heart, June 19, 2009, Pope Benedict XVI declared the opening of the Year of the Priest, and established Saint John Vianney, the Curé of Ars, patron of parish priests, as our example to follow. It is no coincidence that the Year of the Priest begins as the Year of Saint Paul concludes. Both Saint Paul and Saint John Vianney were missionary men committed to the message that all priests proclaim by their sacrificial lives: Jesus Christ is Lord!

For the sake of this Lord, Saint Paul gloried in all his hardships and Saint John Vianney desired nothing more than to be conformed to and to lead others to Him. In fact, on his way to his assignment as parish priest of Ars, a tiny town of three hundred in southern France, he asked a young boy for directions. After listening, the priest told the boy, “You have shown me the way to Ars, I will show you the way to heaven.” Saint John spent the rest of his life doing just that, hearing confessions, living ascetically, preaching carefully the message of salvation, loving his flock, and often doing their penances for them when they left the confessional.

When I reflect on the priests who have touched my own life, the most endearing quality, above all else, was their sacrificial love for others, their willingness to go out of their way for the good of others, not in a showy manner, nor to be noticed by anyone, but because “being for others” was part of who they are as priests. When I noticed how they gave of themselves so generously, without requiring much in return, I too was inspired to be part of their ranks. I learned that priesthood is not all about me, but about Christ, others, and His Church.

How important is the role of the priest in helping us draw close to God. He is the heart of the parish – the place where the love and mercy of Christ are made real for us. Although the priest is a man like others - he hurts, he needs, he errs – yet he forgives, anoints, baptizes and blesses in the name of Christ, and gives Him to us in the Bread of Life.

The great hope of this year dedicated to deeper reflection and appreciation for priests has been articulated beautifully by Pope Benedict:

“The aim of this Year for Priests is to support each priest’s struggle towards spiritual perfection, upon which the effectiveness of his ministry particularly depends, and to help priests, and with them the entire People of God, to rediscover and revive an awareness of the extraordinary and indispensable gift of Grace which the ordained ministry represents, for the person who receives it, for the entire Church, and for the world which would be lost without the real presence of Christ.”

I join with Bishop Robert Shaheen in this Year of the Priests and pray that we all would be better priests, attending with great care to our own spiritual perfection in Christ. Let us pray for priests, let us promote and work for vocations to the priesthood, let us redouble our efforts to support our priests, and may the prayer of the Mother of God, Mother of Priests, be with us.

+Gregory J Mansour
Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn
Schedule of Bishop Robert Shaheen

June 25, 2009
Los Angeles, Calif.

June 29-July 2, 2009
Annual Clergy Conference, Los Angeles, Calif.

July 1-5, 2009
Annual Maronite Convention, Los Angeles, Calif.

July 11, 2009
Dedication of St. Sharbel Apartments, Minneapolis, Minn., and Subdeaconate Ordination

July 21-24, 2009
Annual Maronite Youth Retreat, Ligonier [Pittsburgh], Penn.

July 26, 2009
Daughters of Saint Paul, Boston, Mass.

August 13, 2009
Presbyteral Council Meeting, Our Lady of Lebanon Shrine, North Jackson, Ohio

August 13-16, 2009
Annual Pilgrimage, Our Lady of Lebanon Shrine, North Jackson, Ohio

August 22-23, 2009
Memorial Mass, Danbury, Conn.

August 29-30, 2009
Ordination to the Order of Deacon, Chicago, Illinois

Eparchial Condolences

Chalabieh Haddad Kiwan, 54, of Zahle, Lebanon, the mother of Father Naji Kiwan, Pastor of Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Waterbury, Conn., passed away on Sunday, June 21, 2009 in Lebanon, after a lengthy struggle in her battle with cancer.

She is survived by her loving husband, Jalil, and four children, Father Naji, Michel, Nisrine, and Carine. She also leaves behind four brothers and two sisters as well as many cousins, nieces, nephews and friends.

A Memorial Divine Liturgy was celebrated for the repose of her soul on Wednesday, June 24, 2009, at Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Waterbury, Conn.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Our Lady of Lebanon Church, 8 East Mountain Road, Waterbury, CT 06706.

Bishops Gregory Mansour and Robert Shaheen, along with the clergy and faithful of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn and the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon extend their heartfelt sympathy and the promise of our prayers to Fr. Naji and his family. May Almighty God grant his servant Chalabieh eternal rest.

National Youth Workshop 2009

The National Maronite Youth Retreat will take place Tuesday, July 21, 2009, through Sunday, July 26, 2009, in Ligonier (Pittsburgh), Penn., at the Antiochian Village Conference and Retreat Center. Located in the foothills of the Laurel Mountains, the retreat center is surrounded by God’s finest natural creations and will serve as a spiritual and social backdrop for the summer retreat.

For more information about the retreat, please visit the youth office’s website at www.maroniteyouth.com, or email Father Gary at abounag1@hotmail.com or by phone at (330) 792-2371.
Eparchial Assignments

After having received the completed Protopresbyter ballots, His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, has made the following Protopresbyter appointments for a period of five years:

Appointed Msgr. Peter Fahed Azar as Protopresbyter of the New England Region of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn.

Appointed The Very Reverend James Root as Protopresbyter of the Mid Atlantic East Region of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn.

Appointed Fr. Georges Y. EL-Khalli as Protopresbyter of the Mid Atlantic West Region of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn.

Appointed Fr. Samuel Najjar as Protopresbyter of the Southern Region of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn.

Appointed Fr. Peter Boulos as Protopresbyter of the Far South Region of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn.

The protopresbyter is a priest who is placed over a particular region of the eparchy, consisting of several parishes or eparchial institutions (CCEO c.276).

The New England Region consists of the parishes and missions in Waterville, Me.; Shelbourne, Ve.; Dover, N.H.; Lawrence, Jamaica Plain (Boston), Worcester, Springfield, Brockton, Fall River and New Bedford, Mass.; Pawtucket, R.I.; Torrington, Waterbury and Danbury, Connecticut.

The Mid Atlantic East Region includes the parishes and mission in Brooklyn, Troy, and Utica, N.Y.; Somerset, N.J.; Easton, Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, Newtown Square and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The Mid Atlantic States West Region is comprised of the parishes and missions in Olean and Williamsville (Buffalo), N.Y.; New Castle, Carnegie (Pittsburgh), Aliquippa and Uniontown, Pennsylvania.

The Southern Region consists of the parishes, missions and institutions in Baltimore, Md.; Washington, D.C.; Glen Allen (Richmond) and Roanoke, Va.; Fayetteville and Raleigh, N.C.

The Far South Region includes the parishes and missions in Moore (Greenville), S.C.; Atlanta, Ga.; Jacksonville, Orlando, Melbourne, Tampa, West Palm Beach and Miami, Florida.

The Protopresbyters are ex-officio members of the Eparchial Presbyteral Council. Elections for five members of the Presbyteral Council, divided proportionally by years of ordination, took place at the Clergy Conference held June 29-July 2, in Los Angeles, California.

The Eparchy of Saint Maron Mourns Chorbishop Abi-Nader

Chorbishop Joseph Abi-Nader passed away at his residence in Lighthouse, Florida, on June 6, 2009.

Joseph Abi-Nader was born in Uniontown, Penn., on December 29, 1921. He accompanied his parents to Lebanon when he was three. He was educated at St. Joseph’s University, Beirut, Lebanon, and ordained a priest on June 28, 1948. Proficient in five languages, he became a professor of languages at St. Joseph’s University in 1949, and at St. Maron’s Seminary [Ghazir, Lebanon] in 1950. In 1954 he was appointed Pastor of St. Abda’s Church in Baabda, and in 1956 he became Pastor of St. Roch’s Church in Hazmieh.

Chorbishop Abi-Nader was transferred to the United States in 1957, where he was appointed Pastor of St. Joseph Church, Atlanta, Georgia. He was appointed Vice Chancellor (1967) and Chancellor (1972) of the Diocese of St. Maron - USA. In 1969 he was appointed honorary chaplain (Monsignor) by His Holiness Pope Paul VI. In 1973 he received the Knighthood of the Order of the Cedars of Lebanon. Archbishop Francis M. Zayek ordained him Chorbishop in 1975. In 1978, Chorbishop Abi-Nader founded, and through 1986 served as the Editor of THE CHALLENGE, the national Maronite newspaper and the forerunner to The Maronite Voice. Prior to THE CHALLENGE, Abi-Nader edited The Maronite Diocesan Newsletter. In recent years, he had been assisting at St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church in Lighthouse Point, Florida.

