

The Church is missionary by nature and her principal task is evangelization, which aims to proclaim and to witness to Christ and to promote his Gospel of peace and love in every environment and culture.

Pope Benedict XVI

quote fancy

#### PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

You are welcomed and loved by St Anthony Community. We are transformed through prayer, acts of love, forgiveness, service and stewardship.

#### MEET OUR DEACONS

Deacon Nadim B. Daou / Deacon Michael Charchaflian  
Sub-Deacon James T. Demers / Sub-Deacon Antoine Nammour

#### SACRAMENTS

**Baptism & Confirmation:** 1 month in advance with the Pastor

**Donations:** Church & Priest: \$200

**Matrimony:** Couples should make arrangements six months prior to the wedding date

**Donations:** Church \$500—Priest : Free Will

**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.



[www.facebook.com/SaintAnthonyLawrence](https://www.facebook.com/SaintAnthonyLawrence)

#### OUR CHURCH AT PRAYER

**Hours of Liturgical services changed due to COVID-19**

#### Weekday Liturgies

Mon - Thu: 9:00 AM

#### Saturday Liturgies:

4:00 PM Vigil (English)

#### Sunday Liturgies:

9:00 AM (English)

11:00 AM (English & Arabic)

#### Holy days of obligation:

Vigil Liturgy @ 7 PM

#### OFFICE HOURS

**M-TH:** 9:00 AM-4:00 PM

**Friday:** 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

**Saturdays:** By Appointment



## LITURGICAL SCHEDULE AND INTENTIONS

### SECOND SUNDAY AFTER HOLY CROSS - الأحد الثاني بعد عيد الصليب

<b>Sat</b>	<b>Sep. 26</b>	4:00 PM	<b>For: Beatification of Fr. Antoun Tarabay, healing of Antoine Karam Asmar</b> <i>By his wife Nada Asmar</i>
	<i>English</i>		
<b>Sun</b>	<b>Sep. 27</b>	9:00 AM	<b>For: + Michel Bou Sanayeh</b> <i>By his nieces Rita Bejjani &amp; Hitaf Nammour &amp; his nephew Charles</i>
	<i>English</i>		<b>For: + John J. Purcell</b> <i>By his wife Najla</i>
<b>Sun</b>	<b>Sep. 27</b>	11:00 AM	<b>For: 1st Year Anniversary– Dalal Kassas</b> <i>By her brother George Kassas, her daughter Sonia &amp; their families</i>
	<i>English</i>		
	<i>Ara/Eng</i>		<b>For: 1st Year Anniversary– Josephine Jabbour Nehmeh</b> <i>By her son Charles Nehmeh &amp; family</i>
	<i>Church</i>		
<b>Mon</b>	<b>Sep. 28</b>	9:00 AM	<b>For: Healing of Antoine Karam Asmar</b> <i>By his wife Nada Asmar</i>
<b>Tue</b>	<b>Sep. 29</b>	9:00 AM	<b>For: + Corey Brousseau</b> <i>By his mother and family</i>
<b>Wed</b>	<b>Sep. 30</b>	9:00 AM	<b>For: + Raymond Alphonse</b> <i>By the BouHabib family</i>
		9:00 AM	<b>For: + Louis Zraket</b> <i>By his wife Alice Zraket</i>
<b>Thu</b>	<b>Oct. 1</b>	9:30AM-12Noon	<b>ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT</b>
<b>Fri</b>	<b>Oct. 2</b>		<b>No Liturgy</b>

### THIRD SUNDAY AFTER HOLY CROSS - الأحد الثالث بعد عيد الصليب

<b>Sat</b>	<b>Oct. 3</b>	4:00 PM	<b>For: + Michael J. Tarshi, + James M. Tarshi and + Steven S. Tarshi</b> <i>By Irene Tarshi</i>
	<i>English</i>		
<b>Sun</b>	<b>Oct. 4</b>	9:00 AM	<b>For: + Charles Kabalan Bechara and + Layal Kabalan Bechara</b> <i>By Nada Asmar</i>
	<i>English</i>		
		11:00 AM	<b>For: 40 Day Anniversary - Bechir Faris</b> <i>By his sons Robert and Carl Faris and their families.</i>
	<i>Ara/Eng</i>		<b>For: Living and deceased members of the Bou-Mitri family</b> <i>By Mr. &amp; Mrs. Mounir Bour-Mitri and family</i>
	<i>Church</i>		

