

Saint Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church

Saint Sharbel, Pray for Us!

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www.stsharbel.org



March 4, 2018

The Parable of the Prodigal Son



Next Sunday

Healing of the Paralytic

1Tim 5:24-6:5 (False Teaching & True Wealth)

Mk 2:1-12 (The Healing of a Paralytic)

Your Gifts To God

Offering Report for February 17th - 24th

Online.....\$665.00

Collection.....\$688.00

Weekly Total.....\$1,353.00

YTD Total.....\$12,075.43

YTD Goal.....\$14,768.00

YTD Difference.....**-\$2,692.57**

Liturgy Intentions

Sunday, March 4th, 10:30 am

+ *Yvette Ghossen*

Monday, March 5th

Available

Tuesday, March 6th

Available

Wednesday, March 7th

Available

Thursday, March 8th

Available

Friday, March 9th

Available

Saturday, March 10th

Available

Sunday, March 11th

Available

Adoration/Exposition every Sunday at 9:30 am before the morning Liturgy.

Confession every Sunday at 9:45 am before the morning Liturgy.

Also join us to pray the Rosary on Sundays at 10:00 am before the Liturgy begins.

Altar Sponsorship

Sunday, March 4th

Available

Sunday, March 11th

Available

Events

Lenten Schedule

Stations of the Cross in English and Arabic — **Fridays during Lent, 7:00pm**
 Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament — **Sundays during Lent, 9:00am**
Holy Week Schedule available at stsharbel.org

Parish Council

+Bruce Ashford
(Treasurer)

Charlie Ashou

Gus Bekahi

Nick El Hajj

Agopos Ghossein

Adib Karam

+Claude Karam

Anne Marentette
(Secretary)

Doug Raab

+Thaddeus Rask

Nadia Redmond

Mitch Siekmann

Laif Waldron

Ex Officio
 +Deacon Tony
 +Deacon Wadih

Please make your gift to the Annual Appeal through your local parish. You may make it in a special envelope noted "Bishop's Appeal", or by noting it on your check. You may also make your donation online at www.eparchy.org.

Other Maronite Institutions Serving You



The Eparchy publishes a monthly magazine, the Maronite Voice, which contains spiritual readings and news from parishes across the country. If you do not receive it by mail, you can read it online or via the Eparchy's app!

Website and App

Like the rest of the world, the Eparchy is going increasingly digital! The Eparchy's website is www.eparchy.org, and there is an app for the iPhone and Android. Both contain lots of interesting information.

The Order of Saint Sharbel is an association dedicated to supporting seminarians and retired priests, financially and spiritually. See www.orderstsharbel.org for details.



The National Apostolate of Maronites (NAM) is a lay apostolate that supports the Church and works closely with the Eparchy and Bishop. See www.namnews.org.

If you are receiving this publication by mail, enclosed you will find a special booklet of Maronite prayers dedicated to the Blessed Mother. Use this in honor of the Blessed Mother, and it will help bring you peace and mercy. If you did not receive a booklet, ask your parish priest and he will gladly give you one.



Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles
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 St. Louis, MO 63104
 314-231-1021
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EPARCHY OF OUR LADY OF LEBANON OF LOS ANGELES 2018 LENTEN APPEAL



We've Come a Long Way in 24 Years

When the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon was founded in 1994 by Pope Saint John Paul II, it contained 26 parishes, was served by 30 priests and had 4 seminarians. Today, the Eparchy has 44 parishes and missions, over 50 priests and 10 seminarians.

Still, the Eparchy has a long way to go to fulfill its mission. What is the mission of the Eparchy? It comes from Jesus Christ himself: "Feed my sheep" – that means "Serve all of the Maronite Catholic faithful so that each one has personal relationship with Jesus." And "Go and teach all nations" – that means "Bring the Gospel message to everyone!"

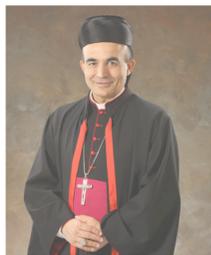
There are 34 states in the Eparchy. In 15 states, there is not a single Maronite parish or mission. There are an estimated 1 million Maronites in the Eparchy who do not belong to a Maronite parish simply because there is no parish nearby. Many communities are asking Bishop A. Elias Zaidan to send a priest and start a parish to serve the Maronites – places such as Albuquerque, Omaha, Lansing, Seattle, Green Bay, San Jose and others. In the 19 states where there is a Maronite presence, some people have to drive over two hours each way to attend a Maronite Liturgy on Sundays. That's too far.



