



# SAINT ANTHONY MARONITE CHURCH

*A Parish Family of the Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn, NY*

كنيسة مار أنطونيوس المارونية

February 11, 2018 ١١ شباط ٢٠١٨

145 Amesbury St \* Lawrence, MA 01841

Phone: 978.685.7233 \* Fax: 978.688.4475

Email: [rectory@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:rectory@stanthonylawrence.org) \* Website: [www.stanthonylawrence.org](http://www.stanthonylawrence.org)

## OFFICE HOURS

M-TH: 9 AM - 4PM

Friday: Office is Closed

Saturdays: By Appointment

## LITURGIES

*Daily Liturgies:*

M & W: 9 AM

T & TH: 7 PM

*Weekend Liturgies:*

*Saturday*

Vigil Liturgy @ 4 PM

*Sunday Liturgies:*

8:30 AM - Arabic

9:30 AM - English

11:30 AM - English & Arabic

## HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION

Vigil Liturgy @ 7 PM

Feast Day @ 9 AM

## Sacraments of

### Baptism & Confirmation

1 month in advance with the Pastor

### Sacrament of Matrimony

Couples should make arrangements  
six months prior to the wedding date

### Sacrament of

### Reconciliation

One hour Before Thursday &

Saturday Liturgies,

or by appointment

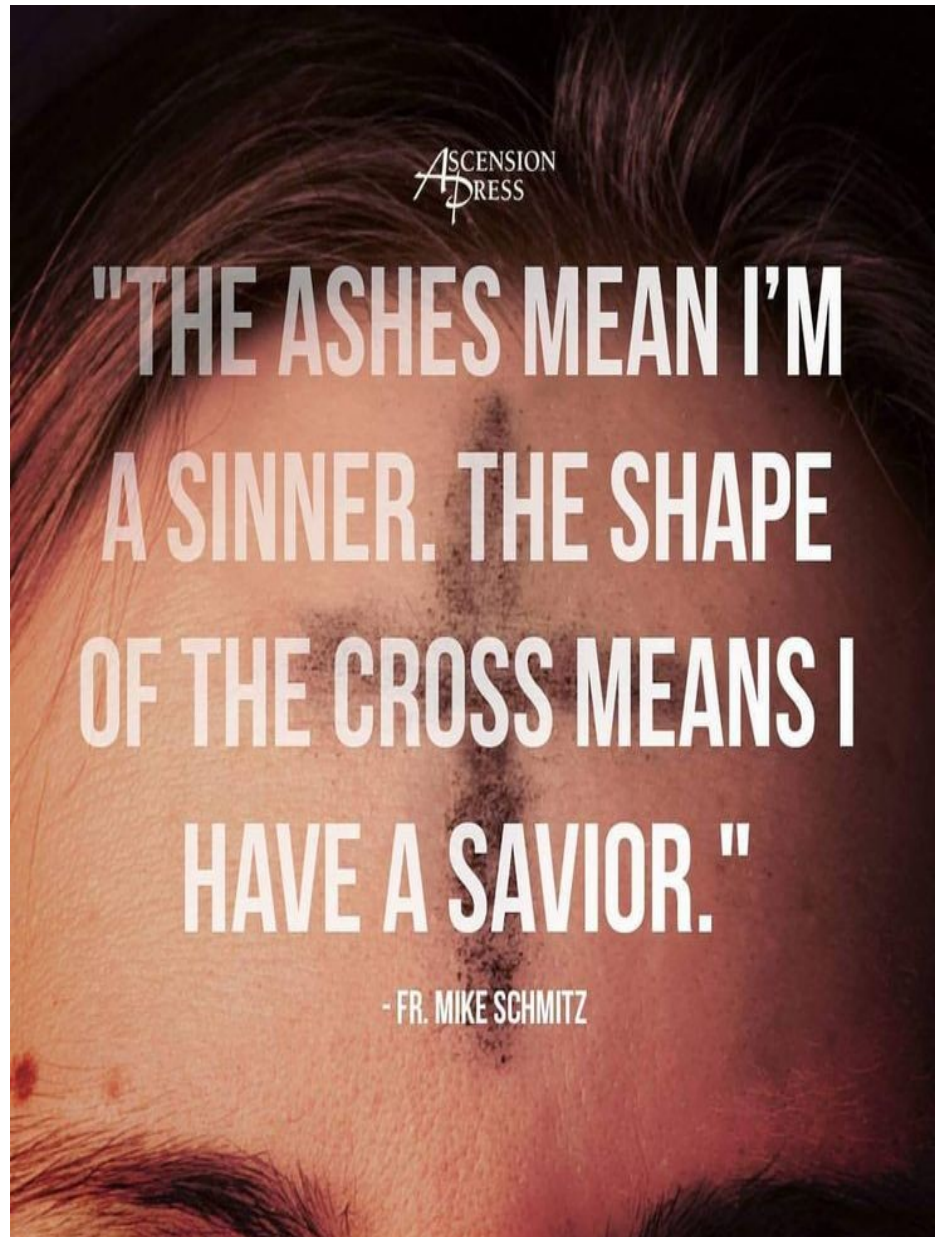
### Anointing of the Sick

Please notify the Rectory if a  
member of your family is ill,  
hospitalized, or unable to come to  
Church and would like to receive  
communion at home

Please refer to our website for more  
Sacrament Celebrations Guidelines

## Entrance into Great Lent

مدخل الصوم الكبير



Facebook: Saint Anthony Maronite Church Lawrence, MA



# Liturgies Intentions

*Lent*

Sunday of the Entrance into Lent:  
Miracle at Cana in Galilee

أحد مدخل الصوم الكبير  
آية عرس قانا الجليل

## Meet our staff:

Clergy

*Father Elie Mikhael, Pastor*  
[pastor@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:pastor@stanthonylawrence.org)

*Father Tony Youssef,*  
*Parochial Vicar*

Phone: 978-685-7233

Emergency Contact:  
Fr. Elie Mikhael  
305.807.9087