Last year, at Chorbishop Abi-Nader’s 60th Anniversary of Priesthood celebration at Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Miami, Florida, His Excellency Gregory Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, thanked Chorbishop Joseph Abi-Nader for “his role in building the Maronite faith in America, and for paving the way for all of today’s Maronite bishops and priests.”

Chorbishop Abi-Nader is survived by his loving nieces, Monica Abi-Nader Phares and her son Alexander of Coconut Grove, Florida; Sylvia Roger of Uniontown, Penn.; and Betty Wilson of Locust Grove, Virginia; and by numerous family members in the U.S., Lebanon, and several other countries.

He was preceded in death by his parents Shibien Joseph and Catherine Abi-Nader, brothers George S. Abi-Nader, Milan Abi-Nader, and Jean Abi-Nader, and by sisters Rita Gaspard, Rose Marie Antoon, Virginia Barnhouse, Iva Springer and Dorothy Roger.

Bishops Gregory Mansour and Robert Shaheen, along with the clergy and faithful of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn and the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon extend their heartfelt sympathy and the promise of our prayers to Chorbishop Abi-Nader’s family. May Almighty God grant his servant Joseph eternal rest.
Keeping the Tradition Alive

by Carla Haibi

On a corner of Henry and Remsen Streets in Brooklyn Heights, a majestic cathedral casts its shadow on the neighboring brownstones and streets lined with cherry blossom trees. Every day at 11 a.m., at Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Cathedral, singing bells signal the beginning of Mass, a ritual where parishioners, the majority Lebanese immigrants, gather to pray, give thanks and ask for peace in Lebanon and the world.

On a Sunday in mid-April, the church that seats 1200 is sparsely filled with 200 devoted parishioners who come to hear Mass celebrated in three languages, Arabic, English and Syriac. The creed and the readings are recited in English and then in Arabic and Syriac, a pattern followed through the hour-long mass. The choir also sings in multiple languages, accompanied by a great pipe organ.

The three languages symbolize that the Maronite church strives to unite people, allowing them to become more tolerant and integrate them in the spiritual celebration regardless of their background, explained the Rev. James Root, Pastor of the Cathedral for two years. “I personally don’t believe in all-Arabic Mass or all-English Mass,” he said. “This way we include everyone, those who understand Arabic and those who don’t.”

Root is actually Lebanese-German. His maternal grandparents immigrated to the United States from Lebanon in 1912, escaping the rigid Ottoman rule, and have never returned. The one thing that kept them connected with their heritage is their love for their community and their church, explained Root. From then on, the traditions were transferred to the following generations.

“It was important for us to keep our Maronite church alive, and through it, we kept alive many of the Lebanese customs as well, language, food and folklore. All of [these] things are important aspects of who we are, as Lebanese and as Maronite,” he said.

As a way to maintain the Lebanese traditions, the Cathedral organizes Arabic language studies; a weekly coffee hour and an occasional Lebanese breakfast after Mass, in addition to an annual Lebanese Food Fair. “We have to have everything, a blend. You can’t forget the past, that would be one of the biggest atrocities to life, to ignore who you are, why you are and where you have come from. We cannot do it,” said Root emphatically.

Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral is the only Maronite Church in New York City and the first neo-Romanesque church in the United States. The church was built in 1847 for Congregationalists. In 1944, the Maronites bought it. Prior to that, Saint Joseph Maronite Church in Lower Manhattan and our Lady of Lebanon on Hicks street in Brooklyn, a block from where the church is today, were the shrines for Maronites in the city.

The Church was remodeled into an ornate cathedral with large stained glass windows that depict, with striking colors, the life of Christ and the Virgin Mary. A large mural of the Lady of Lebanon on top of a hill overlooking a bay area in Lebanon stands above the altar. The altar is made of marble and onyx tiles bought from the French and Lebanese pavilions at the World Fair in Queens, when these were disassembled. Wooden arcades on both sides of the church give it an Eastern character.

Roughly 75 thousand are registered Maronites in the United States and of these about 500 families in New York, the majority of which are Lebanese, according to the 2006 Official Catholic Directory. The Maronite Church is one of the largest Eastern-rite communities in the Catholic Church, according to the National Apostolate of Maronites (NAM), an organization for the people of the Maronite Church supporting the work of priests.

The Maronites are followers of Saint Maron, a Syrian hermit of the late fourth century. With a history plagued by persecutions, especially under the Ottoman rule, Maronites scattered throughout the world, making the Maronite Church grow outside of Lebanon and become international. In fact, the Church includes Canaanite Phoenician Maronites, Aramean Syrian Maronites, and Arab Maronites, but also American, Brazilian, Australian, European, and African Maronites.

In 1920, the Maronites of Lebanon became self-ruling under French Protection and by law the President of the country has to be Maronite,

Lebanese Maronites at the weekly coffee hour. (Photo by Carla Haibi).
explained Mike Naber, the Executive Director of NAM. The [Maronite] Patriarch Nasrallah Peter Cardinal Sfeir in Lebanon holds the spiritual seat of the Maronites worldwide.

Keeping alive the culture has been one of the most sought after goals of the Church in the Diaspora. In fact, some people commute from as far as Connecticut to engage with the community of Lebanese immigrants or other Maronites. Takla Chamoun lives on Staten Island. Although two churches are within walking distance of her house, Chamoun has been commuting to Brooklyn since she moved to New York in 1989 to attend a Mass she described as “mystical.” Apart from religious reasons, Chamoun also goes to Mass to have a feeling of community, which connects her and her family with their cultural heritage, especially during the weekly coffee hour after Mass. “I work so much and I have no time for socializing,” she said. “Our life here is different, but after Mass, the time I spend with the community, brings me back to the social life I miss.”

Chamoun insisted that her daughters Grace, 15, and Sandy, 19, engage in the church activities as a way of learning about their Lebanese heritage. Now, she goes to church less frequently but her daughter Grace still commutes to weekly Mass, taking a bus and a train. “It’s so much more worth it because the Mass is so unique with the multiple languages,” she said.

Born in Brooklyn, Grace did not always feel the connection with Lebanon, because she said she was very Americanized. In fact, she learned about Lebanese traditions and met young Lebanese her age through the Maronite Youth Organization [MYO]. “It brought me closer to the Lebanese culture,” she said, giggling and mixing Arabic words in her sentences with a heavy American accent. “It made me more like into the Lebanese dancing, dabke (a folkloric Levantine dance), derbake (a percussion instrument), arguile (hookah).”

The Maronite Youth Organization was started in the late 1970s by a group of Maronite priests in Ohio to gather young people and teach them about their faith, explained Root. The MYO was an opportunity to keep faith within the secular culture of the Lebanese community as well as the spiritual culture of the Maronite Church,” he said.

Therese Abi Habib started the New York City chapter of the MYO ten years ago. She is in charge of chaperoning the kids and organizing activities for them to bond with others and learn about their Lebanese heritage. “They are the future of the Cathedral,” she said. But Abi Habib also recognized the importance of the parents’ involvement in the culture and in the Church, in order for the children to feel that bond. And to reinforce that, the national MYO organizes a yearly spiritual retreat for about 150 kids across the United States to help them connect with their Lebanese heritage.

Initiatives such as the retreat have been crucial in engaging young adults who were born in the Diaspora and have never had the chance to experience life in Lebanon. “Because our parents were raised with the same values, this brings us closer together, we can understand each other’s families and traditions,” said Grace about the other youngsters she met through MYO.

Her mother’s wish for her to grow up appreciating her Lebanese culture has been fulfilled. Although Grace never wanted to marry a Lebanese guy, now, she cannot picture her life outside of a Lebanese community, she said. She feared that by marrying outside of her culture, her future husband “is not going to want to blend in with my crazy loud family,” she said cracking up. “And he is not going to want to eat tabbouli (traditional Lebanese salad) and ris bi djej (rice with chicken) on every holiday.”

(Carla Haibi is a freelance Lebanese journalist and a graduate student at NYU.)
Easton, Pennsylvania
Maronite Day

by Deacon Anthony P. Koury

On Saturday, May 9, 2009, parishioners of Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church in Easton, Penn., made a pilgrimage to the Blue Army Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Washington, N.J.

The day began with a talk by Sister Marla Marie Lucas, the Founder of the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light. His Excellency Gregory J. Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, had the foresight to establish an order of nuns for the Eparchy who will eventually take on a number of ministries once the order becomes more established and the number of nuns increase.

Sister Marla encouraged vocations to the religious life and spoke of the role of Mary in the Maronite Church. Her talk was well received by all in attendance, and Sister Marla distributed holy cards with the picture of Our Lady of Elige.

