



*St. Anthony*

Maronite Catholic Church

كنيسة مار أنطونيوس المارونية



OFFICE HOURS

M-TH: 9 AM - 4PM

Friday: Office is Closed

Saturdays: By Appointment

Phone: 978.685.7233

Fax: 978.688.4475

rectory@stanthonylawrence.org



LITURGIES

Daily Liturgies

Monday & Wednesday: 9 AM

Tuesday & Thursday: 7 PM

Weekend Liturgies

Saturday: Vigil Liturgy @ 4 PM

Sunday Liturgies:

8:15 AM - Arabic

9:30 AM - English

11:30 AM - English & Arabic

Holy days of obligation

Vigil Liturgy @ 7 PM

Feast Day @ 9 AM



SACRAMENTS

Baptism & Confirmation

1 month in advance with the Pastor

Matrimony

Couples should make arrangements six months prior to the wedding date

Reconciliation

One hour Before Thursday & Saturday Liturgies, or by appointment

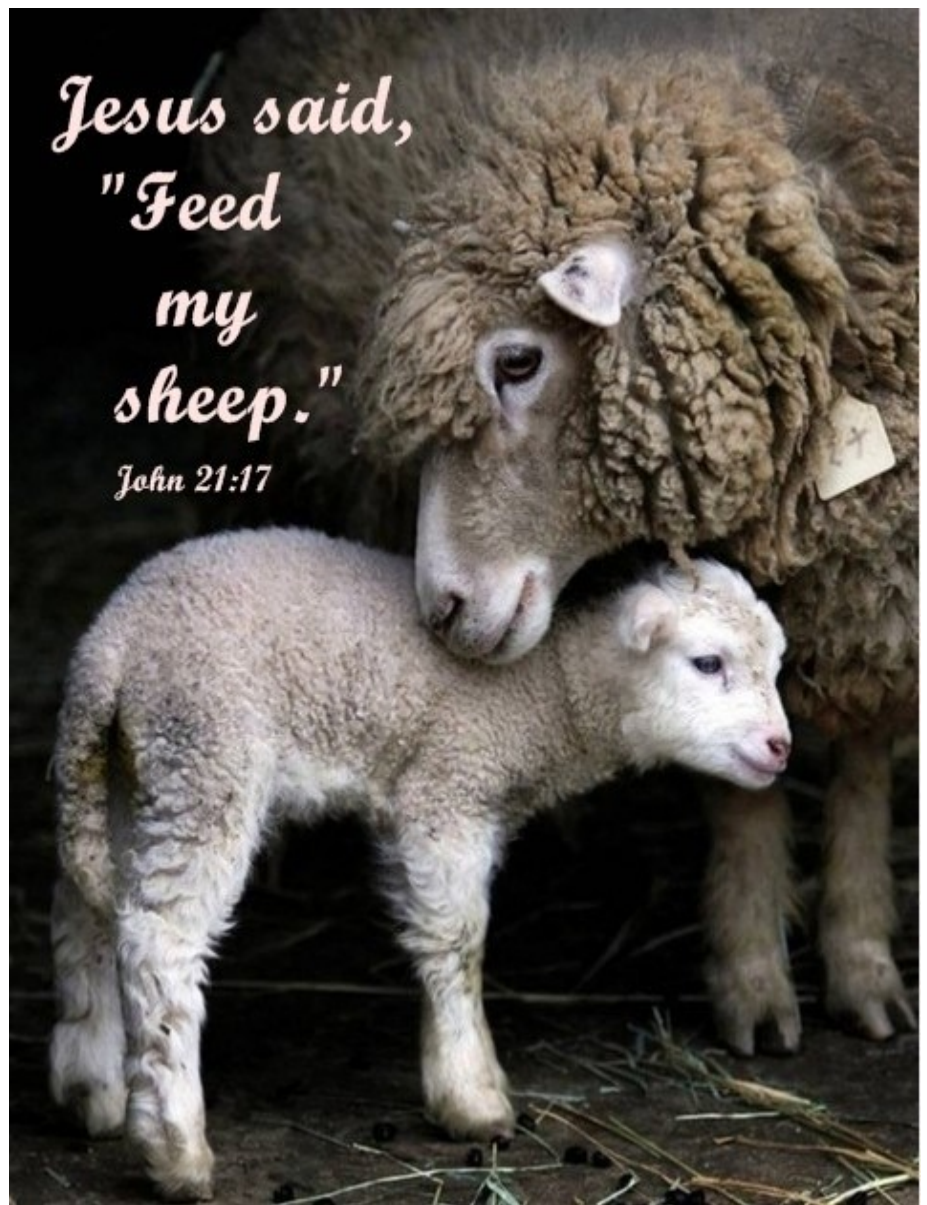
Anointing of the Sick

Please notify the Rectory ASAP.

