



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

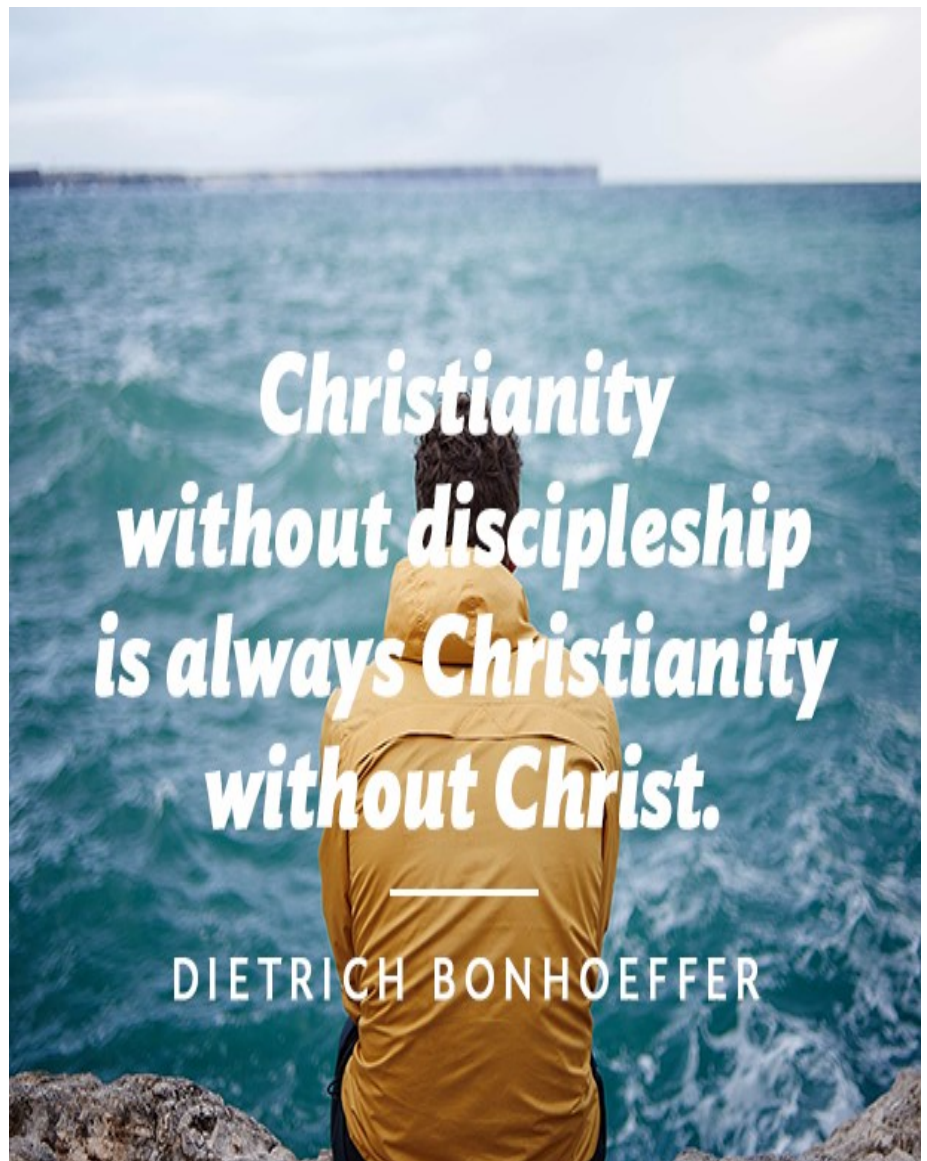
Anointing of the Sick

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.



The Sanctuary Lamp

The Light that Symbolizes
the Eternal Sacrifice

Right Sanctuary Lamp

This week's Sanctuary Lamp will burn

In Memory of

Fred and Stephanie Shiripo

Offered by Beverly and Bob.

Left Sanctuary Lamp

This week's Sanctuary Lamp will burn

In Memory of

Fred and Stephanie Shiripo

Offered by Beverly and Bob.