Fr. Tony Youssef  
917.545.4955

*Sub-Deacon James T. Demers*  
*Sub-Deacon Nadim B. Daou*

Secretary:

*Mrs. Susan Fuccillo*  
978.685-7233

[rectory@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:rectory@stanthonylawrence.org)

## Parish Ministries

- ♦ Religious Education  
[ccd@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:ccd@stanthonylawrence.org)
- ♦ Publishing: Bulletin  
[bulletin@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto: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)

Saturday, February 10	4:00 PM	Private Intentions.
Sunday, February 11	8:30AM	For good health and fast recuperation of Robert Chahine, <i>By the Pastor.</i>
	9:30AM	For: +Mary George Eyssi and Suzanne Eyssi, <i>By Mrs. John McDougall, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Witkiewicz, and family.</i>
	11:30 AM	For: +Maroun and Leila Zaklit, <i>By their daughter, Soline, wife of Ibrahim Geha, and family.</i>

## First Week of Lent

الأسبوع الأول من الصوم المقدس



**Ash Monday, February 12 - 12 شباط - الإثنين، 12**

*Ash Monday Liturgies Intentions for the 9AM and 7PM :*  
*For our parishioners to have a blessed & fruitful Lenten Journey.*  
*Remember you are dust and unto dust you shall return*

Tuesday, February 13 @ 7 PM	<i>For the well-being of Alice Rodriguez, By the Pastor.</i>
Wednesday, February 14 9AM	<i>In honor of Zakia Russo and her family, By the Pastor.</i>
Thursday, February 15 @ 7PM	<i>In honor and good health of the parishioners, By the Pastor.</i>
Friday, February 16 @ 7 PM	<i>Stations of the Cross</i>

## Healing of the Leper

أحد شفاء الأبرص

Saturday, February 17	4:00 PM	For: Private Intentions
Sunday February 18	8:30AM	For: +Bert and Mary Samia. <i>By the pastor</i>
	9:30AM	For: + Gloria and Dan Sarkis <i>By their loving family.</i>
	11:30 AM	For: + 40 Day Anniversary - Seniora Youssef, and in Remembrance of her Husband, George Youssef, <i>By their family.</i>