After Sister Marla’s talk, there was a walk through the Rosary Garden, during which the rosary was recited while everyone visited the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries depictions. Once the walk through the Rosary Garden was completed, everyone walked in procession to the Upper Outdoor Church, singing Marian hymns.

Once the procession ended, there was an opportunity for confessions. Fr. Paul Damien and Fr. Paul Ruge, Shrine Chaplain, heard confessions while preparations were made for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in honor of the Blessed Mother.

Fr. Paul Damien, Pastor, and Fr. Paul Ruge concelebrated an evening Divine Liturgy. Deacon Anthony Koury assisted and Our Lady of Lebanon Church choir sang the hymns during the Liturgy. After the Liturgy the benediction of the icon of Our Blessed Mother concluded the day. All mothers in attendance received a flower in honor of Mother’s Day.

This was the first “Maronite Day” at the Blue Army Shrine. It is our hope that we can build upon this experience and will include other Maronite parishes in an even bigger celebration in the future.

San Antonio, Texas
Baccalaureate Liturgy

On Trinity Sunday, June 7, 2009, St. George Maronite Community honored the graduates of 2009. The Baccalaureate Liturgy is a tradition that celebrates the accomplishments of all who have persevered through years of academic study to graduate from high school, attain a degree, achieve a goal, and/or realize a dream. This moment is shared by the parents and extended family of each student who supported them in the past, and rejoice as they move into a new phase of life. Following the liturgy, the entire community was invited to a reception in the community center. Congratulations everyone! Our prayers go with you as you continue to learn and serve!

From the Book Shelf

Maronite Book of Hymns according to the Antiochian Syriac Church, published in 2008 by the Patriarchal Liturgical Commission, contains Maronite Syriac tunes for the Maronite Qurbono; psalms as well as various Maronite and Marian hymns. This 569-page hardcover book is available from Saint Maron Publications for $25 plus $5 shipping.

Maronite Syriac Hymns CD of the Maronite Qurbono, prepared by the Patriarchal Liturgical Commission in 2008 with Fathers Nassim Hagge and Youhana Gehr, soloists, on a double CD is available from Saint Maron Publications for $25 plus $5 shipping.

The Maronite Icons according to the Maronite Liturgical Year and the Feasts of the Saints was prepared by the Icons Workshop at the Maronite Eparchy of Cyprus. It consists of 60 icons (41 for Sundays and Holy Days and 19 for Maronite Saints). This collection of icons (14” x 20”) along with a booklet explaining each icon is available from Saint Maron Publications for $100 plus $10 shipping.

To order your copy (ies) please write to: Saint Maron Publications, 4611 Sadler Road, Glen Allen, VA 23060.

For a complete listing of publications carried by Saint Maron Publications, please visit www.stmaron.org.
Danbury, Connecticut
Silver Jubilee

by Richard Jowdy

Father Paul Mooradd was honored on the 25th anniversary of his ordination at a gala event held on May 23rd at the Ethan Allen Inn in Danbury, Connecticut. The celebration, which was attended by over 330 guests, was also a going away party for Father Mooradd, who is being transferred to Our Lady of Mercy Maronite Church in Worcester, Mass., after 2-1/2 years as the Pastor of St. Anthony in Danbury.

Many of the guests paid tribute to Father Paul for his accomplishments. His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour thanked Father Paul for accepting the transfer to his new Parish, and His Excellency Bishop Robert Shaheen, Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, commented warmly on their long relationship.

Among the speakers were the Ladies Society President, Barbara Barquez, and the President of the MYO, Susan Najam, as well as Father Paul's Subdeacon in training, George Jabbour. Joe Walcovich, the President of the Lebanon American Club, gave Father Paul a plaque for his many contributions to the club and conferred on him a lifetime membership. Mark Chory, a member of the Parish Council and an altar boy at St. Anthony for over forty years, also shared his comments about Father Paul’s time with the parish.

As a special part of the program, Father Paul's brother, Dr. Michael Mooradd, an attending cardiologist at Doylestown Hospital in Pennsylvania, greatly entertained the crowd with his humorous description of life growing up with the Pastor. In addition, a delegation from the Knights of Columbus from Wilkes-Barre, Penn., presented Father Paul with a gift for his past contributions to their organization.

The toastmaster for the evening was Richard Jowdy, a lifelong member of St. Anthony Church who has served in one capacity or another for all of the priests who have administered the church since its founding. Mr. Jowdy commented on Father Paul’s years of service to the Maronite Church since the time of his ordination, including his early work supporting religious education programs for the Diocese, as well as his prior renovation of two churches. The remarks also detailed some of the many accomplishments Father Paul achieved for St. Anthony Church during his relatively short time as Pastor, notably his commitment and leadership in the ongoing repair and rebuilding of the overall church facilities. To achieve these important goals, Mr. Jowdy also observed that Father Paul, like many of the priests before him, always did things his way.

When it came time to give a gift from the Parish to Father Paul, it had been suggested that it would be in a form of a roast. Normally, this might be considered a little unusual for a Priest. But Father Paul, being a gentleman and the outstanding person that he is, agreed that this would be appropriate. Therefore, at the conclusion of the speech, Father Paul was called up to the stage as the classic song MY WAY was played by the DJ. The beloved Pastor was then presented with an authentic black cowboy hat similar to the one worn by John Wayne in his Academy Award-winning role in the movie, True Grit. The comparison to the great actor was meant to exemplify the sheer determination and fortitude that Father Paul brings to each challenge he undertakes—qualities he may well need in his new assignment.

Schedule of Bishop Gregory Mansour

June 28 - July 7, 2009
Annual Clergy Conference, Maronite Convention and Telelumiere Board of Directors Meeting, Los Angeles, Calif.

July 23 - 24, 2009
Annual Maronite Youth Retreat, Ligonier [Pittsburgh], Penn.

July 26, 2009
Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.

August 8-9, 2009
Pastoral Visit to Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Waterbury, Conn.

August 14-16, 2009
Our Lady of Lebanon National Shrine, North Jackson, Ohio

August 21-28, 2009
Eight-day personal silent retreat

August 28, 2009
Divine Liturgy, Gloucester, Mass.

August 30, 2009
Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn, N.Y.
Maronite Historical Committee
A Progress Report

by Ramona Milford

The Maronite Historical Committee was established in November, 2008 under the direction of Bishops Gregory Mansour and Robert Shaheen. The mission of the Committee is to become the catalyst that performs three major tasks: 1) to document the history of the Maronites in the United States from the first wave of immigration in the nineteenth century to the present; 2) to establish electronic and hard copy records of the history; and 3) to provide a means of updating the history as new developments take place.

Some say, why bother, but ask yourself why you have family photos, heirlooms, etc. Middle Eastern immigrants, and in particular Maronites, have contributed significantly to the history of the United States as far back as the 1830s and they continue to do so today. Many of them served in various branches of the military over the years, many contributed significantly to society in the arts, science, education and business arenas. Many politicians have Maronite roots. Many have been interwoven into American society as entrepreneurs and hard-working individuals in a variety of occupations and family situations.

There are striking similarities in the establishment of the churches in New York, Los Angeles, Wilkes-Barre and Detroit. There is an amazing unity behind the creation of the Maronite Seminary in Washington, D.C., the National Shrine of Our Lady in North Jackson, Ohio, the National Apostolate of Maronites and the first Maronite Eparchy in the United States. There is a “story” behind all of it that is worth telling.

Over the years there have been efforts within many communities to capture their own history, but little has been done to organize this on a national level. There are many media formats available now so this is a good opportunity to “tell our story” nationally.

If you have documents that you believe could contribute to our telling of this story or you want to assist the Committee in any way, please contact Ramona Milford at ramonamarie26@att.net.

Cincinnati, Ohio
Silver Anniversary Of Ordination


Fr. Fisher entered the seminary program for the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio, in 1976 and studied at the Pontifical College Josephinum and Ohio Dominican University, both in Columbus, earning a Bachelors Degree in Philosophy. He then attended major seminary at the North American College in Rome, doing his studies at the Jesuits Gregorian University. He was a classmate of Bishop Gregory Mansour. This is when he made initial contact and fell in love with the Maronite Liturgy and the history of the Maronite Church. He was ordained on May 31, 1984, in St. Peter Basilica by the Servant of God, Pope John Paul II. He stayed in Rome his first year as a priest, to complete the Licentiate in Sacred Theology. Upon returning to Columbus he received bi-ritual faculties and taught a year at the Josephinum and a number of years at Ohio Dominican. After six years of ordination he transferred to the Maronite Eparchy completely. He taught at Xavier University in Cincinnati, University of Dayton, Rosemont College in Philadelphia, and Columbus State Community College until returning to Rome in 2007. When he returned to the United States late last summer he lived in residence at St. Agatha Church in Upper Arlington, Ohio. During this time the opportunity arose to serve as administrator at St. Anthony of Padua Church.

