



Saint Maron Maronite Catholic Church

7032 Bowden Road
Jacksonville, FL 32216
Ph: (904) 448-0203 / Fax: (904) 448-8277
E-mail: StMaronJax@Comcast.net

Pastor: Father Elie Abi Chedid
Deacon: Elias Shami

Mass Schedule: Sundays: 11:15 AM

December 2015

Volume 15 - Issue 12



Beloved parishioners:

Every year, people can't wait for **Christmas** to come. This anticipated holiday has become a worldwide celebration. Christians and non-Christians, active Christians and non

active look forward to this extraordinary holiday with early decorations and much preparation; they try to stretch it as much as they can, and celebrate it as much lavishly as they can.

Everybody loves Christmas, adults and children alike, but alas not for the same reason or for the right reason: Some for just entertainment and amusement, some others for money-making purpose. True believers that recognize Christ as the Son of God and fully embrace His message of salvation are the ones who enjoy Christmas the most, and get truly touched by God's saving power. Also, through them Christ is made visible in the present world. True believers realize and recognize that Jesus Christ who is Emmanuel, God with us, is the source of hope and true happiness for mankind.

Christmas 2015 is marked by the extraordinary **Jubilee Year of Mercy** that begins for the universal Church on December 8, 2015 when the Holy Father, Pope Francis, will open the Holy Door of Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome.

In his announcement of the Jubilee Year Pope Francis said: 'I have decided to announce an extraordinary Jubilee which has at its centre the mercy of God. It will be a Holy Year of Mercy. We want to live in the light of the word of the Lord: "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (cf. Lk 6:36). This Holy Year will commence on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception and will conclude on Sunday, 20 November 2016, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe and living face of the Father's mercy.'

The Pope commented: "The Church may render more clearly her mission in being a witness to mercy; and we have to make this journey. It is a journey which begins with spiritual conversion. I am confident that the whole Church, which is in such need of mercy for we are sinners, will be able to find in this Jubilee the joy of rediscovering and rendering fruitful God's mercy, with which we are all called to give comfort to every man and every woman of our time. Do not forget that God *forgives all*, and God *forgives always*. Let us never tire of asking forgiveness. Let us henceforth entrust this Year to the Mother of Mercy that she turn her gaze upon us and watch over our journey: Our penitential journey, our year-long journey with an open heart, to receive God's pardon and mercy".

Everything that exists is the fruit of God's love and mercy. The Mysteries of Incarnation and Redemption, as all the events of salvation beginning with the act of creation, speak of God's mercy. Faith and worship are worthless and void if are not associated with rich acts of mercy.

May this Christmas for us be truly characterized by rich acts of godlike mercy. Amen

Fr. Elie



Church's News & Events

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

In observation of the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception that occurs on the 8th day of December, and which is a Holy day of Obligation, a Divine Liturgy will be celebrated on Tuesday December 8, at 7:00 PM. This year's celebration also marks the 30th Anniversary of Father Elie's Ordination to Priesthood and First Mass.

Christmas Novena

Christmas Novena is celebrated during the nine days preceding the feast of the Glorious Birth of our Lord. Prayers include Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament, where Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, is mystically present with us and graciously communicates Himself to us.

The Novena Prayers will take place at 7:00 PM starting on Tuesday, December 15th.

Christmas Midnight Mass

Our solemn and traditional Midnight Christmas Mass will be celebrated on **Thursday December 24th, at 11:30 PM.**

Liturgy on Christmas Day will be celebrated at 11:15 AM.

New Year's Day Mass

New Year's Day is a Holy Day of Obligation; it is the feast of the circumcision of our Lord, World Day for Peace, and the beginning of a Christian Year (2016 Anno Domini). Divine Liturgy will be celebrated on Friday, January 1st **at 6:00 PM.**

Second collection

A second collection will be taken for Maronite Patriarchal charities on Sunday December 6.

Memorial Mass

A forty days Memorial Mass will be offered in memory of **Charbel Sadaka**, Eva Sadaka Larocque brother, on Sunday December 6, 2015 at our church.

