



Saint Maron Maronite Catholic Church

7032 Bowden Road

Jacksonville, FL 32216

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Pastor: Father Elie Abi Chedid

Deacon: Elias Shami

Mass Schedule: Sundays: 11:15 AM

February 2014

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Beloved parishioners:

Thanks be to God. The feast of our patron saint will be celebrated in the new church. MABROUK. I hope none of our parishioners will miss this historic day for our community: First Mass celebration in the new church.

The mural we have in the apse of the new church clearly reflects Maronite history and spirituality.

The risen and glorified Lord with the wounds of his crucifixion is the focal point of the mural; he is the center of our Christian faith. The yellow and golden halos around his head represent the illumination of the empty tomb, the resurrection and life eternal. The Lord is seated on a throne as we confess in the creed: "He is seated at the right hand of God the Father". With his right hand Our Lord is granting his peace: "Peace be with you" (Jn 20/21,26); and in his left hand he holds the Bible indicating that he is the Word of God incarnate. Jesus' blue and red garment indicates His human and divine nature. His gentle and merciful eye-gaze follows everyone in the church indicating His Omni-presence.

All saints depicted around our Lord are in standing position symbolizing the resurrection. They illustrate the purpose of Maronite ritual that is *worship* and *metanoia* (transformation through repentance from a life of self-centeredness to a life centered on God).

Saint Maroun priest and monk (+410), stands on the right of the Risen Lord in his monastic dress indicating the monastic spirituality of the Maronite Church; he holds in his left hand a miniature church model signifying that he is the founder and the Father of the Maronite church; and in his right hand he holds the Antiochian staff with its three-bars cross indicating the Antiochian tradition of the Maronite Church. The Aramaic characters on his stole read: *L moryo Teshbohto*-To God be praise; it indicates the Aramaic spiritual heritage of the Maronite church.

Next to Saint Maroun is Saint John Maroun (+707) the first Maronite patriarch who canonically established the Maronite church taking refuge in Lebanon. He was both a civil and a religious leader. He brought the Maronites under one banner and made them an independent nation and an autonomous Church; his Roman vestment, miter and stole indicate the full communion of the Maronite Church with the Roman Catholic Church and the Holy See of Rome. On his stole the writing in Aramaic reads: *Eeqoro d Lebno'n*-The glory of Lebanon-; the saying "The glory of Lebanon is given to him" (Isaiah 35:2) has been applied to the Maronite patriarch.

On the left of the glorified Lord are the three great Maronite saints: St. Charbel, St. Rafqa and St. Hardini, three modern witnesses of Maronite rich spirituality.

The landscape represents Lebanon with its challenging geography where Maronites escaped persecution by hiding in caves and rocky mountains to preserve their faith.

In the scenery is the monastery of Saint Maron's on the Orontes River where Maronite monks cultivated and conserved Maronite spirituality and Catholic doctrine for years before they became an institutional church. The Orontes river (Nahr al-'Assi), is called "'Aassi" = *resistant* in Arabic because it runs against natural course. The Orontes rises in the great springs of Labweh on the east side of the Beqaa Valley in Lebanon, and it

runs due north, parallel with the coast, falling 2000 feet (600 m) through a rocky gorge. It runs across Syria reaching Antioch in Turkey.

In the forest scenery, the cedar trees are most relevant; the cedar is the symbol of Lebanon (spiritual home of Maronites) and the symbol of immortality.

Mabrouk again and Happy Saint Maron's Feast Day!