We Remember in Our Divine Liturgies

3rd Sunday of Resurrection

أحد الثالث بعد القيامة

Saturday, April 14 @ 4:00 PM:

- For: + 1st Anniversary– Aida Saade, Also: +George Saade, Abdullah and Bechara Terek, *By the Saade Family.*

Sunday, April 15 @ 8:15 AM:

- For: + Albert and Helene Ghoussoub– *By Wadad Whiffen.*

Sunday, April 15 @ 9:30AM:

- For: + 40 Day Anniversary– Thomas J. Hajj, *By his children and their families.*
- For: +Deceased Members of the Rahhal and Jesser Families, *their loving families.*

Sunday, April 15 @ 11:30 AM:

- For: + Nicholas El-Jamous, *By his wife, Antoinette Geha, his son, Marwan El-Jamous, and his daughter, Meriana El-Jamous.*
- For: + Tannous Elias Bassil, *By his uncle, Francis Daher, and family.*

3rd Week of Resurrection

الأسبوع الثالث بعد القيامة

Monday, April 16 @ 9 AM:

- For: + Adele Najjar, *By Her Niece Eliane Azzi*

Tuesday, April 17 @ 7 PM :

- For: Tanous Elias Bassil , *By The Pastor*

Wednesday, April 18 @ 9AM:

- For: + Naim, Marian, Antoine & George *By The Pastor*

Thursday, April 19 @ 7PM:

- For: Private Intentions

Friday, April 20 No Liturgies—Office Closed

4th Sunday of Resurrection

أحد الرابع بعد القيامة

Saturday, April 21 @ 4:00 PM:

- For: + 40 Day Anniversary –Thomas Bistany,
By his wife, Juliette & Family.

Sunday, April 22 @ 8:15 AM:

- For: + 40 Day Anniversary– Angele Rizk *By Her Friends*

Sunday, April 22 @ 9:30AM:

- For: + 40 Day Anniversary– Sadie Souma,
By her children & family.

Sunday, April 22 @11:30 AM:

- For: + Nassif Touma and daughter, Patricia Touma
By Rita Touma & her family

**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/>

TITHES & OFFERINGS - April 1, 2018

Sunday Collection (Online)	\$ 4,125.50
Candles	\$ 193.00
Bishop's Appeal	\$ 260.00
Fuel	\$ 50.00
In Memory of	\$ 120.00
Miscellaneous (Bishop's Appeal 2n Collections, MYO registration,)	\$ 265.00
Total Deposit	\$ 5,010.50

**2nd Collection –April 15
Catholic Home Missions Appeal**

Online Donation

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

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	\$7,243.51

 **KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
ST ANTHONY'S COUNCIL 16204
PRESENTS THE 3RD ANNUAL**

*Spring To Life
Hafla*

APRIL 21, 2018

**St. Anthony's Maronite Church
145 Amesbury St.
Lawrence, MA 01841**

Adults \$40
Kids (under 12) \$20

Dinner & Entertainment

FEATURING
ANDRE KEEDY
WITH MAESTRO BACHIR
AND DEEJAY RIKON

Doors open at 7pm
Cash Bar & Raffles

FOR TICKETS & INFORMATION CONTACT:
WISSAM MERHEB 978.653.5145
ELIAS AZZI 978.420.7606




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

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.

Bonheur Du Ciel - Fr. Majdi Allawi

Our Lord calls us all to follow in His footsteps. Some, like Vincent De Paul and Mother Teresa, spend their lifetime following the directions given in Matthew 25, to feed the hungry, cloth the naked, care for the ill and to welcome the stranger.



We are blessed to have one of our own, Abouna Majdi Allawi, visit our parish on April 29th. All are invited following the 11:30 AM Liturgy for a gathering and a chance to meet him.

MYA - Maronite Young Adults

Next Meeting : Sunday April 15 @ 7PM

Children's Choir

Saturdays: May 5 & May 12

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

Knights of Mary

Upcoming Meetings: April 14th: From 5PM - 7PM
After 4PM Liturgy *Dates are Subject to change*

MYO - Maronite Youth Organization

Friday April 13th :Youth Liturgy &
Faith Formation

Faith Formation Events run from 5PM - 7PM

Eucharistic Adoration

Thursday, April 19th @ 7PM - After Liturgy

The Family of Saint Charbel

Thursday, April 19th - الخميس 19 نيسان

- ◆ 6:30 PM - Rosary— صلاة المسبحة 6:30 مساءً
- ◆ 7:00 PM - Divine Liturgy - القداس الإلهي 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

Bible Study

English Session: Tuesdays April 24 @ 7PM

Arabic Session: Wednesdays April 25 @ 7PM

Maronite Monks in Petersham

The Monks in Petersham are grateful for you donations and assure of their continuous prayers for you. If you have any prayer requests, please present them in order for the Monks to pray for your intentions during their liturgies.