Christmas & New Year's Parties

The Annual celebration of Christmas party will take place this year on Sunday December 13 after Mass. Volunteers are needed to be in charge of organizing the party. Sponsors for Christmas party are welcome.

Our sincere thanks go to Mrs. Yasmine Mahfouz and Mrs. Rita Assi that will prepare the food for Christmas party.

Also organizers and sponsors for New Year's party are needed.

Fund for needy at Christmas

Christmas is about love, charity and sharing. It is a special time to think of the less fortunate among us. Your contribution to a fund set for this purpose in our parish for needy families is an expressive way of living Christmas in its true dimension. Please let the priest know if you would like to make a contribution towards this fund.

New TV

The church is in need of a new television. Anyone who would like to donate this item or make a donation towards purchasing it, please inform the priest.

Toys for Tots

A box has been placed in the hall in order to collect Christmas gifts for needy children; your donation of a new (not used) unwrapped gift is welcome. The box will be removed one week before Christmas.

Christmas carols

Christmas Carols will be performed by St Charbel choir on Friday December 18, 2015 at 7:30 PM at St Charbel hall.

Good News/Great Blessing

We will be blessed with the visit of the **relics of Saint Charbel** to our parish for two days, on February 15 & 16, 2016. We pray that this event will be a source of great blessing, inspiration, and healing.

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Christmas Party



Join us in the celebration of a Christmas Party at Saint Charbel hall
On Sunday December 13, 2015, at 12:30 PM (after Liturgy)

Please bring a symbolic gift to your child; Santa Claus will distribute the gifts
to your children.

The menu will consist of: **Chicken & Rice (Roz 3a djaj), Fettucini, Fish fry
& French fries, Pizza and Fattoush salad, Dessert and soft drinks.**

Entertainment features Christmas carols, music, dance, and raffle.

Admission: **\$ 20** for Adults / **\$ 12** for Kids.

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Ring in the New Year

At

Saint Maron's Church

New Year's Party will be held at
Saint Charbel Hall

7032 Bowden Road, Jacksonville, FL 32216

On Thursday December 31st, 2015

Doors open at 8:00 PM

Dinner served at 9:00 PM

- *Full course buffet
- *Music & Dance
- *Raffle Prizes
- *Party Favors
- *BOB (bring your own bottle), set ups are included

Admission: Adults \$60 / Kids: \$35

Please make checks payable to
Saint Maron Church

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Property Insurance/Safety instruction

Catholic Mutual Group, our property insurance carrier, has developed a Risk Management program and recommends having all church's staff and volunteers review some online training courses. These courses provide valuable information to assist our members in reducing accidents, injuries and claims. Each course is less than 20 minutes long. To access and view them, please log on www.catholicmutual.org Login Name: *0327stm* / Password: *service* then select subgroup *Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn*. Thank you for your cooperation.

World Youth Day

Our youth are encouraged to attend the World Youth Day Pilgrimage that will take place in Krakow Poland, in July 2016.

Anyone who is interested in joining other youth from our Eparchy to attend WYD can get online registration.

The Eparchy's WYD coordinators are always available to help in the registration process. You may contact Chuck VanHeusen (910) 988-2421, Charles.vanheusen@yahoo.com, or Sister Therese Maria (508) 996-1753, srtherese2010@gmail.com

Maintaining God's House

Our Lord said: "Give and it will be given to you; for the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you." Lk 6:38

We thank all families and individuals who tithe regularly and generously to the church. Please note that the annual registration dues (**\$250**) are meant to be just a part of tithing's fulfillment. Suggested tithe is **3%** of one's income and means.

All families/Individuals are urged to make this contribution unless they are financially unable.

You can always mail your tithing and Sunday's offering 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.

Loan payment

Our current and urgent goal is to pay off the church loan. Interest payment is a heavy burden on our church's budget. Your donations towards loan payment are very much needed.

With God's help and your thoughtfulness and generosity, we hope to hold a **"mortgage burning party"** on the special celebration of the feast of Saint Maron's, our Patron Saint, on February 6, 2016.