February 4, 2018

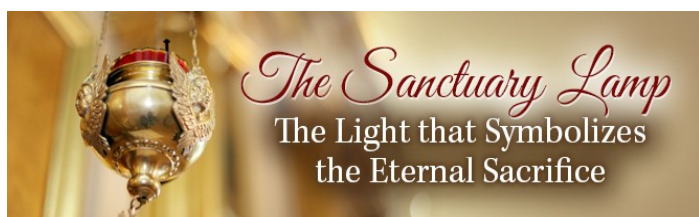
Sunday Collection	\$ 3,714.00
Fuel	\$ 1640.00
Candles	\$ 133.00
Donation	\$ 365.00
2nd Collection– Bishops' Charities	\$ 55.00
Sunday Coffee Hours	\$80.00
<b>Total Deposit</b>	<b>\$ 5,306.00</b>



Dear Father Elie,  
Please find enclosed my check in the amount of **\$25,000.00** in honor of my mother and father, Bert and Mary Samia. Please disclose this donation the parish and have them Pray for me. Wishing you the happiest and most successful 2018. With Deepest Regards,  
Leonard J. Samia

We take this opportunity to offer our gratitude to Mr. Leonard Samia and his family for his generous donation made to our parish in his parents' honor. Our parish is blessed through your kindness and we assure you of our continuous prayers for you and your family. Thank You!!!

**Online Donation—Contribute to Our Parish Growth. Apply Online:**  
<http://stanthonylawrence.org/donate-now/>  
Refer to Page 8 For more info



**Left Sanctuary Lamp**

*Private Intentions*

**Right Sanctuary Lamp**

*In Honor of Zakia Russo and her family  
Offered by Father Elie Mikhael*

# ALTAR SERVERS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Altar Servers</u>
Saturday, February 10	4:00 PM	Jacob Godfrey Youssef Chahine
Sunday, February 11	8:30 AM	Volunteers
Sunday, February 11	9:30 AM	Antonio Hbaiter Joseph Safi
Sunday, February 11 11:30 AM		Elias Azzi, Elie Daou Christopher Bou Sadda, Joseph Mansour

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Altar Servers</u>
Saturday, February 17	4:00 PM	Elias Saab Sharbel Saab
Sunday, February 18	8:30 AM	Volunteers
Sunday, February 18	9:30 AM	George Hbaiter Max Sheehan
Sunday, February 18 11:30 AM		Anthony Chaya, Charbel Merheb Charbel Yammine, Geryes Geha



## Lectors

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Lectors</u>
Saturday, February 10	4:00 PM	Christine Ryan
Sunday, February 11	8:30 AM	Hitaf Nammour
Sunday, February 11	9:30 AM	Elaine Brousseau
Sunday, February 11 11:30 AM		English: Marie Charabati Arabic: Ajia Elia

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Lectors</u>
Saturday, February 17	4:00 PM	Joel Habib
Sunday, February 18	8:30 AM	Guita Bou Habib
Sunday, February 18	9:30 AM	Sub-Deacon Jim Demers
Sunday, February 18 11:30 AM		English: Raghida Ramey Arabic: Claudine Raad

# PARISH MINISTRIES & NEWS



## Condolences

~Gretta Merheb, wife of Mr. Wissam Merheb, and family: for the loss of her beloved mother, Farha Daccache.

~Georgina, wife of Mr. Jihad Maroun; Joumana, wife of Mr. Edgar Feghali, and their families: for the loss of their beloved father, Chafic Zaarour.

~George Bejjani and his family: for the loss of his brother, Sami Bejjani.

*May their souls rest in peace and their loved ones be comforted.*

## Religious Education - Sunday School

What a turnout!!!! Thank you so much to the parents of the First Communion children that attended our meeting Sunday. If you need any further information do not hesitate to contact me. We are looking forward to celebrating these beautiful children in May. Help your children by saying their prayers with them to practice for their big day.

Please note that there is no CCD on **Sunday, February 25**, due to February vacation.