Monthly grocery donation will be scheduled for the first week of May.

Save The Dates

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

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/>

LECTORS

Saturday, April 14 @ 4:00 PM: Christine Ryan
Sunday, April 15

8:15AM Mona Hbaiter

9:30 AM Jean Sarkis

11:30 AM

English: Raghida Ramey

Arabic: Claudine Raad

Saturday, April 21 @ 4:00 PM: Joel Habib
Sunday, April 22

8:15AM Zizi Francis

9:30 AM Elaine Brousseau

11:30 AM

English: Mounira Daher

Arabic: Marcel Saade

ALTAR SERVERS

Saturday, April 14

4:00 PM

Elias Saab

Sharbel Saab

Sunday, April 15

8:15 AM

Volunteers

Sunday, April 15

9:30 AM

Jason Demers

Michael Bejjani

Sunday, April 15

11:30 AM

Anthony Chaya

Anthony Sadek

Charbel Sadek

George Chaya

FORMED: PARISH CODE N3CCNK

<https://formed.org/listen/5702c6bc9f0e77a81afedec>

THE NECESSITY OF DIVINE MERCY

FR. CHRIS ALAR, MIC



Banns of Marriage

First Banns of Marriage are announced for :

- * Sabine Bouraphael and Richard Keyrouz
- * Sharbel Azzi and Kimberly Almonte

Congratulations on your Baptism

We join with the parish family of Saint Anthony to offer our sincere congratulations to the families of:

- ♦ Ava Reese Khoury, *Child of Christina and Karl Khoury*
- ♦ Andreas Rony Fakhry, *Child of Dalia and Rony Fakhry*

who received the Blessed Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. Our best wishes to the parents and godparents. May Christ continue to bless these children whom we welcome into the flock.

3rd Sunday of the Resurrection

الأحد الثالث من زمن القيامة

2 Timothy 2:8-13 طيموثاوس 2:8-13

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David that is my gospel, for which I suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. The saying is sure: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful for he cannot deny himself.

وَأَنْتَ يَا ابْنِي، تَذَكَّرُ يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحَ الَّذِي قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، وَهُوَ مِنْ نَسْلِ دَاوُدَ، بِحَسَبِ إِنْجِيلِي، الَّذِي فِيهِ أَخْتَمِلُ الْمَشَقَّاتِ حَتَّى الْقَيْدِ كَمُجْرِمٍ، لَكِنَّ كَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تَقِيدُ. لِذَلِكَ أَصْبِرُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مِنْ أَجْلِ الْمُخْتَارِينَ، لِيَخْصَلُوا هُمْ أَيْضًا عَلَى الْخَلَاصِ فِي الْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ مَعَ الْمَجْدِ الْأَبَدِيِّ. صَادِقَةٌ هِيَ الْكَلِمَةُ: إِنْ مِتْنَا مَعَهُ نَحْيَ مَعَهُ، وَإِنْ صَبَرْنَا تَمَلَّكَ مَعَهُ، وَإِنْ أَنْكَرْنَاهُ يُنْكِرُنَا، وَإِنْ كُنَّا غَيْرَ أَمْتَاءَ فَهُوَ يَتَمَتَّى أَمِينًا، لِأَنَّهُ لَا يَفْذِرُ أَنْ يُنْكِرَ نَفْسَهُ!

SAINTS FUN FACTS

Saint Cleopatra

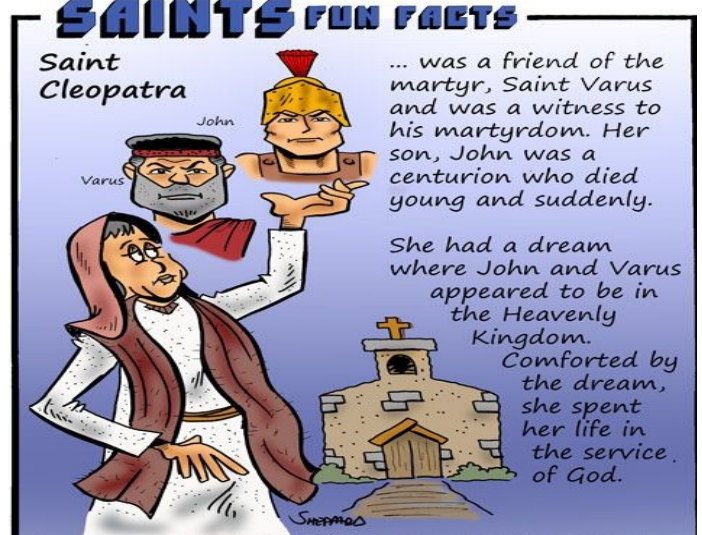
John

Varus

... was a friend of the martyr, Saint Varus and was a witness to his martyrdom. Her son, John was a centurion who died young and suddenly.