Father Elie

Some directives for the use of the new church

- A new missal will be used in the new church. Please make sure to follow closely this new missal since some of the wording in Liturgy is now different.
- **We have 120 books. Each family/ individual is called to help defray the cost of this new missal (\$30 each). Also Sponsors for the new books are welcome.**
- Missals must not be removed from church nor handled by small children.
- **No food or drinks are allowed in the new church facility (including cry-room).**
- Mezzanine is not to be used except when no other seats are available in the nave (main sanctuary).
- **Special attention should be given (in particular to the kids) to not touch fire alarm levers, the alarm will go off instantly, and we will be charged a fine (\$250 minimum). It is better not to mess with any switches or volume controls in the church.**
- Only toddlers 4 years of age and under are to be in cry-room with one of the parents. Cry-room is not a playground but a training ground.
- **It is preferred to use the eastward entrance door (closest to the hall) until landscape is finished. Drop-off area is to be used especially by elderly and in raining weather.**
- Normally the right-side of doors will be unlocked. The sacristy's door is a service door to be used only by clergy.
- **Since the pews are not screwed to the (marble) floor, do not force the pews to move when sitting.**
- Please always try to occupy the front of the church and be punctual.
- **Please make a special effort not to use restrooms during Mass since this is most disrespectful to God and disrupt the people around, and not to let small kids unattended in bathrooms. And please make sure all sanitary products are placed in trash receptacles.**
- All phones and devices are not allowed in the church or are to be turned off during Mass.
- **Smoking is not allowed by any church's entrance door.**
- Fellowship will be taking place immediately after Mass in the social hall not in church.

Church's News & Events

Feast of saint Maroun

The feast of Saint Maroun, our parish's patron saint and Father of the Maronite church will be celebrated on Sunday February 9th with the rite of blessing with his icon.

Saint Maron's lunch

In celebration of Saint Maron's Feast Day, our church is organizing a lunch on Sunday February 9, 2014 in the hall following Mass. A complete meal, buffet style, prepared by Chef Samir Gebrael will be served.

Sponsors for this event are welcome.

Donation: \$20 Adults / \$12 Kids under 12.

Choir practice

Choir practice (Saint Maron's & Saint Charbel's choirs) is scheduled for Wednesday Feb 5, and Friday Feb 7, at 6 PM.

Second collections

A second collection will be taken for our church building fund on February 9 honoring the feast of Saint Maroun, and on February 23 for Catholic Home Missions Appeal.

Help needed for moving to the new church

Moving religious articles, furniture, and items from old church will take place on Tuesday Feb 4 at 6:30 PM. Help especially from men and youth is needed.

Condolences

Our sincere condolences are extended to the family of **Antoinette (Matroune) Saikali** upon her passing occurred in Jacksonville on January 25, 2014.

May Almighty God receive her soul in His heavenly dwellings.

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San Jose school/In-Parish tuition rate

Our church was informed by San Jose Catholic School- Office of Admission- of new policies that are now in effect: "Families who attend a Catholic Church that does not have a school, may qualify for the **In-Parish tuition rate**, provided they can meet specific criteria."

The criteria are: 1- To be active members of their Catholic church (In our case of Saint Maron's church) / a letter of recommendation from the priest is required. 2- For students to be "baptized Catholics" / a baptism certificate is required.

Also introduced is "The New Student Referral Program": When a referral from existing SJCS family results in the enrollment of a new family, the existing SJCS family will be eligible for a Referral Tuition Reduction equal to one (1) month of free tuition per new student enrolled.

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Eucharistic Congress 2014 / *In Him We Are One*

All our parishioners are strongly encouraged to participate in the annual Eucharistic Congress organized by the Diocese of Saint Augustine.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for this spectacular event, slated for March 28-29, 2014, at the Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center in Jacksonville (free admission). To learn more, visit: <http://www.floridaeucharist.org>

Fulfillment of pledges

We are very grateful to our parishioners that have pledged and fulfilled their pledges for the building fund; however, there are still many parishioners who have not yet fulfilled their pledges or did not yet contribute to the building fund. We expect all our parishioners to be part of building God's House according to their ability; for those who have already made contributions towards building fund we hope they can be all the more generous and do a little more according to their means.

The remaining balance for the completion of the new church's construction, after loan, is now around **\$16,000.00**.

ITEMS NEEDED FOR THE NEW CHURCH

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|-------------------------------|----------------|
| - 2 Aisle runners | \$1,700 (each) |
| - Tree of life | \$2,200.00 |
| - Dedication booklet printing | \$3,500.00 |

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Maintaining God's House

We thank all families and individuals who give their annual dues / assessment. You are urged to make this contribution (\$250) for the year 2014 unless you are financially unable. You can always mail your tithing/ Sunday's offering and/ or assessment to the church even though you may not be attending.