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

## Children's Choir

**February 24th, March 10th**

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



## Knights of Mary Schedule

**Upcoming Meetings: February 17th March 3rd**

*All Events run from 5PM - 7PM After 4PM Liturgy*

*\*Dates are Subject to change\**



## MYA -Maronite Young Adults

**Next Meeting Friday, February 16th**

## MYO

### Schedule of Events

## 2018

Sunday, February 18 <sup>th</sup>	Community Service
Sunday, March 4 <sup>th</sup>	MYO Youth Liturgy Faith Formation
Saturday, March 17 <sup>th</sup>	Merrimack Valley Catholic Youth Conference*
Friday, April 13 <sup>th</sup>	MYO Youth Liturgy Faith Formation
Saturday, April 28 <sup>th</sup>	Regional MYO/MYA Retreat*
Friday, May 11 <sup>th</sup>	Faith Formation
Saturday, May 26 <sup>th</sup>	Social Outing

[www.facebook.com/stanthonysmyo](http://www.facebook.com/stanthonysmyo)

Faith Formation	5:15pm-7:30pm
Community Service	5:00pm-7:30pm
Special Events	Details To Be Provided

\*These events may involve additional cost not included in the Registration Fee



**Next Meeting:**  
**Tuesday,**  
**February 13th**

## Rosary Group Every Wednesday @ 6PM

**صلاة المسبحة الوردية: الأربعاء من كل أسبوع الساعة السادسة مساء**



Please Read Carefully this communiqué addressed to every Maronite parishioner in the Eparchy of St Maron of Brooklyn, NY.

Your contribution will outreach to all the charities cited below. Thank You for Your Generosity.

**Our Parish Contribution and dues toward our Eparchy are divided into:**

**1-Bishop Appeal: \$7,500.00. Must be paid by Good Friday March 30, 2018**

**2-Eparchial Assessment: \$25,000.00. Divided into 10 Payments**



**EPARCHY OF SAINT MARON OF BROOKLYN**

**Office of the Bishop**

**109 Remsen Street Brooklyn, New York 11201-4212**

**Tel: (718)-237-9913 Fax: (718)-243-0444**

[chancerystmaron@verizon.net](mailto:chancerystmaron@verizon.net) [www.stmaron.org](http://www.stmaron.org)

Lent 2018

Prot. No. 100/1/18 S

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Eparchy of Saint Maron exists to serve you, the Maronite faithful, and to preach the Gospel to all people. We can only do this effectively with your financial support.

Today, I ask you to make a sacrificial gift to the Eparchy's Annual Lenten Appeal. The proceeds of this year's Appeal will go for the following needs of the Eparchy:

- ✓ **Seminarians:** Our seminarians are our future. We need your help so we can invest in their education and formation. We currently have four seminarians and three men in discernment. Each seminarian costs about \$40,000 per year, in the form of tuition, books, room, board and insurance. **40% of your contribution to this year's Annual Appeal will go for Seminarian Expenses.**
- ✓ **Retired Priests:** Collectively, the 15 retired priests of the Eparchy served the faithful for over 500 years. Now, we help them with a modest pension of \$1,800 per month. **20% of your contribution will go to support Retired Priests.**
- ✓ **Helping in Lebanon and the Middle East:** The Eparchy assists Lebanon and Syria in countless ways, for example: by applying for grants to American foundations and donors, advocating for them with the U.S. government, and channeling and providing direct financial assistance. **10% of your contribution will go to support Christians in Lebanon and the Middle East.**
- ✓ **Endowment:** The Eparchy's Endowment Fund provides a source of income each year for the needs of the Eparchy and ensures that the Eparchy will have solid resources in the future. It also provides a "rainy day fund" in case of disaster. **30% of your contribution will be deposited into the Eparchy's Endowment.**

Please open your heart once again to help with these critical needs. Your gift makes a positive difference in the lives of so many throughout the 16 states of the Eparchy, stretching from Maine to Florida. Any gift you make will have a positive effect.

Thank you very much. May God bless you for your generosity! I wish you a holy Lent and a blessed Easter.

Gratefully yours in Christ,

+Gregory J. Mansour

*PS: Please also consider remembering the Eparchy and your parish in your estate plan, or as the beneficiary of an insurance policy, retirement plan or charitable gift annuity. Thank you.*



Romans 14:14-23

Miracle at Cana in Galilee

رومة 14:23

I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. If your brother or sister is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died. So do not let your good be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The one who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and has human approval. Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual edification. Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for you to make others fall by what you eat; it is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother or sister stumble. The faith that you have, have as your own conviction before God. Blessed are those who have no reason to condemn themselves because of what they approve. But those who have doubts are condemned if they eat, because they do not act from faith; for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