**PARISH SECRETARY:** [rectory@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:rectory@stanthonylawrence.org)

**MEET OUR PRIESTS** **Pastor:** Fr. Elie Mikhael ....305-807-9087.... [pastor@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:pastor@stanthonylawrence.org)

**Parochial Vicar:** Fr. Andrawos El Tabchi.... 978-241-2977 .... [pv@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:pv@stanthonylawrence.org)

**THANK YOU Fr. ANDRAWOS: BLESSED JOURNEY**

**TITHES & OFFERINGS**

**SAINT ANTHONY'S PARISH** depends on donations from our parishioners and benefactors to live and expand our Mission. Your donations fund the many ministries and activities of the parish, Sunday and weekly Masses, faith formation for children, youth and adults, fellowship for our welcoming community, and provides outreach to those in need.

**STEP UP YOUR  
WEEKLY / MONTHLY /  
ANNUAL  
GIVING COMMITMENT**



REGISTER FOR ONLINE DONATION: TO KEEP UP WITH OUR NEEDS AND, NOT TO FALL SHORT OF OUR FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP GOAL. **Apply Online:** [stanthonylawrence.org/donate-now/](http://stanthonylawrence.org/donate-now/)

**UPDATE YOUR LOVED ONES RECORD !!**

The following steps will help you access the tool:

1. Go to [www.stanthonylawrence.org](http://www.stanthonylawrence.org)
2. Scroll to the bottom and click on **BURIAL ONLINE SEARCH**.
3. Type in the last/first name or in some cases just last name and click search.
4. Click on the name.
5. In the middle of the page, look for **“Do you know more about this person or their ancestors?”** [Click here](#).
6. You can then complete any or all the fields and click submit.
7. If desired, you may send obituary notice, special documents, letters, receipts etc. to [rectory@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:rectory@stanthonylawrence.org) and we will attach that to your loved one's record.

**TREE OF LIFE**

**REMEMBER YOUR LOVED ONES BY PUTTING THEIR NAMES ON TREE OF LIFE BRASS ALUMINUM PLAQUES SIZES:**

1.5" X 3" = \$75 / 3" X 6" = \$150 / 4" X 8" = \$250

Please submit your request either by phone: 978.685.7233 or by E-mail: [rectory@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:rectory@stanthonylawrence.org)

**BIBLE STUDY WILL RESUME IN OCTOBER**  
**ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE:**

**1) Arabic Sessions:**

Continues the study of the **Book of Acts of the Apostles** followed by the **Book of Revelation**.  
Wednesdays starting Oct. 7, 2020 @ 7:30 PM

**2) English Sessions:**

**A. Perpetual parish formation and Certification in the Book of Acts of the Apostles.**

Wednesdays starting Oct. 7, 2020 @ 7:30 PM

**B. Continuous Formation in the Book of Revelation.**

Tuesdays starting Oct. 6, 2020 @ 7:30 PM

*Remark: Registration fee is \$40.00, including workbook. It is recommended to complete the study in the Book of Acts of the Apostles before registering for the study in the Book of Revelation.*

**For more info and registration send an email to [rectory@stanthonylawrence.org](mailto:rectory@stanthonylawrence.org)**

**SAJ BREAKFAST SUNDAY OCTOBER 11**  
**TO SUPPORT OUR EPARCHY**



*Due to the Pandemic the yearly Eparchial Fundraising is going Virtual. Our Eparchy have helped many of our missions and parishes to survive this pandemic.*

*Our Fundraising will go to support Our Bishop in his mission.*

*Your support is highly appreciated*



**Join the life-saving registry!**  
**TEXT: Match4Michele To 61474 or go to [Join.BeTheMatch.org/Match4Michele](http://Join.BeTheMatch.org/Match4Michele)**

**Match4Michele**

Please join us in helping Dr. Michele Couri, a physician, wife and mother of 6 children who desperately needs the help of the Lebanese community.

If you are 18-44 years of age, all you have to do is text Match4Michele to 61474, or visit this webpage: [join.bethematch.org/Match4Michele](http://join.bethematch.org/Match4Michele) fill out a form on your cell phone, and a test kit will be mailed to you.

**PLEASE JOIN US**  
**FOR A SPECIAL VIRTUAL EVENT AS WE BEGIN**  
**OUR SECOND DECADE OF BENEFIT DINNERS**  
**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2020 AT 7:00PM**

*Serving seminarians, retired priests, missions, youth ministry and those in need in the Middle East.*

EPARCHY OF SAINT MARON OF BROOKLYN  
718-237-9913 | [saintmaron@yahoo.com](mailto:saintmaron@yahoo.com)  
[www.stmaron.org](http://www.stmaron.org)

Dear Friend in Christ:

I hope you are well during these most challenging times.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's Benefit for the Eparchy of Saint Maron will be a Virtual Event. I hope you will join us for this very special celebration on Thursday, October 1, 2020 at 7:00pm Eastern Time.