Please refer to our website for more Sacrament Celebrations Guidelines

# Season of Resurrection

زمن القيامة المجيدة



Saint Anthony Maronite Church Lawrence, MA

## Meet Our Staff

**Pastor:** Fr. Elie Mikhael

☎ 305.807.9087  
✉ pastor@stanthonylawrence.org

**Parochial Vicar:** Fr. Tony Youssef

☎ 917-545-4955

**Sub-Deacon** James T. Demers

**Sub-Deacon** Nadim B. Daou

### Parish Ministries

♦ Religious Education

✉ ccd@stanthonylawrence.org

♦ Publishing: Bulletin

✉ bulletin@stanthonylawrence.org

♦ Choirs (English, Arabic & Syriac)

♦ Kids Choir

♦ Knights of the Altar

♦ Knights of Mary

♦ Maronite Youth : MYO

♦ Maronite Young Adults

♦ Bereavement Ministry

♦ Cenacle of the Rosary

(Thursdays @ 6PM)

♦ Cenacle of Divine Mercy

(Sundays Before the Liturgies)

♦ Sacristan (s)

## POPE PRAYER INTENTIONS

April - 2018

### Formation in Spiritual Discernment:

That the Church may appreciate the urgency of formation in Spiritual discernment, both on the personal and communitarian levels.



### Right Sanctuary Lamp

This week's Sanctuary Lamp will burn  
***In Loving Memory of Fred Nasser***  
Offered by his Loving Family.

### Left Sanctuary Lamp

This week's Sanctuary Lamp will burn  
***In Loving Memory of Fred Nasser***  
Offered by his Loving Family.

## Divine Liturgies Intentions

### 5th Sunday of Resurrection

أحد الخامس بعد القيامة

**Saturday, April 28 @ 4:00 PM:**

- For: + Jeanne and Al Farrah, *By their children & Families.*

**Sunday, April 29 @ 8:15 AM:**

- For: + Special Intention.

**Sunday, April 29 @ 9:30 AM:**

- For: + Arthur J. Mansor, Sr., *By his wife, Grace, & Family.*

**Sunday, April 29 @ 11:30 AM:**

- For: + Special Intention.

### 5th Week of Resurrection

الأسبوع الخامس بعد القيامة

**Monday, April 30 @ 9 AM:**

- For: In Honor of Yvonne and Robert Palmer

**Tuesday, May 1 @ 7 PM:**

- For: The health and well being of Mark Bejjani.

**Wednesday, May 2 @ 9AM:**

- For: Private Intentions

**Thursday, May 3 @ 7PM:**

- For: Special Intentions.

**Friday, May 4 No Liturgies—Office Closed**

### 6th Sunday of Resurrection

أحد السادس بعد القيامة  
عيد سيدة لبنان

***Our Lady of Lebanon***

**Saturday, May 5 @ 4:00 PM:**

- For: + Kenneth T. Naffah, *By his sons, Michael & Gregory, his sister, Kay, & their families.*

**Sunday, May 6 @ 8:15 AM:**

For: + Albert & Helene Ghossoub, *By his wife, Wadad Whiffen.*

**Sunday, May 6 @ 9:30 AM:**

- Mary Crowning.
- Dorothy Gabriel Scholarship Awards

**Sunday, May 6 @ 11:30 AM:**

- Mary Crowning.
- For: + Daoud Bechara, *By Maroun and Joseph Bechara.*

*Once St. Teresa was overwhelmed with God's Goodness and asked Our Lord, "How can I thank you?" He replied, "ATTEND ONE MASS."*

**SUMMER LITURGIES SCHEDULE**  
**JUNE 17, 2018—SEPTEMBER 2, 2018**

**DAILY LITURGIES: M-TH 9AM**

**WEEKEND LITURGIES:**

**SATURDAY: 4PM**

**SUNDAY: 9AM & 11AM**

.....