إِنِّي عَالِمٌ وَوَاثِقٌ، فِي الرَّبِّ يَسُوعَ، أَنَّ لَا شَيْءَ نَجِسٌ فِي ذَاتِهِ، إِلَّا لِمَنْ يَحْسِبُهُ نَجِسًا، فَلَهُ يَكُونُ نَجِسًا. فَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ أَجْلِ الطَّعَامِ تُحْزِنُ أَخَاكَ، فَلَا تَكُونُ سَالِكًا فِي الْمَحَبَّةِ. فَلَا تُهْلِكْ بِطَعَامِكَ ذَاكَ الَّذِي مَاتَ الْمَسِيحُ مِنْ أَجْلِهِ! إِذَا فَلَا تَسْمَحُوا بِأَنْ يَصِيرَ الْخَيْرُ فِيكُمْ سَبَبًا لِلتَّجْدِيفِ. فَلَيْسَ مَلَكُوتُ اللَّهِ أَكْلًا وَشُرْبًا، بَلْ بَرٌّ وَسَلَامٌ وَفَرَحٌ فِي الرُّوحِ الْقُدُسِ. فَمَنْ يَخْدُمُ الْمَسِيحَ هَكَذَا فَهُوَ مَرْضِيٌّ لَدَى اللَّهِ، وَمَقْبُولٌ لَدَى النَّاسِ. فَلْنَسْعَ إِذَا إِلَى مَا هُوَ لِلسَّلَامِ، وَمَا هُوَ لِلْبَنِيَانِ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا. فَلَا تَنْقُضْ عَمَلَ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَجْلِ الطَّعَامِ؛ لِأَنَّ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ طَاهِرٌ، وَلَكِنَّهُ يَنْقَلِبُ شَرًّا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ الَّذِي يَأْكُلُ وَيَكُونُ سَبَبٌ عَثْرَةٍ لِأَخِيهِ. فَخَيْرٌ لَكَ أَنْ لَا تَأْكُلَ لَحْمًا، وَلَا تَشْرَبَ خَمْرًا، وَلَا تَتَنَاوَلَ شَيْئًا يَكُونُ سَبَبَ عَثْرَةٍ لِأَخِيكَ. وَاحْتَفِظْ بِرَأْيِكَ لِنَفْسِكَ أَمَامَ اللَّهِ. وَطُوبَى لِمَنْ لَا يَدِينُ نَفْسَهُ فِي مَا يَقَرُّهُ! أَمَّا الْمُرْتَابُ فِي قَرَارِهِ، فَإِنْ أَكَلَ يُدَانَ، لِأَنَّ عَمَلَهُ غَيْرُ صَادِرٍ عَنْ يَقِينٍ وَإِيمَانٍ. وَكُلُّ عَمَلٍ لَا يَصْدُرُ عَنْ يَقِينٍ وَإِيمَانٍ فَهُوَ خَطِيئَةٌ.

John 2:1-11

أحد عرس قانا الجليل

يوحنا 2:1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

فِي الْيَوْمِ الثَّلَاثِ، كَانَ عُرْسٌ فِي قَانَا الْجَلِيلِ، وَكَانَتْ أُمُّ يَسُوعَ هُنَاكَ. وَدُعِيَ أَيْضًا يَسُوعُ وَتَلَامِيذُهُ إِلَى الْعُرْسِ. وَنَقَدَ الْخَمْرَ، فَقَالَتْ لِيَسُوعَ أُمُّهُ: «لَيْسَ لَدَيْهِمْ خَمْرٌ». «فَقَالَ لَهَا يَسُوعُ: «مَا لِي وَلَكَ، يَا أُمْرَأَةً؟ لَمْ تَأْتِ سَاعَتِي بَعْدُ!». فَقَالَتْ أُمُّهُ لِلْخَدَمِ: «مَهْمَا يَقُلْ لَكُمْ فَأَفْعَلُوهُ!». وَكَانَ هُنَاكَ سِتَّةُ أَجْرَانِ مِنْ حَجَرٍ، مُعَدَّةٌ لِنُطْهِيرِ الْيَهُودِ، يَسَعُ كُلُّ مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَانِينَ إِلَى مِئَةِ وَعِشْرِينَ لَيْتْرًا، فَقَالَ يَسُوعُ لِلْخَدَمِ: «إِمْلَأُوا الْأَجْرَانَ مَاءً». فَمَلَأُوهُمَا إِلَى فَوْقِ. قَالَ لَهُمْ: «اسْتَقِفُوا الْآنَ، وَقَدِّمُوا لِرَبِّيسِ الْوَلِيمَةِ». فَقَدَّمُوا. وَذَاقَ الرَّبِّيسُ الْمَاءَ، الَّذِي صَارَ خَمْرًا - وَكَانَ لَا يَعْلَمُ مِنْ أَيْنَ هُوَ، وَالْخَدَمُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَقَفُوا يَعْلَمُونَ - فَدَعَا إِلَيْهِ الْعَرِيسَ وَقَالَ لَهُ: «كُلُّ إِنْسَانٍ يُقَدِّمُ الْخَمْرَ الْجَيِّدَ أَوَّلًا، حَتَّى إِذَا سَكِرَ الْمَدْعُوعُونَ، قَدَّمَ الْأَقْلَّ جُودَةً، أَمَّا أَنْتَ فَقَدْ أَبْقَيْتَ الْخَمْرَ الْجَيِّدَ إِلَى الْآنَ!». «تِلْكَ كَانَتْ أُولَى آيَاتِ يَسُوعَ، صَنَعَهَا فِي قَانَا الْجَلِيلِ، فَأُظْهِرَ مَجْدَهُ، وَأَمَنَ بِهِ تَلَامِيذُهُ.