Over the years, this benefit has provided significant financial support to educate seminarians, help parishes and missions, and assist retired priests and ministries of the Eparchy. As in past years, a portion of the proceeds will be dedicated to help the Church in Lebanon and the Middle East – of significant importance this year.

Your participation this year is more important than ever. Leading up to this Virtual Event, we will feature several updates from the organizations, individuals and ministries that are supported by this fundraiser as well as greetings from some very special guests.

I hope you will consider supporting the Eparchy with a special gift this year. Or perhaps you might consider joining the Order of Saint Sharbel if you are not already a member.

Please visit [www.stmaron.org](http://www.stmaron.org) to make a gift and/or register for this special online benefit, or return the enclosed reply card in the envelope provided.

Thank you again for helping us make a difference in the life of the Maronite Church and the world, both at home and abroad. I hope to "see" you on October 1. May God bless you for your generosity!

Gratefully yours in Christ,

+ 

+ Gregory John Mansour  
Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron



## Sacrament of Baptism & Confirmation

Was administered to:

**Emilia Marie Getchell**

daughter of

*Christopher & Eileen Getchell*

**Jovani Raymond Barbetta**

daughter of

*Justin R. Barbetta & Nina Russo*

*Wishing all blessings upon the newly baptized children and their families*

## A Message from Arabic School:

Arabic School at St. Anthony's will be returning, starting this September. The registration fee will be \$150 for child per school year. Siblings will have 30% discount. Please check the bulletin and your email, for more information soon.



***Our Lady of Lebanon Sodality*** group is putting together a Parish Cookbook! If you are interested in having a recipe featured (open to all!), please contact Bassima Aboujaoude (603-571-3003) or the Parish Office ***by September 15*** to submit your name and the dish you want to share!

## Religious Education

If you wish to register your child for Religious Ed, you may register on line at

<https://www.stanthonylawrence.org/registration-form/>

Calendar 2020-2021

<https://www.stanthonylawrence.org/calendar-classes-and-events/>

## St. Anthony Knights of Mary ONLINE REGISTRATION FORM:

<https://www.stanthonylawrence.org/registration-form-4/>

For Calendar and Health and Safety Protocols, Please Check our Website:

<https://www.stanthonylawrence.org/events-2/>

Sessions will start at 5:15 p.m. and end at 7:00 p.m.

## Saint Anthony Kids Choir

Registrations are open either by Contacting Mr.

Wissam Merheb @ 978. 853.5145

or by emailing the parish at

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

## Knights of the Altar

Meetings Schedule:

October 3 / November 7 / December 5 (*none for January*) / February 6 / March 6 / April 3 / May 8

Training will cover:

- Wearing of masks
- Hand sanitizer
- Cleaning of acolyte candles and cross
- The new altar candles
- Personal robes and laundering
- Cleaning of crosses and cinctures
- Sign of peace
- Standing at lectern and pulpit

## Epistle: 1 Corinthians 15: 19-34

If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For 'God has put all things in subjection under his feet.' But when it says, 'All things are put in subjection', it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all.

## Gospel: Saint Matthew 24: 1-14

As Jesus came out of the temple and was going away, his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. Then he asked them, 'You see all these, do you not? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.' When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?' Jesus answered them, 'Beware that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, "I am the Messiah!" and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: all this is but the beginning of the birth pangs. 'Then they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name. Then many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold. But anyone who endures to the end will be saved. And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come.

### AS WE PRAY ON YOUR BIRTHDAY

**Sep 26:** Mary Ann Abdallah, Michael Bejjani, Destiny Geha, Nicole Motta, Derek Shadeed, Laurence Yameen

**Sep 27:** Katia Assaf, Elie Merheb

**Sep 28:** Dawn Aboelsaad, Matthew Saab, Samuel Safi

**Sep 29:** George Atallah, Ramona Bou-Mitri, Pascal Constantine, Laura Dahbour, Aliana Fiato, Tania Mazraani, Manuel Santos