**مواعيد القدايس الصيفية**

**أبتداءً من الأحد 17 حزيران و لغاية 2 أيلول**

**القدايس اليومية: 9 صباحاً فقط**

**قدايس نهاية الأسبوع**

**ألسبت : 4 مساءً  
الأحد:**

**9 صباحاً  
11 صباحاً**

**KINDLY READ CAREFULLY**  
**ALL SACRAMENTAL GUIDELINES**

**Baptism & Confirmation:** (Check our Website)  
**Guidelines :**

<http://stanthonylawrence.org/guidelines/>

**Registration Form :**

<http://stanthonylawrence.org/online-registration-form/>

**Sacrament of Marriage:** (Check our Website)  
**Guidelines :**

<http://stanthonylawrence.org/guidelines-2/>

**FOCCUS:** <http://stanthonylawrence.org/focus/>

**Pre-Cana:** <http://stanthonylawrence.org/pre-cana/>

**Banquet Hall Guidelines:**

**Contract Form & Usage Donations:**

<http://stanthonylawrence.org/banquet-hall/>

**Burial Guidelines**

**Burial Charges and Fees:** (Check our Website)

<http://stanthonylawrence.org/charges-and-fees/>

**Lot Sales:**

<http://stanthonylawrence.org/lots-sales/>

**Online Donation**  
**Contribute to Our Parish Growth. Apply Online:**  
<http://stanthonylawrence.org/donate-now/>

**TITHES & OFFERINGS - April 22, 2018**

Sunday Collection (Online)	\$ 2,774.00
Candles	\$ 103.00
CCD-Sunday School (Registration, 1st Communion)	25.00
Miscellaneous (Baptism, MYO Retreat, Easter Charities ....)	\$ 185.00
<b>Total Deposit</b>	<b>\$ 3,087.00</b>

**Monthly Operational Expenses - April 2017**

Health Insurance , Retirement & Disability	\$4,020.00
Total Household (Table Expense, ....)	\$896.95
Salaries	
Clergy (Base Salary, Table & Auto Expense)	\$5,650.00
Organist / Singers (9:30am & Funerals)	\$500
Secretarial	\$2,200.00
Payroll Expenses	\$169.54
Eparchial Assessment	\$2,500.00
Donations to Others	\$700.00
Maintenance & Repairs (Cleaning, Dumpster , Janitorial Supplies & ..)	\$4,164.14
Religious Supplies (Candles, Hosts & Wines,	\$280.60
Utilities (Phone, Cable, Internet, Electric, Fuel, Sewer & Water)	\$1,210.52
Decorations and Flowers	\$526.99
Office Administration (supplies, Postage, Printing, Subscription )	\$2,631.94
Parish Programs (Knights of Mary, MYO, MYA, Sunday Coffee Hours)	\$610.76
Advertisement & Public Relations	\$638.13
Furniture & Equipment	\$2,274.44
Total Monthly Expenses	\$28,974.01
Net Income needed to Balance per Week	<b>\$7,243.51</b>

**Membership Registration**

<http://stanthonylawrence.org/member-information-form/>

**Online Donation**

<http://stanthonylawrence.org/donate-now/>

**Upcoming Events**

<http://stanthonylawrence.org/upcoming-events/>

**Monthly Calendar:**

<http://stanthonylawrence.org/upcoming-events/calendar/>



## PARISH MINISTRIES & NEWS

### Religious Education

#### Registration 2018-2019

We are winding down the year. Last week, your child is went home with a 2018-2019 registration from for CCD. I would like to have all children registered for next fall BEFORE we finish our year in May. You will be registering for the next grade. This gives us a chance to set up lists early and start right away on September. You may fill out the form (one per child) and either return it in an envelope to your child's teacher or I am always available to receive the registrations once the CCD classes have started on Sunday.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.  
Susan Veilleux, [ccd@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:ccd@stanthonylawrence.org)

#### First Communion

##### First Communion: Upcoming Preparations

- **Saturday, May 5** Reconciliation at 10am.
- **Sunday May 6** Crowning of Mary. Grade 2 will help serve at the 9:30 or 11:30 liturgies Parents will chose which liturgy works for their family. Children should be prepared to wear their First Communion outfits. We will do a practice at 10:30 in lieu of CCD between liturgies that day.
- **FRIDAY, May 18** will be rehearsal for First Communion with parents. This will begin at 5:30 p.m. and last approximately an hour.
- **Saturday May 19 at 10:30 a.m.** First Communion Celebration.