She had a dream where John and Varus appeared to be in the Heavenly Kingdom.

Comforted by the dream, she spent her life in the service of God.



Boston College
Department of Music

Institut Sainte Katka
de Musique, Lebanon

Presents

CHARBEL ROUHANA
The virtuoso Lebanese 'ud player and composer

with
ASTAZA
Boston College Middle East Ensemble

Directed by
NIZAR FARES, PhD

April 15th, Boston College, Gasson Hall, Room 100, at 8:00 PM
- Free and open to public -

Maestro Rouhana will also teach an 'ud workshop at 4 PM
RSVP: ann.lucas@bc.edu or ballout@bc.edu
Book signing of his 'ud teaching text MAQAM 'AL 'UD will follow

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

في اليوم عينه، كان اثنان من التلاميذ ذاهبين إلى قرية تدعى عماؤس، تبعد نحو سبعة أميال عن اورشليم. وكانا يتحادثان بكل تلك الأمور التي حدثت. وفيما هما يتحادثان ويتساءلان، إذا يسوع نفسه قد اقترب منهما، وراح يسير معهما. ولكن أعينهما أُمسكت عن معرفته. أما هو فقال لهما: «ما هذا الكلام الذي تتحادثان به، وأنتما تسييران؟». «فوقفا عابسين. وأجاب أحدهما، واسمه كليوباس، فقال له: «هل أنت وحدك غريب عن اورشليم، فلا تعلم ما حدث فيها هذه الأيام؟». «فقال لهما: «وما هي؟». «فقال له: «ما يتعلّق بيسوع الناصري، الذي كان رجلاً نبياً قوياً بالقول والفعل، فقام الله والشعب كله. وكيف أسلمه أخبارنا ورؤسائنا ليحكم عليه بالموت، وكيف صلبوه! وكنا نحن نرجو أن يكون هو الذي سيقضي إسرائيل. ولكن مع هذا كله، فهذا هو اليوم الثالث بعد تلك الأحداث. لكن بغض النساء من جماعتنا أذهشتنا، لأنهن ذهبن إلى القبر عند الفجر، ولم يجدن جسد يسوع، فرجعن وقلن إنهن شاهدن ملائكة تراءوا لهن وقالوا إنه حي! ومضى قوم من الذين معنا إلى القبر، فوجدوه هكذا كما قالت النساء، وأما يسوع فلم يره». «فقال لهما يسوع: «يا عديمي الفهم، وبطيئي القلب في الإيمان بكل ما تكلم به الأنبياء! أما كان يجب على المسيح أن يعاني تلك الآلام، ثم يدخل في مجده؟». «وفسر لهما ما يتعلّق به في كل الكتب المقدسة، مبتدئاً بموسى وجميع الأنبياء. واقتربا من القرية التي كانا ذاهبين إليها، فتظاهر يسوع بأنه ذاهب إلى مكان أبعد. فتمسكا به قائلين: «أمنك معنا، فقد حان المساء، ومال النهار». «فدخل ليمكث معهما. وفيما كان مُمكّماً معهما، أخذ الخبز، وبارك، وكسر، وناولهما. فالتفتحت أعينهما، وعرفاه، فإذا هو قد توارى عنهما. فقال أحدهما للآخر: «أما كان قلبنا مضطرباً فينا، حين كان يكلمنا في الطريق، ويشرح لنا الكتب؟». «وقاما في تلك الساعة عنيّنا، ورجعا إلى اورشليم، فوجدنا الأحد عشر. والذين معهم مجتمعين، وهم يقولون: «حقاً إن الرب قام، وتراءى ليسمعان!». أما هما فكانا يخبران بما حدث في الطريق، وكيف عرفا يسوع عند كسر الخبز.

From Pregnancy Center

Thank you so much for being a part of the blessings that are happening here at the Pregnancy Center! The donations that came in from your recent event are going to help so many families in our community! Thank you for your support!