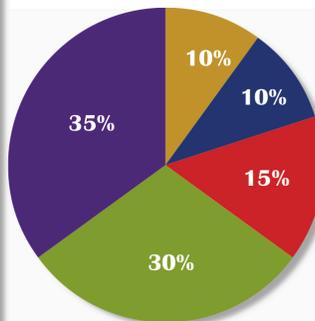
The Need to do More

Bishop Zaidan is committed to extending the Eparchy's services to all Maronites throughout the Eparchy, so that they and their children have the opportunity to be raised in the faith of their ancestors. Under his leadership, the Eparchy is moving swiftly to address these needs. New missions have been opened or staffed by priests in places like Milwaukee (WI), El Paso (TX) and Riverside (CA). The Eparchy now has 10 seminarians who are receiving the finest education at seminaries and universities such as Catholic University of America. And many of the Eparchy's priests are making heroic efforts to travel to serve Maronites in far-flung areas and build parishes.

But we need to do more. And to do more, we need your help.



The pie chart below shows how your gifts for this year's Annual Appeal will be allocated.



Each year, the Eparchy makes an appeal during Lent for the most critical needs of the Eparchy. For 2018, these needs are:

Seminarians and Retired Priests

A man must undergo a rigorous education and formation program for at least five years to become a priest. During this time he is called a "seminarian". The Eparchy needs seminarians to ensure that there will be enough priests in the future. The Eparchy currently has 10 seminarians. Two of them are deacons and two will be subdeacons soon. The average cost of educating and supporting a seminarian is \$400,000 per year (\$400,000 in total this year).

At the other end of the spectrum, the Eparchy has four retired priests who faithfully served for over 150 years (on a collective basis) in parishes. These priests receive a modest pension each month and supplemental health insurance. The total cost of this is \$111,000 in 2018. 35% of this year's Annual Appeal proceeds will go to assist the needs of Seminarians and Retired Priests.



Missions and Small Parishes.

Opening new parishes is essential to the survival of the Maronite Church in America. The Eparchy has sent priests to new areas to gather Maronites and minister to them, such as Milwaukee, Riverside and El Paso. These new missions need support for basic expenses such as insurance, utilities and the priest's living costs, in their early days to grow. 30% of this year's Annual Appeal proceeds will go to support Missions and Small Parishes.



Ministries

The Eparchy has multiple ministries to better serve Maronites which need to grow because they do not reach as many people as they should. Among these ministries are: Religious Education, Youth Ministry, New Evangelization, and Family and Sanctity of Life. The Eparchy wants to increase the size and scope of its ministries so that they reach more people in more places throughout the Eparchy. 15% of this year's Annual Appeal proceeds will go to assist the Eparchy's Ministries.



Charity to Others

Just as you are generous to the Eparchy, the Eparchy generously supports those in need here in the United States, and abroad in places like Lebanon and Syria. Many worthy causes are helped with this assistance. 10% of this year's Annual Appeal proceeds will go to charity.



National Maronite Shrine

The National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon located in North Jackson, Ohio, was founded over 50 years ago to invoke Our Lady's protection over all Maronites in the United States. The Shrine is a place of pilgrimage for all Maronites and is open 365 days a year. 10% of this year's Annual Appeal proceeds will go to assist the National Shrine.



Blue Jean's and Bling

Northwest Family Services' 14th Annual Benefit Dinner and Silent Auction

Friday, March 9, 2018 5:30-9pm

Double Tree Hotel, Portland

Please join us for an evening of fun “kicking it up for a cause! Come enjoy a Social Hour and No-Host Bar, an expanded Silent Auction, Wine Wall, Restaurant Gift Card Mystery Grab, a delicious chef-prepared meal, Dessert Dash, inspiring speakers, touching testimonies, and a prize for the “Most Bling”! All proceeds benefit the programs of Northwest Family Services, who provide Natural Family Planning education, sacramental marriage prep, and LifeSaver Retreats in the Archdiocese of Portland. To purchase tickets (\$60 each), visit www.nwfs.org/bluejeans&bling

YOUNG CATHOLIC PROFESSIONALS

Come celebrate the launch of Young Catholic Professionals Portland - the 18th chapter nationally. YCP brings young professionals together to share in their witness to Christ through their work. YCP is one of the fastest growing Catholic organizations in the United States, spanning 11 states now!