#### Let us Pray!!! May 5th @ 10AM

May Our Children encounter the Merciful Face of Our Heavenly Father in the sacrament of Reconciliation

### Maronite Monks in Petersham

Monthly grocery donation will be scheduled for May 6, 2018 after the Liturgies

Item list will be forthcoming.

### MYA - Maronite Young Adults

Next Meeting : TBD

### Children's Choir

Saturdays: May 5 & May 12

Practices are held from -5:00PM - 6:30PM

### Knights of Mary

May 5th: 5PM - 7PM After 4PM Liturgy

\*Dates are Subject to change\*

### MYO - Maronite Youth Organization

Friday May 11th: Faith Formation

Faith Formation Events run from 5PM - 7PM

### Mahrajan Committee Meeting

Monday, April 30 @ 7PM - Parish Office

### Eucharistic Adoration

Thursday, May 3rd @ 7PM - After Liturgy

### Daughters of Saint Anthony

Tuesday, May 9: Monthly Meeting

Field Trip information TBD

### Bible Study

English Session: **Tuesdays May 8 @ 7PM**

Arabic Session: **Wednesdays May 9 @ 7PM**

### The Family of Saint Charbel

**Thursday, May 17th - الخميس 17 أيار**

♦ 6:30 PM - Rosary—صلاة المسبحة—6:30 مساءً

♦ 7:00 PM - Divine Liturgy - القداس الألهي - 7:00 مساءً

♦ 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM - Sharing the Word of God

7:30 مساءً: مشاركة روحية

### Rosary Group - صلاة المسبحة

Wednesday @ 6PM - الأربعاء: 6 مساءً

## Save The Dates

**First Communion Liturgy**  
Saturday, May 19th @ 10:30 AM

**Feast of the Ascension**  
Liturgy: Thursday, May 10th @ 7 PM

**SATURDAY MAY 12**

*Mother's Day*  
**SUNDAY BRUNCH**

**11AM - 3PM**



### Memorial Day Divine Liturgy

Weather permitting, we will carry on the tradition of celebrating Memorial Day Divine Liturgy at the Cemetery Grounds on **Monday, May 28th at 10:00 AM**. In case of inclement weather, we will celebrate the liturgy in the church.

### Honoring Our Graduates in the Divine Liturgy

We, at Saint Anthony, will acknowledge our 2018 High School and College graduates with a Liturgy in their honor on **Sunday June 10th**.

If you are a 2018 Graduate, we kindly ask you to forward: your full name, a (high resolution) photo, grade level, graduating school name and for high school grads, the College you will attend in the fall, to the Rectory or by e-mail. Please be sure to pass in your information ASAP in order for us to properly recognize their achievements. Thank you for your participation.

**\*\*Deadline to Submit is May 30th\*\***

**Annual Father's Day Picnic**  
Sunday, June 17th: 11:00 AM Liturgy  
Saint Basil Salvatorian Center Grounds

## LECTORS

**Saturday, April 28 @ 4:00 PM:** Nancy Bistany  
**Sunday, April 29**

**8:15AM** Huguette Sfeir

**9:30 AM** Elaine Ferris

**11:30 AM**

**English:** Meriana Jamous

**Arabic:** George Saab

**Saturday, May 5 @ 4:00 PM:** Phyllis Thomas  
**Sunday, May 6**

**8:15AM** Maroun Nassar

**9:30 AM** Sub-Deacon Jim Demers

**11:30 AM**

**English:** Mansour Chaya

**Arabic:** Gretta Merheb

## ALTAR SERVERS

**Saturday, April 28**

**4:00 PM**

**Elias Saab**

**Sharbel Saab**

**Sunday, April 29**

**8:15 AM**

**Volunteers**

**Sunday, April 29**

**9:30 AM**

**Anthony Hassan**

**Thomas Demers**

**Sunday, April 29**

**11:30 AM**

**Charbel Merheb**

**Geryes Geha**

**Elie Daou**

**Giorgio Abounasr**

## Condolences

We join with the Parish of Saint Anthony to offer our condolences to the families the late:

♦ *Stephanie Ota, our sympathies are expressed to her parents, Mike and Vivian Ota, her sister, Samantha and to the Ota and Khoury Families*

♦ *Dr. Joseph Maroun, our sympathies to his wife, his children,*

May they rest in peace and their loved ones be comforted.