**Sep 30:** Mason Sawyer

**Oct 1:** Luna Abi-Moussa, Ibrahim Ata, Christopher Bou Saada, Neal Hassan

**Oct 1:** Jason Martino, Alyce Sader, Christa-Maria Salame, Fadi Saroufim

**Oct 2:** Charly El-Khoury, Patrick Gerges, Damari Leonardo, Dionair Leonardo, Radwan Maroun

### AS WE PRAY ON YOUR ANNIVERSARY

**Sep 26:** Robert & Beverly Schiripo

**Sep 27:** Fred & Lori Corey

**Sep 28:** Allen & Karen Pelletier

**Sep 29:** Anthony & Cristina Chedid

**Sep 30:** Lutfi & Mouna Kassarji

**Oct 1:** Rabih & Maya Bou-Chaaya  
Ryan & Nicole Jacobs

**Oct 2:** Raymond & Claudia Saysouk

## رسالة القديس بولس الأولى إلى أهل كورنتس 15:19-34

يا إخوتي، إن كنا نَرْجُو الْمَسِيحَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةِ وَحَسَبُ، فَنَحْنُ أَشَقَى النَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ! وَالْحَالُ أَنَّ الْمَسِيحَ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، وَهُوَ بَاكُورَةُ الرَّاقِدِينَ. فِيمَا أَنَّ الْمَوْتَ كَانَ بِوَاسِطَةِ إِنْسَانٍ، فَبِوَاسِطَةِ إِنْسَانٍ أَيْضًا تَكُونُ قِيَامَةُ الْأَمْوَاتِ. فَكَمَا أَنَّهُ فِي أَدَمَ يَمُوتُ الْجَمِيعُ، كَذَلِكَ فِي الْمَسِيحِ سَيَحْيَا الْجَمِيعُ، كُلُّ وَاحِدٍ فِي رُتْبَتِهِ: الْمَسِيحُ أَوَّلًا، لِأَنَّهُ الْبَاكُورَةُ، ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلْمَسِيحِ، عِنْدَ مَجِيئِهِ. وَبَعْدَ ذَلِكَ تَكُونُ النِّهَايَةُ، حِينَ يُسَلِّمُ الْمَسِيحُ الْمُلْكَ إِلَى اللَّهِ الْآبِ، بَعْدَ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَدْ أَبْطَلَ كُلَّ رِئَاسَةٍ وَكُلَّ سُلْطَانٍ وَقُوَّةٍ، لِأَنَّهُ لَا بُدَّ لِلْمَسِيحِ أَنْ يَمْلِكَ، إِلَى أَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ جَمِيعَ أَعْدَائِهِ تَحْتَ قَدَمَيْهِ. وَآخِرُ عَدُوٍّ يُبْطَلُ هُوَ الْمَوْتُ. لَقَدْ أَخْضَعَ اللَّهُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ تَحْتَ قَدَمَيْهِ. وَحِينَ يَقُولُ الْكِتَابُ: «أَخْضَعَ لَهُ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ»، فَمِنَ الْوَاضِحِ أَنَّهُ يَسْتَنْبِي اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَخْضَعَ لَهُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ. وَمَتَى أَخْضَعَ لِلْآبِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ، فَحِينَئِذٍ يَخْضَعُ الْآبُنُ نَفْسَهُ لِلَّذِي أَخْضَعَ لَهُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ، حَتَّى يَكُونَ اللَّهُ الْكُلَّ فِي الْكُلِّ. وَإِلَّا فَمَاذَا يَفْعَلُ الَّذِينَ يَتَعَمَّدُونَ مِنْ أَجْلِ الْأَمْوَاتِ؟ إِنْ كَانَ الْأَمْوَاتُ لَا يَقُومُونَ أَبَدًا، فَلِمَاذَا يَتَعَمَّدُونَ مِنْ أَجْلِهِمْ؟ وَنَحْنُ، فَلِمَاذَا نَعْرِضُ أَنْفُسَنَا كُلَّ سَاعَةٍ لِلْخَطَرِ؟ أَلَيْسَ، أَيُّهَا الْإِخْوَةُ، بِمَا لِي مِنْ فَخْرٍ بِكُمْ فِي الْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ رَبِّنَا، أَنِّي أَوَاجَهُ الْمَوْتَ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ. إِنْ كُنْتُ صَارَعْتُ الْوُحُوشَ فِي أَفْسُسَ، لِغَايَةِ بَشْرِيَّةٍ، فَأَيُّ نَفْعٍ لِي؟ وَإِنْ كَانَ الْأَمْوَاتُ لَا يَقُومُونَ، فَلَنَأْكُلُ وَنَشْرَبُ، لِأَنَّنَا عَدَا سَمُوتَ! لَا تَضَلُّوا! إِنْ الْمَعَاشِرَاتِ السَّيِّئَةِ نَفْسِدُ الْأَخْلَاقِ السَّالِمَةَ! أَيْقِظُوا قُلُوبَكُمْ بِالتَّقْوَى، وَلَا تَخْطُوا، فَإِنَّ بَعْضًا مِنْكُمْ يَجْهَلُونَ اللَّهَ! أَقُولُ هَذَا لِإِخْبَالِكُمْ!