The parishioners of St. Anthony of Padua are happy to have Fr. David and congratulate him on his anniversary!

Chicago, Illinois
Lenten Retreat

April 3-5, 2009, Bishop Stephen Hector Doueihi, Bishop Emeritus of the Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn, lead a Lenten retreat at Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Lombard [Chicago], Illinois. His lecture on Friday of the Wilderness inspired over one hundred parishioners as he preached on the meaning of Great Lent preceded by Liturgy, the Benediction of the Cross and Eucharistic Adoration.

His lecture on Saturday of Lazarus helped those present experience a spiritual journey of grace, conversion and renewal as they participated in Reconciliation and interactive discussion on temptation and suffering. Attendants repeatedly claimed that Bishop Doueihi was excellent in his approach and intelligence on the topics and had a spiritual answer to every question.

The weekend concluded with Bishop Doueihi celebrating the Liturgy on Hosanna Sunday where the majority of children from the crowd of 650 approached him for a special blessing. His monumental presence was greatly appreciated by Msgr. Alfred Badawi, Pastor, and his parishioners.
St. Paul, Minnesota

Transplant Brings New Energy to Nonagenarian

by John Kempe and Jackie Gubash-Mueller

Tempus Fugit. The wise among us understand that while memories can be captured, time itself will always fly beyond our grasp.

A few short months ago, the faithful of the Holy Family Church in St. Paul, Minnesota, gathered to commemorate their 90th Anniversary as a Maronite Parish. Laughter echoed throughout the evening as honored guests, friends and family enjoyed a sumptuous dinner, and were entertained with witty speeches as well as a stunningly well-prepared documentary about the history of our parish. Tears could be seen amidst the merriment as parishioners reminisced of momentous events from years gone by - precious moments they had shared with loved ones and which brought our parish together as a family.

The joyous nature of this commemoration underscored the faith, dedication and sacrifice of that generation belonging to our grandparents and great-grandparents who laid the cornerstone of our parish community ninety years earlier. We will forever be grateful for the wonderful gift they gave us by establishing a Maronite presence in the Saint Paul area.

Brief History

In the early 1900s Maronites settling in the St. Paul area were hosted by a neighboring Roman Catholic Church, St. Michael in West St. Paul, where the Pastor permitted the Maronite Liturgy to be celebrated for a period of approximately fifteen years. In 1918 the Maronite Community, led by Father Joseph Al-Ladakane, obtained authorization to purchase a small Protestant Church for the sum of $2,250. The building was somewhat remodeled and converted to the Church of the Holy Family.

But this accomplishment coincided with very uneasy times in the country and in the world. By the fall of 1918, parishioners of the newly dedicated Church were praying for an end to one of the most evil wars in the annals of the human race. Known then simply as “The Great War,” 17 million lives were tragically lost and millions more were altered forever as war raged across Europe, bringing heartaches and catastrophe around the globe. Astonishingly, these very parishioners were at the same time being swept into the abyss of the most deadly epidemic in recorded world history. The influenza pandemic of 1918-1919 infected one-fifth of the world’s population with one out of every four persons in the United States succumbing to the infectious disease which caused more deaths than World War I and World War II combined. In an era of unfathomable despair, the humble parishioners who formed this fledgling parish, placed their faith in the Almighty and found comfort in sharing the Eucharist within the Maronite Liturgy.

Parting Is Such Sweet Sorrow

Over time, the original church building became dilapidated, and eventually ground was broken for the construction of a new church building in 1950. A new rectory was later built in 1958, and in the ensuing five decades, our parish prospered and grew. By the year 2004, the Parish Council and Stewardship Committee recognized the aging beauty and grace of the buildings constructed by our fathers and grandparents that would eventually give way to the growing needs of the parish. As with our forefathers, authorization was obtained to relocate, and a Lutheran Church was purchased some ten miles south-east of our current location in nearby Mendota Heights. As in the early history of our community, the people arose to the challenge of financing this move in a very tenuous and difficult time. It is through the commitment of each and every one of these dedicated and faithful parishioners that we give “thanks” for moving beyond what was safe to ensure a future for ourselves and our children. It has been no easy task for many of them with the state of the economy, but they have come forth with their prayers, their faith, and their will to succeed. It is with gratitude that we say “thank you” to all the faithful for their donations in money, time, and service – for lighting the way for a future that honors the past as well as prepares for the future.

(Continues on Page 24)
Springfield, Massachusetts
Retirement Blessing

On May 23, 2009, Msgr. David George, Pastor, and parishioners of St. Anthony Church in Springfield, Mass., honored their retiring parish organist, Hilda Schechterle. Hilda has served as organist for over thirty years, and she also celebrates her 90th birthday this month. A Papal Blessing was presented to her by the parishioners.

Williamsville, New York
Lebanese Festival at St. John Maron Church

The 11th Annual Lebanese Festival will be held Friday, July 24 through Sunday, July 26, 2009 on the grounds of St. John Maron Church in Williamsville (Buffalo), N.Y. The highlight will be the authentic Lebanese cuisine including delectable sweets. The STARS OF THE EAST will be back to entertain us with continuous live Lebanese music. Raffles, children's games, and the annual backgammon tournament all add to the festivities of a weekend that promises to be fun filled and exciting. The church will be open to give visitors an opportunity to experience our Maronite Religious Display. The Divine Liturgy will be celebrated during the festival at 5 p.m. on Saturday and at 11 a.m. on Sunday morning. For further information visit the church website at www.stjohnmaron.org.

Summer Break


St. John Maron Church Honors Church Members

Ms. Veronica Simon and Mr. Ray Georges were honored for their outstanding academic and spiritual contributions to their school, community and Church on Sunday, June 7, 2009 at St. John Maron Church in Williamsville, New York. Each received a check in the amount of $1,000. The award is offered annually to high school seniors who are active members at St. John Maron and who exemplify high academic qualifications and serious involvement in church activities. The award is co-sponsored by the Holy Name Society and the Altar and Rosary Society.

Two other parishioners, Ms. Theresa Hayek and Mr. Fouad Badawy were also honored with the Woman of the Year and Man of the Year Awards, respectively. These awards have been given annually since the 1960s. Ms. Hayek has been most active in the Altar and Rosary Society, the church festival, and has been a member of the church choir for many years.

Mr. Badawy is the leader and assistant for numerous church banquets and celebrations and can be counted upon for his hard work with the church festival and the Holy Name Society. These annual awards are given by the Holy Name and Altar and Rosary Societies.

With Our Sincere Apology

In last month’s issue of The Maronite Voice (Volume V, Issue No. VI, June 2009, page 16), we erroneously stated the name of the May Queen at St. Ann Church in Scranton, Penn. May Queen was Anna Catherine Ligorio, daughter of Atty. Donald C. and Maria Deeb Ligorio. Maria Deeb Ligorio was also a co-chair of the event. We apologize for the unintentional error.
San Francisco, California

Baccalaureate Liturgy

by Nicole Rishwan

Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Church, San Francisco Bay area, California, celebrated on Sunday, May 31, a Baccalaureate Sunday for all the graduates in the community. A scholarship committee was appointed to start an endowment fund to give scholarships to the graduates in the near future. The members of the scholarship committee are Dr. Walid Ayoub, Dr. Antonio Hardan and Norma Yazbek.

North Jackson, Ohio

New Stations of the Cross Dedicated

After decades of weather, the original Stations of the Cross began to crumble and fall. They had to be replaced, but finances seemed to be an impossible challenge until Anthony and Mary Lariccia of Boardman, Ohio, came to the rescue once again! The philanthropist couple had already donated $100,000 to the restoration and repair work on the Tower. During the re-dedication of the Tower last year, they donated another $160,000 to replace the Stations of the Cross.

Tony and Mary Lariccia's special place is where they kissed and made up after a disagreement. It's the National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon, and specifically, Mary's Tower, in North Jackson. "We were dating in 1973 and were married October 19, 1974," Lariccia said, noting that the date also is his birthday. "We had some disagreements, some of them heated... The shrine was the place we went to make up. She would drive up in her 1960 Ford and I was in my 1971 Pontiac."

The Catholic faith, an important element in the Lariccia marriage, drew them to the shrine. "I think that our faith in God and the Lady had a lot to do with a good marriage and happy children," Lariccia said. The couple are members of St. Charles Borromeo Church in Boardman and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Youngstown.