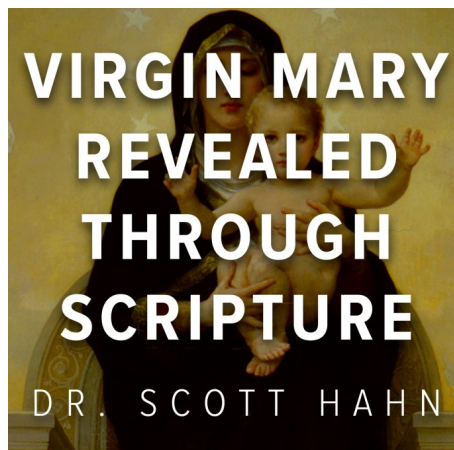
Preschool & Kindergarten Open House  
@ St. Joe's

**Saturday, 5/19/18, 9:00 am - 11:00 am**  
St. Joseph Regional Catholic School  
in Salem invites you to their  
Preschool & Kindergarten Open House.

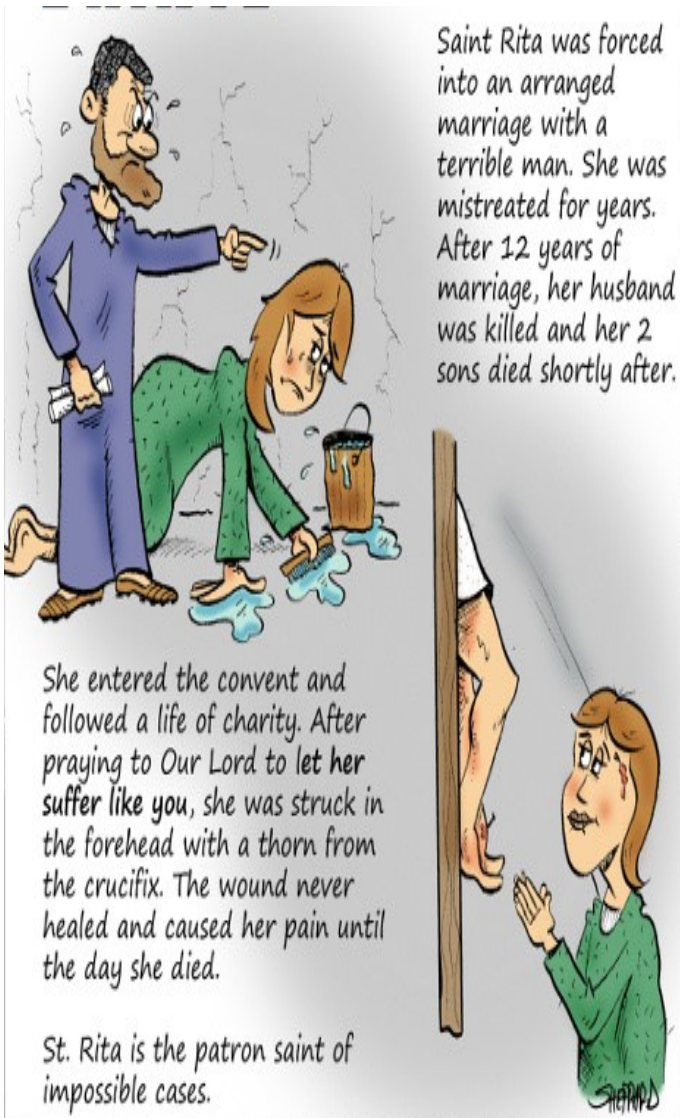
Learn why our families say our school "...has upheld all of my high expectations...where children are seen as individuals and are truly loved." Teachers, students, and current parents will be available to answer questions, provide registration information, and give tours. Kindergarten readiness information will also be available. Questions? Unable to attend but would like more information? Contact Christine, [clatino@sjrcs.com](mailto:clatino@sjrcs.com) or 603-893-6811 x 19.

FORMED: PARISH CODE N3CCNK

<https://formed.org/listen/5a1f0cf00923a71100a44696>



Drawing on his roots as a Protestant minister, Dr. Scott Hahn responds to key misunderstandings about the Virgin Mary. This captivating presentation explains the biblical and historical basis for the Church's teachings that the Virgin Mary is the New Eve and the Queen of Heaven.