## إنجيل القديس متى 24:1-14

خَرَجَ يَسُوعُ مِنَ الْهَيْكَلِ وَمَضَى. فَدَنَا مِنْهُ تَلَامِيذُهُ لِيُفْتَنُوا نَظْرَهُ إِلَى أَنْبِيَةِ الْهَيْكَلِ. فَأَجَابَ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ: «أَلَا تَنْظُرُونَ هَذَا كُلَّهُ؟ الْحَقُّ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ: لَنْ يُتْرَكَ هُنَا حَجْرٌ عَلَى حَجْرٍ إِلَّا وَيُنْقَضُ.» وَفِيمَا هُوَ جَالِسٌ عَلَى جَبَلِ الزَيْتُونِ، دَنَا مِنْهُ التَّلَامِيذُ عَلَى أَنْفِرَادٍ قَائِلِينَ: «قُلْ لَنَا مَتَى يَكُونُ هَذَا، وَمَا هِيَ عِلْمَةٌ مَجِيئِكَ وَنِهَايَةِ الْعَالَمِ؟» فَأَجَابَ يَسُوعُ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ: «إِحْذَرُوا أَنْ يُضِلَّكُمْ أَحَدًا! فَكَثِيرُونَ سَيَأْتُونَ بِأَسْمِي قَائِلِينَ: «أَنَا هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ! وَيُضِلُّونَ الْكَثِيرِينَ. وَسَوْفَ تَسْمَعُونَ بِحُرُوبٍ وَبِأَخْبَارِ حُرُوبٍ، أَنْظَرُوا، لَا تَرْتَعِبُوا! فَلَإِنَّ بُدَّ أَنْ يَحْدُثَ هَذَا. وَلَكِنْ لَيْسَتْ النِّهَايَةُ بَعْدَ! سَتَقُومُ أُمَّةٌ عَلَى أُمَّةٍ، وَمَمْلَكَةٌ عَلَى مَمْلَكَةٍ، وَتَكُونُ مَجَاعَاتٌ وَزَلَزَلٌ فِي أَمَاكِنَ شَتَّى، وَهَذَا كُلُّهُ أَوَّلُ الْمَخَاضِ. حِينَئِذٍ يُسَلِّمُونَكُمْ إِلَى الضِّيقِ، وَيَقْتُلُونَكُمْ، وَيُبَغِضُوكُمْ جَمِيعُ الْأُمَمِ مِنْ أَجْلِ اسْمِي. وَحِينَئِذٍ يَزِيدُ الْكَثِيرُونَ عَنِ الْإِيمَانِ، وَيُسَلِّمُ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا، وَيُبَغِضُ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا. وَيَقُومُ أَنْبِيَاءُ كَذِبَةٌ كَثِيرُونَ وَيُضِلُّونَ الْكَثِيرِينَ. وَلَكِنَّةَ الْإِنَّمِ تَقُورُ مَحَبَّةُ الْكَثِيرِينَ. وَمَنْ يَصْبِرُ إِلَى النِّهَايَةِ يَخْلُصُ. وَيُكْرَزُ بِإِنْجِيلِ الْمَلَكُوتِ هَذَا فِي الْمَسْكُونَةِ كُلِّهَا شَهَادَةً لِجَمِيعِ الْأُمَمِ، وَحِينَئِذٍ تَأْتِي النِّهَايَةُ.»

### THE SANCTUARY LAMPS

SANCTUARY LAMPS WILL BURN IN  
MEMORY OF:  
JAMES HAJJ BY HIS FAMILY



ADORATION OF  
BLESSED SACRAMENT  
Every Thursday  
9:30am-12pm



We have taken needed precautions to ensure the safety of our parishioners as we open the Church for worship

**Upon Arrival:**

- All church doors will be **opened wide** to avoid touching of door handles
- **Masks must be worn by all, ages 5+**, while inside the church. No one will be admitted without a mask, unless for health reasons.
- Masks (if needed) and **Hand Sanitizer are available at Church Entrance.**
- A **contact-less collection bin** has been placed in the foyer. Please drop your offering right into the bin.