"I think the Lady helped us," Lariccia said. "When we would meet at the tower, we would look at each other and she would forgive me my obstinance. We must have gone there six or so times. Now we go back once a year to thank Our Lady who helped us. It is how Our Lady works, if your faith is pure and sincere and your wishes are based in love." Lariccia said he and his wife enjoy these annual visits. "It's such a serene and beautiful place. It gives you a tremendous feeling of peace," he said.

The New Stations of the Cross were dedicated on May 3, during the Feast of Our Lady of Lebanon. We are extremely grateful to the Laricciases for their generous gifts that made the restoration of the Tower and the replacement of the Stations possible.

Visit the Shrine's website to view more photos at http://www.ourladylifebanonshrine.com/stations.html.

Award for Maronite Servants Blog

"Radiate His Light", the blog of the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light, has been voted Most Visually Attractive Blog by Eastern Christian New Media Awards (http://ecawards.blogspot.com) for 2009. Visit RadiateHisLight.blogspot.com for inspiring reading and photos on the Maronite faith, spirituality, liturgy, vocations, parishes, and the mission of the Maronite Servants compiled from a group of contributing writers. The blog is updated every Friday, and some of the past post titles include: Maronite Liturgy and Devotions; Our Lady of the Maronites; To Kneel or Not to Kneel; Massabki Brothers, Pray for Us. To learn more about the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light, see their website: maroniteservants.org.
**Bishop Synod’s Communique 2009**

**The Maronite Bishops Hold Their Annual Synod**

On May 31 through June 6, 2009 and in response to the convocation of His Beatitude Patriarch Nasrallah Peter Cardinal Sfeir, Patriarch of Antioch and the Whole East, Their Excellencies the Maronite Bishops in Lebanon and from Syria, the Holy Land, Egypt, Cyprus, Europe, U.S.A., Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Australia held their annual synod/retreat at the Patriarchate in Bkerke, Lebanon. The Very Reverend Father Elie Madi, Superior General of the Congregation of the Lebanese Maronite Missionaries was the retreat master. The theme was: “In the Footsteps of the Apostle Paul.” In their discussions the studied church and liturgical matters as well as the pastoral matters of the countries of expansion and issues pertaining to Lebanon. At the end of the meeting they issued the following statement:

### Church and Liturgical Matters

1). In the atmosphere of the glorious Pentecost and the approaching end of the jubilee year consecrated to Paul the apostle, the Fathers thanked the Lord for the graces and blessings which He has bestowed upon the Church and the world through the intercession of the Apostle of the Nations. They called upon their sons and daughters to share in the closure of this year on Monday June 29, at Saint Paul’s Cathedral, Harissa [Lebanon], in the presence of Cardinal André Vingt Trois, Archbishop of Paris, delegate of His Holiness the Pope for this ceremony with the participation of the Assembly of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops in Lebanon and the Ecumenical Committee responsible for the celebration and others from all the churches in Lebanon.

The Fathers also emphasized that His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI has announced a new jubilee year dedicated to the priest under the theme “Faithfulness of Christ, Faithfulness of Priests” from June 19, 2009 until June, 19, 2010. This, on the occasion of the 150th year of the death of Saint Jean Marie Vianney, Curate of Ars. They call their sons and daughters to pray during this year for their priests who devote themselves to the service of God and people, and to participate in the activities which the Assembly of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops in Lebanon will organize with the eparchies, parishes, apostolic organizations, the confraternity of priests and seminaries. They ask them all to raise their prayers to God so that He gives always to the Church holy priests.

The Fathers expect that His Beatitude the Patriarch will announce the year 2010 a jubilee year on the occasion of 1600th year of Saint Maron’s death (+410 – 2010). A church committee has been formed for the celebration of this year. There were talks, as well, about Brad and Kalouta Fortress, the places where Saint Maron lived and was buried, and the activities aiming at making them a pilgrimage shrine.

2). Under the heading “Justice and Love Go Together,” the Fathers listened to the yearly report about the Maronite tribunals. They were informed about the number of cases presented during last year and the sentences issued and several statistic tables related to these tribunal activities. They praised the seriousness of the work and the effort exerted at the service of justice. In order that tribunals become the last recourse for the settlement of family differences, the Fathers felt that it is necessary for the marriage preparation and counsel centers to assist couples in difficulty, so that they [may] reach reconciliation before they go to court. Thus, the pastoral care of the family gets the best results, so our families become home churches, schools of virtues and oasis of happiness where are preserved the sacrament sanctity of marriage bonds. Fathers and mothers will learn in these home churches and schools of virtues to sacrifice and give freely, accepting with great joy the children God gives them.

It is well known that the destiny of societies depends upon the family.

3). The Fathers reconstituted the tribunal of the Bishop Synod of the Maronite Patriarchal Church and the permanent Synod. They elected a Secretary for the Holy Synod. After that, they studied the retired Bishops chart which reflects their image and status in the universal and Patriarchal churches, defines their presence in the eparchies they had served and pastored and designs some aspects of their duties and rights with their activity and mission.

4). They listened to the reports about seminaries, these are: the Patriarchal seminary in Ghazir and those of the eparchies of Beirut, Tripoli and the U.S., which all together receive more than 150 university seminarians. They praised the way spiritual, education and cultural work is run, especially that these schools have adopted the new charter specialized in the education to priesthood. It mentions resorting to the convenient means to prepare priests for their pastoral work in this time.

5). Due to the role the liturgy plays in uniting the Maronites, spread all over the world, and its importance in nourishing their spiritual life and preserving their church identity and patrimony, the Fathers followed up with great interest the work of the Liturgical Patriarchal Committee which is in charge of ritual reforms. They expressed their contentment for the many achievements it has realized, the last of which was the publication of “The Anaphora of St. Peter,” known as “Anaphora Sharar,” which dates back to the ancient Apostolic patrimony. It is considered among the oldest prayers in the Church. It carries a rare historical value and unique biblical and theological dimensions. Using it in eparchies had a good impact upon the worshippers.

They talked about the Maronite book of chants which aims at unifying Maronite hymns in parishes and at enriching them. A series of books, rituals and devotions for the various liturgical occasions will be published.
Pastorate of the Expansion

6). The Fathers were informed about the coordination of the pastoral matters which the bishops of the American continent studied in Sao Paulo, Brazil. They listened to the detailed report about the other eparchies of the expansion and the Maronite missions in Western Africa: Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, Togo, Borkina-Vasso, Niger, Mal; and in Europe, especially Sweden, Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece. They stressed upon strengthening the parishes and providing priests to serve them with the help of committed lay people, the cooperation of leagues and institutions which are concerned with the expansion, and in coordination with the Church in Lebanon.

National Matters

7). The Fathers reiterate what has come out in their last appeal about holding responsible and transparent parliamentary elections. They do call the citizens to make of this great national election day a confirmation of true liberty and democracy in Lebanon, which would thus become more immune and more radiant. They call upon the citizens to let the high interest overcome any personal, partisan or confessional interests and secure a free promising future for Lebanon’s new generations.

8). Following the elections, the Fathers look forward, with His Excellency the President of the Republic, General Michel Sleiman, towards starting reforms, beginning with rendering constitutional institutions more efficient. These, alone, can secure political, security and economic stability and the protection of all the citizens.

In order to build up national unity, lessen the violence of the struggle over the central power and fortify the balanced development, it is necessary to give priority to the broad administrative decentralization. To face the emigration problem and the worries of most Lebanese to assure their living and their educational and hospitalization obligations, the Fathers ask the State for economic and tax reforms and for backing the productive industrial, agricultural, touristic and investment activities. They also urge it to give particular attention to youth potentialities by creating job opportunities for young people, according to their skills and competence. It will, thus, provide them with the chance of staying in their homeland, prompting creation on its land, securing their future in it, setting up a family and opening before them doors of hope in a better future (The Chart of Political Activity 32-33).

9). The Fathers call upon all their Lebanese brothers and sisters, sons and daughters to preserve their homeland united in solidarity, keeping it away from the fire of sedition and division. Face the circumstances of this phase and its issues with mutual understanding, by resorting only to dialogue to settle differences and putting public interest before any private one.

Conclusion

The Fathers ended their spiritual retreat with the prayer as they had started it, especially at the intention of Lebanon, land of the message and sanctity, the homeland which draws to it all its citizens, resident and in the expansion. They asked God to preserve in it the fathers and forefathers’ patrimony, which is a precious patrimony for the whole of humanity. They appealed for raising high in its sky the flambeau of liberty and the encounter of Christianity and Islam in the ranks of its believing people on the basis of mutual love and constructive cooperation.

They deem it important that the whole world respects this Lebanese particularity, appreciates its contributions and upraises its distinguished civilized position.

