



Saint Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church

Saint Sharbel, Pray for Us!

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www.stsharbel.org

January 5, 2020

The Great Epiphany Feast



Next Sunday

First Sunday After Epiphany

2 Cor 10:1-11 (Accusation of the Weakness)

Jn 1:29-34 (John's Testimony to Jesus)

Your Gifts To God

Offering Report for December 22nd - 28th

Online.....\$1,145.00

Collection.....\$483.00

Weekly Total.....\$1,628.00

YTD Total.....\$92,066.14

YTD Goal.....\$95,992.00

YTD Difference.....**-\$3,925.86**

Liturgy Intentions

Sunday, January 5th 10:30 am

Servant of God Cyril

Monday, January 6th

Available

Tuesday, January 7th

Available

Wednesday, January 8th

Available

Thursday, January 9th

Available

Friday, January 10th

Available

Saturday, January 11th

Available

Sunday, January 12th

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, January 5th

Available

Sunday, January 12th

Available

Parish / Community Events

The Cedars of Saint Sharbel Youth Group Discussion Schedule:

All meetings held in upstairs classroom immediately following Sunday Mass.

- JAN:** **12th** - Truth vs. Tolerance
 26th - Church Authority: What is It? and Apologetics
- FEB:** **9th** - Youth and Young Adult Saints
 23rd - Mary : Her Motherhood, her Apparitions, the Rosary
- MAR:** **8th** - Sacraments and Mysteries : Their meaning, Grace
 22nd - TBA
- APR:** **19th** - The Truth About Human Sexuality and God
- MAY:** **17th** - Social Event: TBA

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

+Finance
Committee



Reflection

The Great Epiphany Feast

This Sunday we celebrate the great feast of the Epiphany. While the Latin Church now remembers the Magi visiting the new born Christ on this feast, we have kept the ancient purpose of celebrating the baptism of Christ in the Jordan at the hands of John the Baptist. It might appear to come randomly after our Lord's birth at first, but the celebration is an ancient one already recorded in the year 200. It purposefully follows after Christmas for the reason why we call it *Denho* in Syriac.

Our tradition calls the feast of the Epiphany *Denho* in Syriac, which is the same word for the dawning of the sun. The Syriac Fathers use the word often referring to both Christ's first coming when He was born a child, and His second coming when He will descend from heaven at the end of time. It is appropriate since Christ is called the Light Who has shone on us in the darkness of sin (cf. Is. 9:2, John 1:9). The name is reference to the prophet Zechariah as recorded in its unique Syriac form, "Thus the Lord Almighty says, 'Behold a man, and His name is Dawn (*Denho*), and He shall dawn from below and build the Temple of the Lord.'" This prophet foretells, as many of the prophets, the coming of Jesus Christ, for as St. Paul said, "In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son... The Son is the radiance of God's glory" (Heb. 1:1-3).

The Light which has dawned on us on Christmas has once again dawned on the feast of the *Denho* (dawn). Christ is the darkness Who wished to chase away the darkness from our lives and bring us into His divine light. He saw us, His image, had become tarnished by sin and wished we have life rather than the death of sin. In His love, Christ chose to lower His Highness to save us – He lowered Himself in His birth, in His baptism and on the cross. Each time, Jesus Christ had no requirement or compulsion other than His love for mankind. On Christmas, Jesus, God Almighty and Ancient of Days, become a newborn, dependent baby to what had fallen into the corruption of sin, our human nature, and give us His immortal, divine nature. By His cross, He again took what was the result of our sin, suffering, and gave us what was His – His body and blood to eat and drink for the remission of sin and eternal life. And His baptism is no different – though He is sinless, the Creator lowered Himself to be baptized in the very water He created to wash things that He might bless it for baptism.

Jesus Christ chose water for baptism because it shows the superabundance of His mercy – it is common, essential and life-giving. Just as He started creation in Genesis with His Spirit over the waters (Gen. 1:2) so too did He start the re-creation of the fallen image by Spirit and water again (Luke 3:22) that all might have access to this source of renewal. By Christ's baptism, He has given us the sacrament of baptism to enter into His mystical body and begin a new life in Him. This is what Zechariah means when he says Christ will build the Temple of the Lord regarding this great feast, for as St. Paul tells us, "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own" (1 Cor. 6:19). It is precisely through baptism, which Christ has given us that we become temples of the same Spirit that first animated us. Christ is the Light Who has dawned upon us, filling us with His Spirit and revealing to us His Hidden Father.

Let us implore the Lord Who has come and saved us in His abundant mercy:

O God the Word, Who was revealed and made known by the prophets, mystically spoken of through their words, and Who came and fulfilled their parables, illumine us, Your servants, by the light of Your divine baptism. Renew us by Your Holy Spirit that with perfect renewal of soul and body we may feast this glorious and holy feast, the illuminator of our souls, now and at all times, forever. Amen.

**Gibran N Zogbi**

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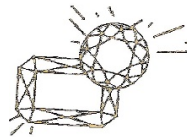
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