## 2017 Tax Statements

Those who would like a statement of their 2017 contributions, please call the office and we will be happy to forward it to you so you can claim it on your tax return. Keep in mind, if you have not used your weekly envelopes or have not contributed by checks, it is impossible for us to generate a record or statement with your donations and offerings.

## ALAA Scholarships are now Available

[www.americanlebaneseawarenessassociation.org/scholarships](http://www.americanlebaneseawarenessassociation.org/scholarships)



### Weekly offering envelopes for 2018

will be mailed to your home on a quarterly basis. You will receive envelopes every 3 months. For those who have signed up for online donations, you may disregard them or drop your empty envelope in the collection basket.

### Guidelines:

Baptismal Guidelines: (Check our Website)

- ♦ Guidelines & Registration Form

Marriage Guidelines: (Check our Website)

- ♦ Guidelines & Check List Forms

Banquet Hall Guidelines:

- ♦ Contract Form (Check our Website)
- ♦ Banquet Hall Usage Donations:
  1. \$500 (For 6 Hours)
  2. \$250 For Registered & Active parish-ioners (with contribution history)
  3. Security Deposit \$250 (Returned after the event, if no Damages)
  4. Cleaning Donations: \$100

## BE IN TOUCH!! STAY CONNECTED!!

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/>

## Saint Anthony Burial Guidelines

### Burial Charges and Fees:

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

The following charges for cemetery services are in effect January 1, 2017 at St. Anthony Cemetery and are subject to change without notice.

- Adult Opening – Graveside (Summer) \$875.00
- Adult Opening – Graveside (Winter) \$875.00
- Child Opening – (one to eight years) \$100.00
- Infant Opening – NO CHARGE
- Saturday & Holiday Overtime \$75.00
- Burial of Cremated Remains \$550.00
- Cremation Burial Unit \$350.00

When arrangements are made with a family and they wish to purchase a lot, we ask that you call the cemetery office (978) 985-7233 and arrange an appointment for them. Financial arrangements for new lot sales will be handled directly with the family.

Cemetery charges for grave openings are due and payable to the cemetery the morning of the funeral, unless charged to the funeral director's account. Cemetery charges billed to the funeral director's account are due and payable to the cemetery in 10 days

### Lot Sales

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

Saint Anthony Cemetery offers affordable payment plans to fit any family's budget. Please call us at 978-685-7233 or email [rectory@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:rectory@stanthonylawrence.org) for more information about availability.

### Burial Pre-Arrangements

Making arrangements for a burial in advance should be no more difficult than providing insurance or having a will. It is a sensible thing to do. By pre-arranging your burial, you can avoid the unnecessary confusion plus the financial and emotional stress that death often brings.

Funeral pre-arrangements are available and recommended with guarantees of no increase in cemetery charges at the time of interment. Pre-Arrangement Funds are placed in a separate account and are withdrawn at the time of the interment. An interest free Time-Payment Plan is available for your convenience.