WHO: You (and every young adult 21-39 y/o)

WHAT: The YCP PDX kickoff event

WHEN: Tuesday, March 20, 2018, 7 - 9 pm

WHERE: The Madeleine Parish, 3123 NE 24th Ave, Portland, OR 97212

WHY COME

- + Meet other young professionals in their 20s and 30s
 - + Enjoy complimentary beer/wine and appetizers
 - + Learn what YCP will do for Portland and how you can get involved
 - + Meet our guests, Most Reverend Archbishop Alexander K. Sample & Jennifer Baugh
-

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Reflection

The Parable of the Prodigal Son

Lk 15:11-32

We can often become dulled to how beautiful something is when we pass it frequently. Even if it is a rare piece of art or a famous building we forget it in familiarity. But there are moments when we stop to ponder such an object we realize the value of what we have taken for granted. The Parable of the Prodigal Son is such a gem – it is perhaps one of the most used stories from the Gospel. We hear it on all sorts of occasions, and it is no wonder why – the Parable of the Prodigal Son is the story of any Christian and no matter how many times we might hear or read it it yields a new lesson each time.

Part of our familiarity with the story removes the scandal of the events we know so well. The younger son of the father comes to ask for his inheritance and so the story goes on. What is often glossed over is the fact that the son has asked for his inheritance while his father is still living. What a bold act – not only does the son wish to abandon his house but asks his father while he still lives for what he would have received upon his death. This son takes for granted everything his father has given him until that point as well as the life of his father. But without a fight his father indulges him and grants the son what he asks. Though we normally focus on the actions of the prodigal son, the love of the father is an excellent window into the mercy of God, the Good Physician, Who has come to give us all things to our advantage.

Once the son realizes that he has spent all his inheritance and is no longer having fun he feels bad for himself and intends to return as a servant to the comfort of his father's house. But the father does not even let him even finish his apology before having him clothed and a party thrown in honor of his return. The true and constant good in this story is the mercy of the father, which was never withheld from the ungrateful son. This is evermore the case in the Christian life. Just as the son, we have received everything as a gift from God – time, health, life – but when deprived of the smallest part we sense a great injustice against us as though it is due to us. Worse, how often do we turn from God after having received from Him the comforts for which we asked without even a thanks?

But God is long-suffering and endures any injustice we might inflict on Him. As the Maronite prayers for Good Friday narrate, the angels of fire wanted to drop lightning and fiery coals upon those crucifying their Lord Christ but Christ Himself commanded that they not do so for love of the crucifiers. Christ even washes the feet of Judas on the night of his betrayal, knowing well that Judas is the culprit. The Lord God is omnipotent – He has no need of the Judases or crucifiers of the world, but He still loves them in spite of their acts and calls them to repentance for their sin is their own death (Rom. 6:23), but the repentance is life (Ez. 18:32). This is why the father in the Parable says, “We had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again” (Luke 15:32). God's mercy is available to all if they ask for it in faith and our God of Life celebrates when we choose life in love rather than the death of sin. St. Peter committed the same offense as Judas in denying Christ our God, but St. Peter trusted in the mercy of God while Judas thought God's mercy could not overcome his offense – this is why St. Peter is a saint and Judas is not. We, as Syrians, reflect upon God's mercy in all things, knowing full well that God could destroy all sinners as He did in the time of Noah with the flood, but have the assurance that He would never do so (Gen. 9:11). Instead of destruction for our sins God blesses us with the abundance of our lives.

Some failure in life is inevitable – as is God's mercy for those who seek it. Let us continue to use our Lent to seek the Good Physician's merciful healing by our fasting and repentance. Let our senses not be dulled to the greatest treasure God offers us in His mercy as we pray, “True Father, You received the Prodigal Son after he squandered Your possessions in debauchery and drunkenness. You took him by the neck and kissed him, slaughtered a fattened calf and received him – receive Your servants, O Compassionate One, who return and come to Your sheepfold while the angels and watchers rejoice in the hope there is for the repentant” (From Sunday Maronite Morning Prayer).



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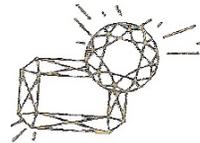
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