



EPARCHY OF SAINT MARON OF BROOKLYN
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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22 October 2012
Feast of Blessed John Paul II

Prot. No. 658/1/12
First of Three Letters on the New
Liturgical Translation

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

With great joy I announce to you that soon the new translation of our beautiful Maronite Divine Liturgy will be here. It has been five years in the making, and that is because we wanted to offer a Liturgy that is fully animated with our Syriac Chants in excellent English. This new English translation has been promulgated by our Maronite Patriarch for use in all of our English speaking Eparchies throughout the world, and as the Decree of the Patriarch states clearly, no other translation is to be used.

The new Divine Liturgy is not different at all in structure from what we are used to. Basically, the changes are in the wording of the prayers including the Creed. Some minor differences are that people sit during the exchange of the sign of peace, something we are not used to here in the United States but they are in Lebanon. We also recite a prayer at the elevation of the Host and Chalice which had been reserved to the priest in the past.

The hymns are the most enriching contribution to this new translation with over 300 of them in 56 different Syriac chants. See our eparchial website www.stmaron.org for a special link to the Maronite Music website, which is specifically designed for choir members, directors and anyone interested.

It is my hope, brothers and sisters, that this new translation will be a source of renewal for our Church during this Year of the Faith. Liturgy celebrated reverently, beautifully, respectfully, and sincerely not only invites but also inspires worshippers to deepen their personal relationship with God.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Gregory

+Gregory John Mansour
GJM/cm



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31 October 2012

Prot. No. 732/1/12
Second of Three Letters

Dear Friends in Christ:

In this, the second of three letters on the upcoming new translation of the Maronite Liturgy, I would like to call your attention to three aspects:

First, the new translation is arranged in an easy to use format. It is singable according to the traditional Syriac Chants in excellent English and in Arabic. Likewise, it is arranged in a way to showcase the parts of liturgy where Syriac is used and also enables the worshipper to pray and understand in the language that he/she is comfortable with, Arabic or English. Language should always be a bridge for us, never a barrier. Thus the celebrant is able to use a blend of languages that serve the worshipping community and reaches the heart of each worshipper.

Second, the new translation and format gives us melodies that we may have never heard before, or perhaps have forgotten. These are simple Syriac melodies and many of them go back to the inspiration of Saints Ephrem and James of Serug. One beautiful example is taken from the Liturgy for the Feast of the Assumption of Mary, who according to tradition lived with the apostle John in Ephesus:

Alleluia!
In the land of Ephesus the dew was falling
When John wrote and taught the Church
To honor Mary three times a year.
January when we plant the seeds,
May for all the wheat,
And the month of August for the grapes we harvest.
Mary, these three feasts depict the life God gives us.
Alleluia! We ask for your prayers.

Third, we have the introduction of two new Anaphoras (Eucharistic Prayers) which we have not been exposed to here in the United States. We are used to the following Anaphoras:

Anaphora of the Twelve Apostles
Anaphora of Saint Peter
Anaphora of Saint James
Anaphora of Saint John
Anaphora of Saint Mark
Anaphora of Saint Sixtus

We are also used to the Anaphora of Saint John Maron here in the United States, but the new Anaphora, under the same name, is entirely different. Likewise, the Anaphora of Saint John Chrysostom is of a particular importance because of its elegant way of worshipping Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For example, the prayer just after the Words of the Institution remind us:

O Word of God, who can comprehend that you willingly emptied yourself of your divine glory? Who can explain your miraculous birth from a virgin? Who can repay you for your saving passion which you freely endured? Who can praise your plan of salvation for us? We can only ask you, O Lover of all people, that this sacrifice that we have offered be accepted on your altar in heaven, the dwelling place of your hidden divinity, in the company of the angels and saints. Through this sacrifice may we be worthy of the forgiveness Of our sins.

We hope that the new translation and format will allow us all, priest and people, to worship in a way that touches our hearts, engages our minds, and brings each one of us greater peace and joy in seeking to accomplish God's will in our lives.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Gregory

+Gregory John Mansour

GJM/cm