They pray God for all their dear sons and daughters, in the homeland, within the Patriarchal territory and the expansion, so as they remain always united and in agreement with their brothers in citizenship, sticking to their spiritual values and noble human patrimony. May they be successful in their aspiration and continuous work at the service of peace with the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Lady of Lebanon, asking God to bestow upon all of them His graces and blessings.

People’s Prayer for Priests

Dear Lord,

We pray that the Blessed Mother wrap her mantle around your priests and through her intercession strengthen them for their ministry.

We pray that Mary will guide your priests to follow her own words, “Do whatever He tells you” (Jn 2:5).

May your priests have the heart of St. Joseph.

Mary’s most chaste spouse.

May the Blessed Mother’s own pierced heart inspire them to embrace all who suffer at the foot of the cross.

May your priests be holy, filled with the fire of your love seeking nothing but your greater glory and the salvation of souls.

Amen.

Saint John Vianney, pray for us.

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Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations.
A Letter from Bishop Gregory Mansour

Prot. No. 232/1/09

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Over the past four years, our Finance Council of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn has given us wise advice and guidance, even during these difficult economic times. In conformity with the guidelines of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops we have implemented the following internal controls for all financial matters in the Chancery and in all of our parishes and institutions.

The Chancery has consolidated accounts and tracks all of them on the computer using the QuickBooks program, thus producing in-house an Income and Expense Statement as well as a Balance Sheet. This report has been published for the past three years in The Maronite Voice and in all parish bulletins. Two years ago, an independent outside auditor was hired to perform a full six-year financial audit of the Chancery and the Cathedral parish.

At the same time, our outside auditor began a five year review of every parish/institution in the Eparchy. Written observations were sent to each Pastor/Administrator to be studied by him and his Parish Finance Council. In some cases full audits were conducted. A detailed questionnaire which serves as a financial policy procedure manual was also sent to all parishes for the Pastor/Administrator and Finance Council to study. This was done to insure proper handling of all transactions.

This past year we also implemented a policy whereby all parishes and institutions submit a proposed budget to the Eparchy for approval. This is an important tool to assist the Pastor/Administrator in looking ahead to the following year for financial planning.

All parishes and institutions of the Eparchy are also using the computer program QuickBooks for all financial transactions and are required to publish a yearly financial report for their parishioners, including an Income-Expense Statement and Balance Sheet. The program also tracks income and expenses in relation to the proposed budget.

Enclosed is the Eparchial Financial Report for 2008 which includes an Income-Expense Statement and Balance Sheet. As you can see, we are still in need and we have to depend on our Endowment monies to make ends meet. We do this to insure the viability of the Priest Retirement Fund (thirteen priests receiving a $1,400 monthly pension) and our seminarians (three in Washington and two in Lebanon). Our Capital Campaign was just getting underway when the financial crisis hit. Nonetheless, we still need to do what we ought for our retired priests, missions, seminary, cathedral, and our future. Your help has been so very much appreciated.

If anyone has any questions on financial matters mentioned in this letter they are free to call or write me or Chorbishop Michael Thomas, Vicar General, Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer of the Eparchy at: The Chancery, 109 Remsen Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201 or 718-237-9913.

I take this opportunity to thank once again the members of the Eparchial Finance Council: Mr. Albert Ashkouti, Chorbishop Seely Beggiiani, Mr. Anthony Budway, Dr. Peter Gabriel, Ms Claire Habib, and Dr. Rodney P. Thomas. Their dedication and sound advice have been invaluable to us. This past year we lost a dear member of our Finance Council, Mr. Paul Kassouf, whose wise counsel was so greatly appreciated by me and my predecessors, Bishop Doueihi and Archbishop Zayek. We remember Paul in our Masses and prayers.

With prayerful best wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Gregory J. Mansour

Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2008

ASSETS

Current Assets

Checking/Savings - Audi Bank
  General Operations 304,959.70
  Order St. Sharbel Gen Op. 29,147.00
  Tribunal General 7,677.26
  Vocations 7,251.48
  Youth Office 24,255.26
Total Bank AUDI 405,552.25

Bank of America - Payroll Acct. 14,889.40
  Health Checking 155,108.44
  Priest Retirement Checking 69,566.44
  Rafka Retreat Center Checking 3,083.98
Total Checking/Savings 648,200.51

Total Accounts Receivable 54,690.46

Total Current Assets 702,890.97

Fixed Assets

Buildings/Land 2,613,659.00
  Chancery Auto (resale value) 3,000.00
Total Fixed Assets 2,616,659.00

OTHER ASSETS

INVESTMENT FUNDS

Bishop Retirement - BK Diocese 180,721.93
Capital Campaign - BK Diocese 139,843.42
Capital Campaign - CBIS 25,260.31
Disability Fund - BK Diocese 60,530.91
Endowment Inv-CBIS 500,345.14
Hermits of Jesus (Audi MMA) 378,445.33
Joe Shaheen-Order Sharbel-CBIS 509,218.06
<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Order of St. Sharbel Inv-CBIS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Priests Retirement - BK Diocese</td>
<td>1,453,576.67</td>
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<td>Rafka Retreat Cen. - BK Diocese</td>
<td>106,106.09</td>
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<td>St. Hardini -Seminarans- BK</td>
<td>211,352.47</td>
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<td>Westchester Mission Bldg. Fund</td>
<td>300,038.92</td>
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<tr>
<td>Woody &amp; Webby Mass Fund-CBIS</td>
<td>3,274.96</td>
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**Total INVESTMENT FUNDS**
4,944,078.67

**Total Other Assets**
4,944,078.67

**TOTAL ASSETS**
8,263,628.64

**LIABILITIES AND EQUITY**

**Equity**

**FUND BALANCE**
9,312,183.18

**Net Income**
1,048,554.54

**Total Equity**
8,263,628.64

**TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY**
8,263,628.64

**Profit & Loss As of December 31, 2008**

**ORDINARY INCOME/EXPENSE**

**Income**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Assessments of Parishes</td>
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<td>Bishop Appeal</td>
<td>251,808.10</td>
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<td>Canonical Taxa</td>
<td>1,515.00</td>
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<td>Checking Accounts Interest</td>
<td>1,718.89</td>
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<td>Donations</td>
<td>30,954.94</td>
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<td>Grants Received-Cath Home Miss.</td>
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<td>Missions</td>
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<td>Seminary</td>
<td>30,000.00</td>
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<td><strong>Total Grants Received-Cath Home Miss.</strong></td>
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<td>Lebanon Insurance Income</td>
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**Lebanon Assistance Income**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Batroun</td>
<td>8,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caritas Liban</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diocese of Deir Al-Ahmar</td>
<td>25,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hosrayel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kherbet Kanafar</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEAF</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
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<td>Lebanon Relief</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orphans</td>
<td>15,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our Lady of Savior</td>
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<td>Patriarchal Charities</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Charbel Amman Jordan</td>
<td>60,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Hardini Shrine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telelumiere</td>
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<td><strong>Total Lebanon Assistance Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>222,550.00</strong></td>
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**Order of St Sharbel**

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<td>Annual Dues</td>
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<td>Donations</td>
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<td>Perpetual Dues</td>
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<td><strong>Total Order of St Sharbel</strong></td>
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**Rafka Retreat Center Income**
53.41

**Reimbursements**
7,599.36

**Retirement Account Income**
232,029.15

**Second Collections**

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<td>Bishop's World Wide Charities</td>
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<td>Catholic Communications</td>
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<td>Catholic University</td>
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<td>Holy Father</td>
<td>9,133.00</td>
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<td>Holy Land</td>
<td>17,129.50</td>
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<td>Home Missions</td>
<td>9,166.08</td>
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<td>Patriarchal Charities</td>
<td>12,630.40</td>
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<td>Shrine</td>
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<td>World Mission Sunday</td>
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<td><strong>Total Second Collections</strong></td>
<td><strong>91,647.70</strong></td>
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<td>Vocation Office Income</td>
<td>4,395.00</td>
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<td><strong>Total Ordinary Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,813,668.21</strong></td>
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**Expense**

**Bishops’ Conferences Expenses**

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<td>Eastern Catholic Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maronite Synod of Bishops</td>
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<td>USCCB</td>
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<td><strong>Total Bishops’ Conferences Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,835.44</strong></td>
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**Bishop Appeal Disbursements**

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<tr>
<td>Liturgical Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retirement</td>
<td>61,823.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminary</td>
<td>51,519.25</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Bishop Appeal Disbursements</strong></td>
<td><strong>119,401.35</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Canon Law Graduate Studies</td>
<td>18,160.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canonical Taxa</td>
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**Chancery**