Saint Rita was forced into an arranged marriage with a terrible man. She was mistreated for years. After 12 years of marriage, her husband was killed and her 2 sons died shortly after.

She entered the convent and followed a life of charity. After praying to Our Lord to let her suffer like you, she was struck in the forehead with a thorn from the crucifix. The wound never healed and caused her pain until the day she died.

St. Rita is the patron saint of impossible cases.



The Whole-Life  
Confession

Four Weeks of Awakening  
to Mercy, Healing & Peace

William M. Watson, SJ



Modeled on the practice of a life confession St. Ignatius made early in his conversion, *The Whole-Life Confession* is a step-by-step four week process with spiritual exercises for each day. It culminates in the grace-filled experience of *The Whole-Life Confession*. *The Whole-Life Confession* is a very dynamic and holistic method that helps you to integrate your spiritual, intellectual and psychological/ emotional history. Those who have completed it have been amazed how it allowed them to "see their whole life" as if for the first time. Done any time of year, individually or with a faith community, your life will be changed by learning how to bring your entire life's history—your story—to Christ in this intensely holistic, deeply personal and healing method of Reconciliation.



أفسس 2:1-10 الأحد الخامس من زمن القيامة - 5th Sunday of the Resurrection

You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

وَأَنْتُمْ، فَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا بِزَلَّاتِكُمْ وَخَطَايَاكُمْ، الَّتِي سَلَكْتُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ قَبْلُ بِحَسَبِ إِلَهٍ هَذَا الْعَالَمِ، بِحَسَبِ رَئِيسِ سُلْطَانِ الْجَوِّ، أَيْ الرُّوحِ الَّذِي يَعْمَلُ الْآنَ فِي أَبْنَاءِ الْغُضَيَّانِ؛ وَمِنْهُمْ نَحْنُ أَيْضًا جَمِيعًا قَدْ سَلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ فِي شَهَوَاتِ إِنْسَانِيَةِ الْجَسَدِيِّ، عَامِلِينَ بِرِعَابَاتِهِ وَأَفْكَارِهِ، وَكُنَّا بِالطَّبِيعَةِ أَوْلَادَ الْغَضَبِ كَالْبَاقِينَ؛ لَكِنَّ اللَّهَ، وَهُوَ الْغَنِيُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ، فَلِكثْرَةِ مَحَبَّتِهِ الَّتِي أَحَبَّنَا بِهَا، وَقَدْ كُنَّا نَحْنُ أَيْضًا أَمْوَاتًا بِزَلَّاتِنَا، أَحْيَانَا مَعَ الْمَسِيحِ، وَبِالْغِنَةِ أَنْتُمْ مُخَلَّصُونَ؛ وَمَعَهُ أَقَامْنَا وَأَجْلَسْنَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ فِي الْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ، لِيُظْهِرَ فِي الْأَجْيَالِ الْآتِيَةِ غِنَى نِعْمَتِهِ الْفَائِقَةِ، بِلُطْفِهِ لَنَا فِي الْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ. فَبِالْغِنَةِ أَنْتُمْ مُخَلَّصُونَ بِوَاسِطَةِ الْإِيمَانِ: وَهَذَا لَيْسَ مِنْكُمْ، إِنَّهُ عَطِيَّةُ اللَّهِ. وَلَا هُوَ مِنَ الْأَعْمَالِ، لِئَلَّا يَفْتَخِرَ أَحَدٌ؛ لِأَنَّنَا نَحْنُ صُنْعُهُ، قَدْ خُلِقْنَا فِي الْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ لِلْأَعْمَالِ الصَّالِحَةِ، الَّتِي سَبَقَ اللَّهُ فَأَعَدَّهَا لِكَيْ نَسْلُكَ فِيهَا.

يوحنا 21:15-19 الأحد الخامس من زمن القيامة - 5th Sunday of the Resurrection

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' A second time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' And he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.' He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God. After this he said to him, 'Follow me.'