**During Liturgy:**

- Every **other church pew is blocked off** to allow for physical distancing.
- The **center communion aisle has been marked with 6-ft markers** to allow for physical distancing.
- **Red Qurbono books have been removed.** All Liturgical texts are available online and throughout the church, you can find a **QR Code** that directs you to the online text for your convenience.
- Communion of the Eucharist may be received **on the hand** or by intinction on tongue.

**Between Liturgies:**

All church pews and doors will be sprayed down with **hospital-grade disinfectant.**





## GOD IS HAPPY *By Ronald Rolheiser*

Christianity, Judaism, and Islam ultimately all believe in the same God. Interestingly, too, in the popular mind they also all tend to conceive of God in the same way, namely, as male, celibate, and not being particularly happy.

Well, the gender of God is not something we can ever conceptualize. God is neither male or female, nor some androgynous mix of gender. So how can we conceptualize God's gender? We can't, pure and simple. Classically we've spoken of God as male, even as we know that this isn't exactly true because we affirm, dogmatically, that God is ineffable, incapable of ever being captured in any concept. That also holds true for our notion of God as celibate, as not having a wife. How masculinity and femininity interrelate in God is also ineffable, incapable of being conceived of, but we know God is not simply a male celibate.

But what about that other popular notion, namely, that God is not particularly happy, especially with us?

Here we have a clear answer: God is happy. How can God not be? If God is perfect oneness, perfect goodness, perfect truth, perfect beauty, and perfect fullness in every way, how then can God not be perfect happiness? An unhappy God would not be God for such a God would be lacking the power to make Himself (pardon the pronoun) happy. Not a minor inadequacy for God. So a perfect God is also a perfectly happy God. But that's a metaphysical statement. We can still ask, is God happy emotionally and is God happy with us? Mustn't God frown at times and shake his head in disappointment at our behavior? Surely God can't be happy with a lot that goes on in our world. God can't be happy in the face of sin.

Well, just as in every other thing about God, there are things here we cannot comprehend. However, this much must be affirmed, both from what's deepest in revelation in our scriptures and from the testimony of countless good people: God is happy! God is not habitually disappointed with us, frowning at our weaknesses, and sending the majority of us to hell. Rather, God is like the loving parent of a little child, forever luring us forwards, delighting in our energy, wanting us to flourish, saddened when we act in ways that bring unhappiness to others and to ourselves, but understanding of weakness rather than angry and unhappy.

Julian of Norwich, the famed mystic, describes God this way: God sits in heaven, smiling, completely relaxed, his face looking like a marvelous symphony. When I first read this passage some years ago, I was taken aback both by the concept of God as smiling and by the image of God as relaxed. I had never thought of God as "relaxed". Surely with all that's happening in our world and surely with all the betrayals, large and small, in our lives, God must be tense, frustrated and anxious. It's difficult but easier to picture God as smiling (at least sometimes), but it's exceedingly difficult to picture God as relaxed, as not being tense about all that's wrong with us and our world.

Here's my journey in grappling with that. I was wonderfully blessed in my religious background. From my parents and family, through the parish community I grew up in, through the Ursuline nuns who taught me in school, you couldn't have ordered a more-ideal faith milieu. I experienced faith and religion being lived out in real life in a way that gave it credibility and made it attractive. My seminary training and theological studies strongly reinforced that. But, all that time, underneath, there was a picture of a God who wasn't very happy and who smiled only when the occasion merited it, which wasn't very often. The consequence of that in my life was an anxious attempt always to measure up, to be good enough, to not make God unhappy, and to earn God's approval and affection. But of course, we can never be good enough, never measure up, and so it's natural to believe that God is never really happy with us and never really happy at all.

In theory, of course, we know better. We tend to have a healthier concept of God theoretically; but the heart is not so easy to bring onside. It's hard to feel inside myself that God is happy, happy with us, happy with me. It has taken me seventy years to realize, accept, take consolation in, and finally bathe in the fact that God is happy. I'm not sure what pulled all the triggers inside me that helped me make that shift, but the fact that God is happy comes to me now whenever I'm praying whole-heartedly, nakedly, and sincerely. It's also what comes to me when I look at the saints in my life, those men and women whom I most look up to in faith, who reflect the face of God for me. They're happy, relaxed, and not perpetually frowning in displeasure.