-Kayla Mignone - Material Services Coordinator

St Anthony Easter Basket Raffle was donated to Salem Boys and Girls Club.
By Kristen & George Kassas



YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO THE
Saint Basil Seminary - Fundraising Dinner
benefiting the Project of

SAINT CHARBEL & ABOUNA BESHARA SHRINE

Sunday, April 15

6:00 pm

at Saint Basil Salvatorian Center

SCHOLARSHIPS

ALAA Scholarship

www.americanlebaneseawarenessassociation.org/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

DCG SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

2018-2019 freshman entering Central Catholic High School.

- **Online:** www.dcgfoundation.com / **Hard Copies:** Church Rectory.

DCG Annual Golf Fundraiser Event:

Merrimack Golf Course - Monday, June 25th . Call Ken at 508-63-0704 to register by phone or download an entry form @ 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.

REASONS TO BELIEVE IN GOD

Today belief in God is often seen as a naiveté. For many, believing in God is like believing in Santa and the Easter Bunny, nice, something for the kids, a warm nostalgia or a bitter memory, but not something that's real, that stands up to hard scrutiny and indeed stands up to the dark doubts that sometimes linger below the surface of our faith. Where's there evidence that God exists?

A true apologetics, I believe, needs at a point to be personal. So here are my own reasons why I continue to believe in God in the face of the agnosticism of our overly-adult world and despite the dark nights that sometimes beset me.

First, I believe in God because I sense, at the deepest level of my being, that there's an inalienable moral structure to things. Life, love, and meaning are morally-contoured. There's an inalienable "law of karma" that's experienced everywhere and in everything: good behavior is its own happiness, just as bad behavior is its own sorrow. Different religions word it differently but the concept is at the heart of all religion and is in essence the very definition of morality: *The measure you measure out will be the measure that's measured back to you.* That's Jesus' version of it, and can be translated this way: *The air you breathe out is the air you will re-inhale.* Simply put: If we cut down too many trees we will soon be breathing in carbon monoxide. If we breathe out love, we will meet love. If we breathe out hate and anger we will soon enough find ourselves surrounded by hatred and anger. Reality is so structured that goodness brings goodness and sin brings sin.

I believe in God because blind chaos could not have designed things this way, to be innately moral. Only an intelligent Goodness could have built reality this way.

My next reason for believing in God is the existence of soul, intelligence, love, altruism, and art. These could not have emerged simply from blind chaos, from billions and billions of cosmic bingo chips coming out of nothing, with no intelligent loving force behind them, endlessly churning through billions of years. Random chaos, empty of all intelligence and love from its origins, could not have eventually produced soul and all that's highest inside it: intelligence, love, altruism, spirituality, and art. Can our own hearts and all that's noble and precious within them really be just the result of billions of fluke chances colliding within a brute, mindless process?

I believe in God because if our hearts are real then so is God.

Next, I believe in God because the Gospel works – if we work it. What Jesus incarnated and taught ultimately resonates with what's most precious, most noble, and most meaningful inside of life and inside each of us. Moreover, this checks out in life. Whenever I have the faith and courage to actually live out the Gospel, to roll the dice on its truth, it always proves to be true, the loaves multiply and feed the thousands and David defeats Goliath. But it doesn't work unless I risk it. The Gospel works, if we work it.

The objection could be raised here, of course, that many sincere, faith-filled people risk their lives and truth on the Gospel and, from all appearances in this world, it doesn't work for them. They end up poor, as victims, on the losing side of things. But again, that's a judgment we make from the standards of this world, from the Gospel of Prosperity where whoever has the most worldly success wins. The Gospel of Jesus undercuts this. Anyone who lives it out as faithfully as he or she is able, will be blessed with something beyond worldly success, namely, the deeper joy of a life well-lived, a joy which Jesus assures us is deeper, less ephemeral, and more lasting than any other joy.

I believe in God because the Gospel works! As does prayer!

Finally, though certainly not least, I believe in God because of the community of faith that stretches back to the beginning of time, that stretches back to the life and resurrection of Jesus, and that baptized me into the faith. Throughout all of history virtually all human communities have been also communities of faith, of belief in God, of worship, and of sacred ritual and sacrament.

I believe in God because of the existence of families of faith and the existence of church and sacrament.

I wrote my doctoral thesis on the classical proofs for the existence of God, arguments for God's existence taken from some of the great intellectuals in history: Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, Leibnitz, Spinoza, and Alfred North Whitehead. I rambled through nearly 500 hundred pages of articulating and evaluating these proofs and then ended with this conclusion.

We don't come to believe in God because of the compelling power of some mathematical equation or logical syllogism. God's existence becomes real to us when we live an honest, sincere life.