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Travel 19,136.05
Utilities 10,062.15
Total Chancery 697,650.44

Charter 6,525.87
Checks/Deposit Slips 264.00
Donation To Others 3,000.00
Faith of Mountain Revision 6,650.13

Hermit of Jesus Expense
Servants of Christ the Light 14,833.12
Sister Rakfa 32,414.94
Total Hermit of Jesus Expense 47,248.06

Home Missions Grant Expense
Missions 61,000.00
Retreat House-St. Rakfa 9,000.00
Seminary 30,000.00
Total Home Missions Grant Expense 100,000.00

Lebanon Assistance Expenses
Caritas Liban 500.00
Diocese of Deir Ahmar 25,000.00
Kherbet Kanafar 49,950.00
LEAF 2,000.00
Lebanon Relief 2,000.00
Orphans 15,000.00
Our Lady Savior 49,000.00
Patriarchal Charities 2,000.00
St. Charbel Jordan 60,000.00
St. Hardini 5,000.00
Telelumiere 2,000.00
Voice of Charity 500.00
Total Lebanon Assistance Expenses 212,950.00

Maronite Voice 16,052.50
Maronite Youth Office 6,244.74
Ministries Office 1,548.53
Order St. Sharbel 3,748.00
Patriarch's Visit 22,316.68
Professional Fees 77,405.99
Rafka Retreat Center 28,931.98
Religious Supplies 5,372.55
Total Maronite Voice 212,950.00

Residence
Household 17,534.14
Household Salaries 13,000.06
Repairs & Maintenance 20,540.07
Subscription 565.64
Table 6,776.49
Telephone 3,799.02
Utilities 14,015.48
Water Tax 1,912.87
Total Residence 78,143.77
Retired Bishop's Residence 2,035.00

Retirement Account Expenses
403-b Service Fee 1,072.50
Disability 5,224.00
Health Insurance 62,069.55
Retirement Payments 205,409.00
Transfer Fees 200.00
Total Retirement Account Expenses 273,975.05

Second Collection Expense
Bishops Worldwide Charities 3,500.00
Catholic Communications 7,266.15
Catholic University 8,188.50
Holy Father 9,133.00
Holy Land 17,129.50
Home Missions 9,166.08
Shrine 10,503.17
Patriarchal Charities 11,337.01
World Mission Sunday 17,844.65
Total Second Collection Expense 94,068.06

SEMINARY EXPENSES
Dedication 4,000.00
DC from Order St. Sharbel 40,000.00
Lebanon 12,271.00
Total Seminary Expenses 56,271.00
Vocations Office 2,255.04

EXTRAORDINARY INCOME/EXPENSE
Income
Hermits of Jesus 11,984.29
Norman J. Ferris Estate 612,008.56
Westchester 74,864.36
Total Capital Campaign Income 355,200.00
Capital Campaign Income
DC Shrine 700.00
Pledge Income 354,500.00
Total Capital Campaign Income 355,200.00

Restricted Funds Dividends
Bishops Retirement 6,952.69
Capital Fund 5,971.91
Endowment 14,088.61
Hardini 5,905.57
Joe Shaheen 14,338.47
Order of St. Sharbel 28,592.07
Priest Retirement 57,380.74
Rafka 4,255.44
Woody & Webby Mass 92.21
Total Restricted Funds Dividends 137,577.71
Total Extra Ordinary Income $1,191,634.92

Expense
Capital Campaign
Ave Maria Retreat Center 2,625.00
Cathedral Study 2,062.48
IC National Shrine DC 4,900.00
Research 4,920.00
Videos 8,974.00
Zambo & Associates 29,586.51
Total Capital Campaign 53,067.99
Unrealized Loss of Securities' FMV 2,103,395.50
Total Capital Campaign 2,103,395.50

Total Extra Ordinary Expense $2,156,463.49
NET EXTRAORDINARY INCOME $(964,828.57)

NET ORDINARY & EXTRAORDINARY INCOME $(1,048,554.54)
Glen Allen, Virginia Annual Bible Camp

Eighty children and twenty helpers and a group of parents and grandparents filed quietly into Saint Anthony Church in Glen Allen (Richmond), Virginia, for the concluding liturgy for their 2009 Bible Camp. Children were excited to be able to do the readings and Maronite hymns for the liturgy as well as perform their camp songs for their parents at the cookout afterwards.

Held during the week of June 22 - 26, the Camp this year revolved around the theme of “Rejoicing in the Lord!” with the stories of Miriam sung after the parting of the Red Sea; the birth of Hannah’s son, Samuel; the calming of the storm; the cure of the hemorrhaging woman and the raising of the little girl and the cure of the paralytic. The children also learned about Saints Maron, Anthony, Marina, Rafka, and Paul. They did Discovery Canyon arts and crafts, music and games as well. Volunteer teens and parents from the parish shepherded the children through the day and prepared daily hot lunch and snacks.

by Cathy George

North Jackson, Ohio 44th Assumption Pilgrimage

August 13, 14, and 15, 2009, mark the 44th Annual Pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in North Jackson, Ohio. The years have passed quickly and many visitors and pilgrims have come to Mary’s home for many reasons. All have left with God’s blessings and graces,” says Monsignor Anthony S. Spinosa, Rector. This year the Pilgrimage Celebration will include two new additions: a retreat talk sponsored by the Ladies Organizations of Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral in Brooklyn and St. Raymond’s Cathedral in St. Louis and a Post Feast Day Celebration Lamb Roast.

Pilgrimage Schedule

Thursday, August 13

Father John Keehner, Rector of St. Columba Cathedral and Pastor of St. Casimir in Youngstown, Ohio, will celebrate the 7 p.m. Divine Liturgy according to the Roman Rite followed by a candlelight procession.

Friday, August 14

10: a.m.: Maronite Divine Liturgy
6: p.m.: The Rosary will be recited

Archbishop Basil Schott, D.D. O.F.M., for the Byzantine Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh will celebrate the 7:00 p.m. Byzantine Rite Liturgy followed by a Paraclesis to the Blessed Virgin Mary led by Monsignor George Appleyard.

Saturday, August 15

Feast of the Assumption

12 p.m. Melkite Divine Liturgy
1 - 4 p.m. Rosary on the hour
2 p.m. Maronite Divine Liturgy with Anointing of the Sick celebrated by Bishops Robert Shaheen and Gregory Mansour
4 p.m. Maronite Vespers chanted by the Antonine Sisters

Sunday, August 16

Post Feast Day Celebration

10: a.m. Maronite Divine Liturgy
11: a.m. - 3 p.m.: Lamb Roast Dinner prepared by Shrine Volunteers
5 p.m. Maronite Divine Liturgy

The National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon will open all four days at 9:00 a.m. The Cedars Dining Hall will be open three days from 11:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. with many varieties of ethnic foods and desserts.

The National Shrine is located at 2759 North Lipkey Road in North Jackson, Ohio. For further information on the Shrine call (330)-538-3351 or visit the website www.ourladyoflebanonshrine.org.
First Holy Communion in the Maronite Eparchies in the U.S.A.

Portland, Oregon

Dominic Robinson, Teodor Teeny, Camille Massaad, Elena Lachmann, Maria Saleh, Lena Karam, and Loreen Karam received their First Holy Communion on April 19, 2009 at St. Sharbel Maronite Church in Portland, Oregon.

Akron, Ohio

John Jesser, Kayla Whitley, Collette Shamatta, and Joseph Najm received their First Holy Communion on May 10, 2009 at Our Lady of the Cedars Church of Mount Lebanon in Fairlawn (Akron), Ohio.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Sara Issa, Grace Khoury, Anthony Dahdah, Alyia Rancour, Jasmine Gates, Mark Sipihimalani, Timothy Willis, Zachary Willis, and Najib Rahal received their First Holy Communion on May 17, 2009 at St. Maron Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Flint, Michigan

Christopher Dabish, Nicholas Haley, Sami Halloun, Giovanni Issa, Joseph Issa, Dylan Jaques, Gabrielle Jaques, Jonathan Lahoud, Lewis Walterhouse III, George Walterhouse, and Therese Wofford received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2009 at Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Church in Flint, Michigan. The ceremony was followed with the crowning of the Blessed Mother.
Anthony J. Abi Rached, Jack R. Bseibess, Jared C. Daye, Nathalie Doumit, Aleksander C. Kline, Olivia P. Kovacs, Lila Nassar, and Connor L. Sassine received their First Holy Communion on May 9, 2009 at St. Joseph Maronite Church in Atlanta, Georgia.