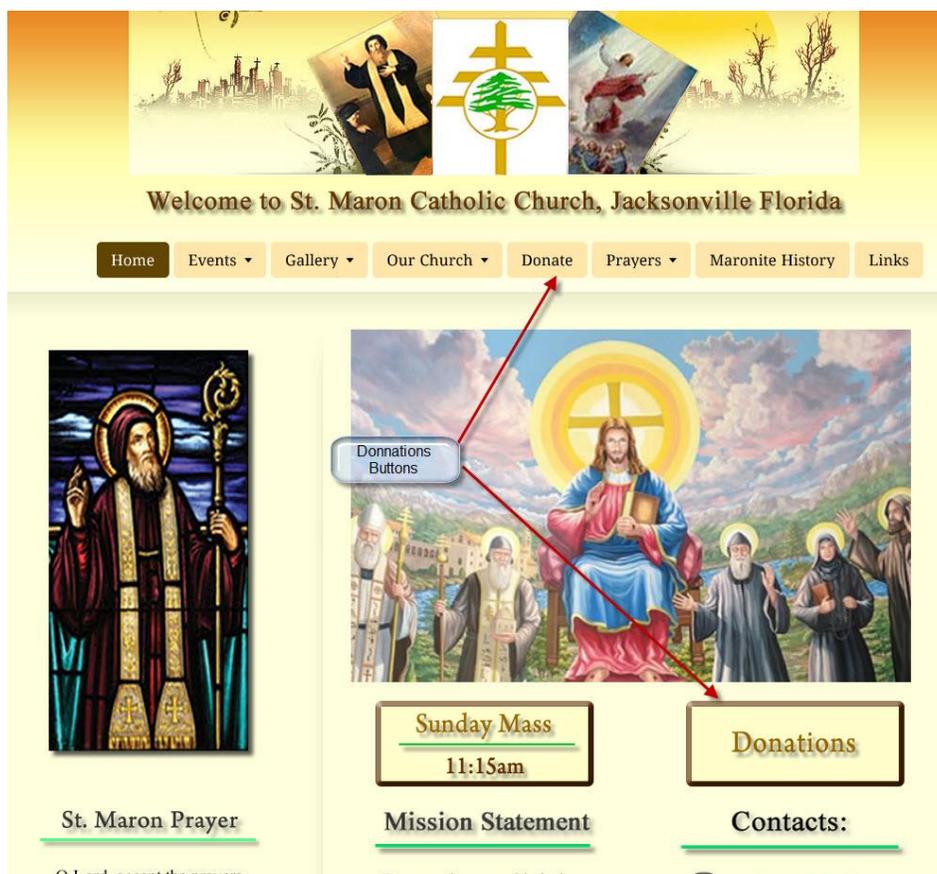
According to God's and Church's commandments, every working individual that receives a salary is required to tithe to the church on a personal level.

You are strongly encouraged to use the offering envelopes that are available at the church on the entrance table. The use of these envelopes enables you to get an accurate credit of your donations throughout the fiscal year, and help facilitate the church's financial procedures.

Church Website/Donate on line

Our church introduced a "Donate on line" program using credit cards. The program is available through the church's website: www.stmaronjax.com.

Your benefits from this program are: 1-You earn points on your credit card; 2-You keep accurate records of your donation; 3- You save time and stamps on writing and mailing checks; 4-Your donation is tax deductible.



For more information you may contact Mrs. Sana' Saliba at (904) 519-6619. If you would like to place an Ad on the website please contact Mr. Elias Trad at (561) 809-8668.

A reminder of the obvious

Out of respect first for God and second for those who are in church to worship Him, there needs to be a sincere effort to dress appropriately and decently, arrive on time, control your

children, and keep your phones and all electronic devices off until after Mass.

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Protecting God's children

Pamphlets outlining the pro-active policy of the United States Catholic Bishops to protect children are available at the Church, or by logging on to www.usccb.org/ocyp/. Likewise information on our own Eparchial policy on sexual abuse can be found on our Eparchial website www.stmaron.org. It takes a dedicated team effort to safeguard our children.