بَعْدَ الْغَدَاءِ، قَالَ يَسُوعُ لِسِمْعَانَ بُطْرُسَ: «يَا سِمْعَانُ بْنُ يُونَا، أَتُحِبُّنِي أَكْثَرَ مِمَّا يُحِبُّنِي هَؤُلَاءِ؟». «قَالَ لَهُ: «نَعَمْ، يَا رَبِّ، أَنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنِّي أُحِبُّكَ». «قَالَ لَهُ يَسُوعُ: «إِزْعِ خُمْلَانِي». «قَالَ لَهُ مَرَّةً ثَانِيَةً: «يَا سِمْعَانُ بْنُ يُونَا، أَتُحِبُّنِي؟». «قَالَ لَهُ: «نَعَمْ يَا رَبِّ، أَنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنِّي أُحِبُّكَ». «قَالَ لَهُ يَسُوعُ: «إِزْعِ نِعَاجِي!». «قَالَ لَهُ مَرَّةً ثَالِثَةً: «يَا سِمْعَانُ بْنُ يُونَا، أَتُحِبُّنِي؟». «فَحَزَنَ بُطْرُسُ، لِأَنَّ يَسُوعَ قَالَ لَهُ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ: أَتُحِبُّنِي؟ فَقَالَ لَهُ: «يَا رَبِّ، أَنْتَ تَعْلَمُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ، وَأَنْتَ تَعْرِفُ أَنِّي أُحِبُّكَ». «قَالَ لَهُ يَسُوعُ: «إِزْعِ خِرَافِي! أَحَقُّ الْحَقِّ أَقُولُ لَكَ: حِينَ كُنْتَ شَابًّا، كُنْتَ تَشُدُّ حِزَامَكَ بِيَدَيْكَ وَتَسِيرُ إِلَى حَيْثُ تُرِيدُ. وَلَكِنْ حِينَ تَشِيخُ، سَتَسْبِطُ يَدَيْكَ وَآخَرُ يَشُدُّ لَكَ حِزَامَكَ، وَيَذْهَبُ بِكَ إِلَى حَيْثُ لَا تُرِيدُ». «قَالَ يَسُوعُ ذَلِكَ مُشِيرًا إِلَى الْمَيَّةِ الَّتِي سَيَمَجِدُ بِهَا بُطْرُسُ اللَّهَ. ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ: «إِتَّبِعْنِي!».



# Save the Date

Thursday, October 4, 2018

Save This Date!  
Thursday, October 4, 2018



And join Bishop Gregory Mansour at the  
Eparchy of Saint Maron's 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit Dinner  
on Thursday, October 4, 2018 at  
the New York Athletic Club.

The proceeds of this Benefit Dinner  
provide essential funding for:

Seminarian Education  
Establishing New Maronite Parishes  
Caring for Retired Priests  
Ministering to the Faithful

Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn  
Phone: 718-237-9913

Email: [saintmaron@yahoo.com](mailto:saintmaron@yahoo.com)

Website: [www.stmaron.org](http://www.stmaron.org)

We look forward to seeing you there!  
Thank you for your support.

## 55th Annual Maronite Convention

HOUSTON, TX | Jul 11-15, 2018

Hosted by Our Lady of the Cedars Parish  
Sponsored by the National Apostolate of Maronites  
Marriott Marquis, Downtown

REGISTER TODAY:

[NAMconvention2018.com](http://NAMconvention2018.com)

[NAMnews.org](http://NAMnews.org) | 914.964.3070



## MARONITES - DEEP ROOTS, GROWING IN FAITH



### OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS

#### "Come and See"

Everything is Bigger in Texas

Experience Southern hospitality  
at its best by a large community  
with a big heart.



### MARRIOTT MARQUIS

\$139/night

877.622.3056

Code: NAM Convention

Rate for single, double,  
triple, quadruple rooms.  
One night deposit required.  
Rate valid till June 18, 2018.

- Texas-sized Lazy River
- Convenient Location
- Luxurious Rooms
- Full Amenities

## ENTERTAINMENT



Nader Khoury  
Lebanese Singer  
Saturday Night



Ghada Chbeir  
Religious Singer  
Thursday Night



Nemr Abou Nassar  
Lebanese Comedian  
Thursday Night



Jabbour  
Local Favorite  
Friday Night



Country and Western  
Music and Dancing  
Friday Night

## SCHOLARSHIPS

### NAM Scholarship

NAM Scholarships are now available. Visit their site to  
see the many Scholarship options to choose from.