Amy Mourani, Richard Mourani, Elie Tabet, and Christie Chahwan received their First Holy Communion on May 17, 2009 at the Westchester Maronite Mission in Westchester, New York. Also Nadia Makhraz, Sassine Makhraz, James Mejalli, Alex Mejalli, Ramzi Bishtawi, and Gabrielle Wakim received Chrismation on the same day.

Kevin Bassil, Karen Jouni, and Jacob Kilar received their First Holy Communion on May 17, 2009 at Mary, Mother of the Light Mission in West Palm Beach, Florida. Kevin, Karen and Jacob each received a gold cross and chain gifted by the Parish Family along with their First Communion Certificate and other gifts and cards from loved ones.

Michael Magnotti, Licha Fayad, and Marissa Joseph received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2009 at Our Lady of Victory Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
First Holy Communion in the Maronite Eparchies in the U.S.A.

Scranton, Pennsylvania


San Diego, California

Joseph Daniel, Jerjis Fatho, Andrew Khoury, Carlo Khoury, Mirna Luwis, Rita Luwis, Christopher Malham, Emily Mansour, Aquilina Mouawad, Anthony Nemer, Maria Raad, and Maya Salameh received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2009 at St. Ephrem Maronite Church in San Diego, California.

Chicago, Illinois

Forty children received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2009 at Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Chicago, Illinois. (Pictured are the 11:30 a.m. communicants.)

Somerset, New Jersey

Anthony Hreiz, George Hreiz, Anthony Kassis, Christopher Hachem, Jessica Rachdan, Roxana Maroun, Hikmat Sabe, Lani Sabe, Bashir Matar, Jimmy Kassouf, Ryan Lakkis, Andrew Lakkis, Rawad Boumansour, Houda Sabe, Kenny Abboud, Maria Rahi, Renee Bassil, Enya Hachem and Elija Hachem received their First Holy Communion on May 2, 2009 at St. Sharbel Church in Somerset, New Jersey.
First Holy Communion in the Maronite Eparchies in the U.S.A.

Detroit, Michigan

Dominique Nahra-Palmer, Mia Nahra-Palmer, Laura Gharios, Gerard Harb-Cain, Anthony Dasaro-Semaan, Christopher Dasaro-Semaan received their First Holy Communion on May 17, 2009 at St. Maron Church in Detroit, Michigan.

Lawrence, Massachusetts

Danielle Nadira, Carter Bistany, Olivia Garand, Willis Thompson, Michelle Korbani, Lukas Fares, Jessica El-Helou, Antoine Saab, Lauren Deschene, Peter Francis, Regina Abdelnour, James Msaddi, Alexia Assaf, Youssef Chahine, Pam Abi-Moussa, Ayiman Ata, Morgan Zraket, Joseph Abi-Samra, Farah El-Khoury, Anthony Hanna, Christine Aboujoudé, George El-Hachem, C.J. Daher, John Msaddi, and Zachary Elias received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2009 at St. Anthony Church in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

Danbury, Connecticut

Joseph Merhi, Ashley Kovacs, and Jamison Dolan received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2009 at St. Anthony Church in Danbury, Connecticut.

Fall River, Massachusetts

Carina Al-Houkain, Leah Eid, Maya Eid, John Karam, Taylor Karam, Hannah Mahfouz, Thomas Michael, Jacob Milan, Thomas Panchely, Saadi Saade, and Robert Shaker received their First Holy Communion on May 3, 2009 at St. Anthony of the Desert Church in Fall River, Massachusetts.
Being a Priest!

Those entrusted with the secret things of God. 2Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. 3I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. “My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.”

Whether they mean to or not, many people are overly critical of priests. In my opinion, it is usually when they didn’t get their way or when the priest didn’t do something to suit them. He may not have visited them enough or called them at the right times or perhaps he preached something they disagreed with.

Priests are ministers of Christ. Priests are stewards of the mysteries of God. A priest’s first loyalty is to God, and if our church is to be a healthy church, we must recognize that loyalty.

Honor him

A lot of folks have mistaken ideas about what it means to honor God’s man. When Paul mentioned honoring those who labored in word and deed, he specified the financial support of those who labored. That is certainly one way to honor God’s man, but there are other ways to do so.

Respect the office of priesthood. There are some policemen that I do not respect, but I respect the office they hold and I know there is much more to it than what I see. The same is true for a priest. You can respect the office of priesthood. Don’t treat priests with contempt, and don’t tolerate others who do.

Allow Him to Fulfill His Calling

I do want to point out that God has called men to join Him in His work, and too often there are churches or members of churches who really aren’t interested in being a part of that work. There are some who are content to hear a sermon and be left alone. There are some who are content with the status quo. There are some who are afraid to move, afraid to spend, afraid to work, afraid of change, and afraid of what God might do. There are those who don’t want to be bothered; those who are filled with self-interest. If God calls a man to lead, and you as a church call that man to lead, then he must be allowed to lead.

Encourage Him

Did you know that...

• 90% of pastors work more than 46 hours a week
• 80% believed that pastoral ministry affected their families negatively
• 33% said that being in ministry was an outright hazard to their family
• 75% reported a significant stress-related crisis at least once in their ministry
• 50% felt unable to meet the needs of the job
• 90% felt they were inadequately trained to cope with ministry demands
• 70% say they have a lower self-esteem now than when they started out
• 40% reported a serious conflict with a parishioner at least once a month
• 70% do not have someone they consider a close friend.

There is no doubt that being in the ministry is hazardous to one’s health and well-being, so how do you encourage the God-called man? You can pray for him. Tell him you’re praying for him. You can write a note; care for him; stand with him; work with him, feed him, buy him cars and send him on luxurious vacations (just kidding!) and did I mention pray for him?

Recognize His First Loyalty

Look with me at 1 Corinthians 4:1-4. Paul said, “So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as...”

by Fr. John Nahal

Being a priest is no laughing matter. In fact, it is what I believe to be the highest and most important calling on the face of the earth. Pastoring and preaching are second to none, and as I elaborate a little bit on the priesthood, I want a better understanding of and a deeper appreciation for the men God has placed in your lives we call priests.

In this article, I want to deal with one thing: I believe that as members of the Lord’s churches, there are certain responses we owe to priests in light of their calling.

A Church’s Response

God calls a man to do the work of the ministry. God has found that man faithful, oftentimes seeing in the man things that the man can’t even see himself. He leads some church out there to call that man to be their priest. He has equipped and enabled him to fulfill his calling, and has given him divine authority to carry out that calling. What then should be the church’s response to that man? What are your responsibilities to your priest?

Recognize His First Loyalty

(Continues on page 24)
“The harvest is plentiful. Pray therefore that the Lord of the Harvest may send out laborers into his Harvest.”

(Matthew 9:38)

We are not looking for saints, but for a few good men. Talk to your Pastor about your vocation or contact your Vocation Director

Open your heart to the Lord.
Being A Priest

Continued from page 22

It really doesn’t matter what the cause, you have a responsibility to hold your priest accountable to fulfill his calling as a minister and steward of the gospel.

Conclusion

When God calls a man into the work of the ministry – it is a serious calling. God has always called upon leaders to guide His people. In 1 Samuel 13:14, the Bible says that “the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart…” The Lord is still seeking that kind of people today. For some, God is searching your heart in pursuit of a personal relationship with you.

God may be calling others of you to some place of ministry. He is not going to twist your arm, it is an invitation to join Him where He is already at work in your life. Will you join Him today? You alone must respond to God’s Spirit speaking to you. How will you answer?

St. Paul, Minnesota

Continued from page 9

On July 12, 2009 the faithful of the Holy Family Church will gather for the last time at the Church building located at 203 East Robie Street in St. Paul for their celebration of the Eucharist. A Eucharistic procession will then transfer the Eucharist to the new Tabernacle in the new church in Mendota Heights. The weekend of July 18-19 will mark the official first Liturgy.

When we make the move to our new home, we will bring with us, in addition to wonderful memories, as many familiar Liturgical items as possible. The stained-glass windows that were donated by the families who built Holy Family will reside in the new church, but in a different, more updated form. The altar that served our grandparents will continue to serve our children and generations to come. Much will be familiar in the new surroundings to offer a smooth transition for all parishioners.

His Excellency’s Blessing!

In November, Bishop Robert Shaheen will celebrate the dedication Liturgy for our new church building. At ninety years and counting, the Church of the Holy Family shows no signs of slowing down, and appears ready, willing and able to meet the challenges of this millennium with the same courage, faith, dedication and sacrifice of our predecessors. With God willing, we pray that during the next ninety years our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will build new memories in the new building, and make this new church the home of thousands of Liturgies, baptisms, first communions, and weddings!