**POPE PRAYER INTENTIONS -**

**FEBRUARY 2018:**

**Universal: Say "No" to Corruption**

That those who have material, political or spiritual power may resist any lure of corruption.



## **THE CRIES OF FINITUDE** BY RONALD ROLHEISER

What most moves your heart? I was asked this question recently at a workshop. We were asked to respond to this question: When do you most naturally feel compassion in your heart? For me, the answer came easily. I am most moved when I see helplessness, when I see someone or something helpless to tend to its own needs and to protect its own dignity. It might be baby, hungry and crying, too little to feed itself and to safeguard its own dignity. It might be a woman in a hospital, sick, in pain, dying, helpless to get better, also unable to attend to her own dignity. It might be an unemployed man, down on his luck, unable to find work, the odd man out when everyone else seems to be doing great. It might be a little girl on the playground, helpless as she is teased and bullied, suffering indignity. Or it might just be a baby kitten, hungry, helpless, pleading with its eyes, unable to speak or attend to its own need. Helplessness tugs at the heart. I am always touched in the softest place inside me by helplessness, by the pleading of finitude. I suspect we all are.



We're in good company. This is what moved Mary, Jesus' mother, at the Wedding Feast of Cana to go over to Jesus and say: "They have no wine!" Her request here has different layers of meaning. At one level, it is a very particular request at a particular occasion in history; she is trying to save her hosts at a wedding from embarrassment, from suffering an indignity. No doubt the shortage of wine was due to some poverty on their part, either a shortage of money or a shortage of good planning, but, either way, they stood to be embarrassed before their guests. But, as with most things in the Gospels, this incident has a deeper meaning. Mary isn't just speaking for a particular host on a particular occasion. She's also speaking universally, as the mother of humanity, Eve, voicing for all of us what John Shea so aptly calls, "the cries of finitude".

What is finitude? The finite, as we can see from the word itself, contrasts itself to the infinite, to what is not limited, to God. God, alone, is not finite. God, alone, is self-sufficient. God, alone, is never helpless, and God, alone, never needs help from anyone else. Only God is never subject to sickness, hunger, tiredness, irritation, fatigue, bodily and mental diminishment, and death. God, alone, never has to suffer the indignity of need, of getting caught short, of inadequate self-expression, of not measuring up, of being embarrassed, of being bullied, of being unable to help Himself, and of having to beg silently with His eyes for someone to come and help.

Everything else is finite. Thus, as humans, we are subject to helplessness, illness, lameness, blindness, hunger, tiredness, irritation, diminishment, and death. Moreover, within all these, we are also subject to indignity. So many of our words and actions are, in the end, cries of finitude, cries for assistance, the cries of a baby for food, for warmth, for protection, and for a safeguard from indignity. Although we are infinitely more sophisticated in our humanity, we are all still, at one level, the baby kitten, pleading with our eyes for someone to feed us, and all the assertions of self-sufficiency of the rich, the strong, the healthy, the arrogant, and of those who seemingly need no help are in the end nothing other than attempts to keep helplessness at bay. Not matter how strong and self-sufficient we might believe ourselves to be, finitude and mortality admit of no exemptions. Tiredness, illness, diminishment, death, and painful hungers will eventually find us all. Our wine too will eventually run out. Hopefully someone like the Mother of Jesus will speak for us: *They have no wine!*

What's the lesson in this? A number of things:

First, recognizing our finitude can lead to a healthier self-understanding. Knowing and accepting our finitude can help quell a lot of frustration, restlessness, and false guilt in our lives. I once had a spiritual director, an elderly nun, who challenged me to live by this axiom: *Fear not, you are inadequate*. We need to forgive ourselves for our own limits, for the fact that we are human, finite, and are unable to provide ourselves and those around us all that we need. But inadequacy is a forgivable condition, not a moral fault.

Beyond forgiving ourselves for our helplessness, recognizing and accepting our finitude should challenge us too to hear more clearly the cries of finitude around us. And so whether it's the cry of a baby, the humiliation in the eyes of someone looking for work, the ravaged eyes of the terminally ill patient, or simply the pleading eyes of a young kitten, we need, like Mary, to take up their cause and ensure that someone spares them from indignity by changing their water into wine, by calling out: *They have no wine!*



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