[www.namnews.org/index.php?page=Scholarships1](http://www.namnews.org/index.php?page=Scholarships1)

## DCG SCHOLARSHIP Golf Tournament

### DCG Annual Golf Fundraiser Event:

Merrimack Golf Course - Monday, June 25th . Call Ken at 508-633-0704 to register by phone or download an  
entry form @ [www.dcgfoundation.com](http://www.dcgfoundation.com)

### DONATIONS NEEDED FOR RAFFLE!

Patriots, Red Sox, Bruins, or Celtics tickets, Vacation Spots or Restaurants,  
Grocery and Gas gift Certificates would be appropriate and appreciated.



## UNDERSTANDING THE DESERT OF LONELINESS

A few summers ago, I decided to spend three months in a Trappist monastery. I was tired out from a very busy year within which my work kept me over-active, over-involved, and over-stimulated, I was looking for solitude, and in the weeks and days immediately preceding my departure for the monastery, I began more and more to fantasize about how good it was going to feel spending those months in solitude. I imagined myself walking in silence around a peaceful lake, sitting by a fireplace smoking a pipe, making visits to the chapel to pray, and sitting under an oak tree drinking in the serenity of the distant mountains.

I arrived at the monastery in the early afternoon and could hardly wait to begin all this solitude and ... by late evening, I was restless and climbing walls. I had already done almost all of the contemplative things I about which I had fantasized. I had walked around the lake, smoked my pipe by the fireplace, visited the chapel twice, and sat under the oak tree and drank in the mountains! Now I was in panic, wondering what I would do for the rest of the summer – with no work to do, no meetings to go to, no classes to teach, no talks to give, no newspapers to read, no movies or television to watch, no picnics to go to with family and friends, no sports scores to watch over. I suddenly felt very sorry that I had gotten myself into this commitment. Also, at that moment – hyper, restless, dislocated, disillusioned, and in panic – I began to enter into solitude.

My case, I suspect, is typical. Our fantasy about solitude most often sees it precisely as leisured serenity, a quiet walk in the woods, a peaceful contemplation of some scene of beauty, or a consoling time spent sitting in a chapel or church. The reality is, normally, exactly the opposite. Real solitude most often hits us unawares and sends us reeling. Almost always the initial stages of solitude are extremely painful and are experienced as dislocation, disillusionment, and intense loneliness. Moreover, like real prayer, genuine solitude is often not something we choose to put ourselves for ourselves. More often, solitude is the experience of being taken, against our own choosing, where we would rather not go.

We are led into solitude. Thus, for example, we are led into it in our experience of moral loneliness, namely, on those occasions when, alone or within a group, we feel ourselves radically isolated, a minority of one, in terms of what we hold precious and value deeply. It is when we feel most without moral companionship, when we feel out of sync with everyone else, dislocated, disillusioned, naked and alone, that we are led into solitude. This is the desert that constitutes solitude and it is always, initially, very painful – and it is rare that we go there of our own choosing. Most often we end up there after having exhausted every means of escaping the experience.

In John's Gospel (John 21), after Peter swears his love for him, Jesus tells him: "Until now, you have girded your belt and walked where you wanted to walk. Now others will put a belt around you and take you where you would rather not go!" John informs us that Jesus said this to indicate the type of death Peter was to die. Prayer and solitude are a lot about a certain kind of death – death to narcissism, to fantasy, to illusion, to false grandiosity, and to false beliefs and values. Rarely do we walk into the desert that purifies us of these by ourselves. Generally it is a conspiracy of circumstances, more accurately called divine providence, that puts a rope around us and leads us where we would rather not go. Most of our solitude is by conscription. It is rarely by our active choosing that we are taken into the real desert.

This should, I hope, be valuable to us in helping us understand what is happening to us during those times when we feel so dislocated, isolated, alone, and morally lonely. We are experiencing desert pain, the rope of baptismal displacement that Jesus told Peter about, the dark night of the soul, the painful purification of real contemplation. Real solitude is not the type that one normally reads about in the tourist brochures ... or that one fantasizes about when one is over-tired and over-restless! It is important, at those times when we are most lonely and in pain, to know this.

But it is this type of solitude that, because it is so disillusioning, precisely dispells illusion. It also dispells fantasy and narcissism because it takes us out of a dream world into the real world. And it is, ironically, this type of painful aloneness that is the basis for real community since, as Rainer Marie Rilke once said, love is the capacity of two solitudes to protect and border and greet each other.