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Project Roots



The Maronite Eparchies of Saint Maron and of Our Lady of Lebanon join together to help people reconnect with their Christian spiritual roots in Lebanon and the Middle East. An office in Los Angeles will assist those interested to:

1. Register their vital life events.
2. Obtain their sacramental records from their country of origin.
3. Connect with family members living in their place of origins and throughout the world where they emigrated.
4. Obtain Lebanese citizenship if desired.
5. Obtain immigration records if desired.
6. Remain connected with the Maronite Church here and throughout the world.

For more information you may contact: Main office (CA) Ph: (310) 275-6634 / (310) 276-1939 MLM 333 South San Vicente Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90048. Or visit websites: www.projectroots.net & www.registerlebnani.com

Project Roots is an endeavor of the two Maronite Eparchies in the US in collaboration with the Maronite Foundation in the World / Christian Lebanese Foundation (CLFW).

Register in Lebanon with us and **spread the word** about the need for registration. Your registration will NOT jeopardize your American citizenship. It will help Lebanon maintain the demographic and political power-sharing balance and prevent the Christians there from becoming only **10%** of the population.

Contact one of **Project Roots** representatives **today** and start the process. You can even use the website (www.projectroots.net) to register online and get a chance to win **free tickets to Lebanon**.

If you have already tried to register without success, sign the **Lebanese Citizenship Petition**:

www.yes-i-want.com. Together, we can effect change!

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Bequests and Planned Giving

Have you considered including your Parish in your will? A will is an expression of your commitment to the principles, people and institutions that you cherish here on earth. As an active participant and a supporter of your Church, a bequest in your will ensures that the work of the Maronite Church can continue after you are gone. It is a lasting testament that has great significance.

Remembering your Parish in your will is easy to do. Here is an example of the words you can use to do this:

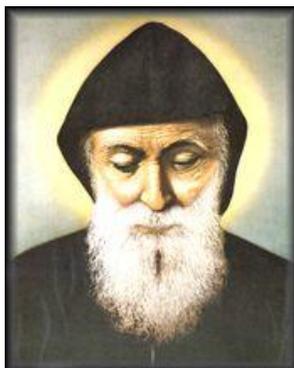
"I give and bequeath to St. Maron Maronite Catholic Church, located on 7032 Bowden Rd in Jacksonville, Florida, _____% of the residue of my estate [Or: The sum of \$_____."

Tax-Smart Giving of Appreciated Stock or other Assets

The gift of an asset such as common stock or mutual fund shares is a smart way to make a contribution and receive maximum tax benefits based on the value of the asset. Gifts of other appreciated assets such as land, antiques, and homes, can also be utilized as potential gifts with valuable tax benefits. Gifts of these assets should be considered on a case-by-case basis and discussed with an accountant or tax adviser.

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Order of Saint Sharbel



Bishop Gregory Mansour has asked all clergy in the Eparchy of Saint Maron to assist in enriching the order of Saint Sharbel both spiritually and on the level of involvement.

The order of Saint Sharbel, established in 1980, is an organization of lay people and clergy who have pledged their spiritual strength and financial support to the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn.

Its first objective is to direct financial assistance towards educating the seminarians of our Eparchy.

When it will be possible the second objective is to provide additional benefits to our retired clergy in order for them to live with dignity and make it easier for them to share the wisdom of their years.

One way in sharing in the Order's objectives is to become a member. There are two forms of membership annual and perpetual. All billing comes from the Chancery Office and is paid to the Chancery.

Annual Membership

An Annual Member is one who pledges to donate \$500.00 annually or four equal installments of \$125.00 yearly (yearly membership starts from the month you join).

Perpetual Membership

A Perpetual member is one who makes a one-time donation of \$5,000 to the Order's Trust Fund. Perpetual members can choose to make four equal installments over a one-year period.

For more information you may visit the Eparchy's website: www.stmaron.org

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Reflection of the month:

"An idle mind is the devil's workshop"

Reflection and motto of the year

**“Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things,
Nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
Nor any other creature will be able to separate us
From the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

Romans 8:38-39

**Our congratulations and good wishes go to
Nicholas Antar & Nammour Nammour**

For the opening of their new restaurant
St. Mary's Seafood & More...

Located At

11290 Old St. Augustine Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32256

Ph: (904) 233-3319