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Policy for the use of Saint Charbel Hall (Page 1)

7032 Bowden Road

Jacksonville, FL 32216 / Ph: (904) 448-0203

The Hall capacity is 160 people (Provided dance space).

- 1- Security deposit/Registration in the amount of \$400 is required upon registration for the hall. This deposit is refundable after damage assessment.
- 2- In case of cancellation, a notification is requested at least two weeks ahead of the event; otherwise half of the registration fee will not be refunded.
- 3- The fees for the use of the hall are in accordance to the number of occupants for the event and the hours of operation:
Up to \$75 people: \$650 / Up to 100 people: \$750
Up to 130: \$850 / Up to 160: \$950
- 4- Any damage occurring to the hall or to any artifacts within the perimeter of said property will be deducted from the security deposit. Debris from food and drink including candy wrappers etc. must be disposed of properly. Cans and bottles should be emptied and recycled; no liquids should be trashed in garbage bags. Damages exceeding the security deposit will be the responsibility of the undersigned.
- 5- The hall is and shall remain a smoke free environment. Remains from smoking are to be kept in proper containers outside of the building.
- 6- The hall is to be evacuated by 11:45 PM. A charge of \$100 will be added when that time is exceeded.
- 7- Decoration attached with tapes or tacks on walls and / or drapery, removing items from walls, the use of confetti, standing on chairs and tables, are strictly prohibited. Decorations on tables and suspending from the ceiling are allowed.

- 8- An additional fee in the amount of \$200 is to be charged for food preparation in the kitchen.
- 9- Table linens are available if desired; fees are negotiable.
- 10- Additional fees will apply for cleaning and garbage disposal.

* **Attention:** Set up and decorations should take place the same day of event, if needed to be done one day in advance or to take more than five hours, an additional charge will apply. In case of the preparation of food in the kitchen takes more than four hours or needed to be done a day before, an additional charge will apply also.

Respectful communication should be observed to the landlord at all times and strict adherence to the rules above.

Signature _____

Date _____

Policy for Saint Charbel Hall Use (Page 2)
Disclaimer Proclamation

I, the undersigned.....,

am aware and agree that I am fully responsible for any damages

and accidents that occur on the premises of Saint Maron property

during my occupancy. This includes all persons and personal

property affiliated with me or my function.

In the case of monthly use I agree to pay the proper deposit and

Advanced payment at the beginning of the month.

I also agree to be responsible to make sure all utilities, electrical

and water are properly turned off, and doors locked at the end of

the function.

I understand that no alcohol be served for underage drinking, and that alcohol use is the liability of the occupant.

Signature

Date

Policy for the use of Saint Charbel Church/Hall (Page 3)

7032 Bowden Road

Jacksonville, FL 32216 / Ph: (904) 448-0203

Name.....

Address.....

Phone number.....

Date of event:

Duration of function: From..... To.....

Time of Hall's set up and opening.....

Type of food preparation.....

Type of Music.....

Number of guests.....

Requirements:

*A photocopy of Driver License or Photo ID.

*Deposit payment.

*Full payment a week before function if paid by check.

*Hall is to be cleared by 11:45 PM.

Signature

Date



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) 514-4114.
 If you would like to place an Ad on the website please contact Mr. Elias Trad at (561) 809-8668.

Some directives for the use of the new church

- A new missal is being 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 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. Please don't let kids wander in hallways during Mass.
- **It is preferred to use the eastward entrance door (closest to the hall). 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, please do not force the pews to move when sitting.**
- Please always try to occupy the front of the church and be punctual. Readers, choir members and altar boys should be at church at least 10 minutes before Mass, and are required to be dressed with appropriate church attire.

- **Smoking is not allowed by any church's entrance door. Also chewing gums are not allowed in church; Gums should be disposed of in trash cans.**
- Fellowship will be taking place immediately after Mass in the social hall not in church.
- **Hymnal sheets will be placed on the entrance table; kindly return them to the table at the end of the Mass.**
- The drop-off area is not a parking place; that area should remain unblocked.
- **Unless for emergency, please use bathrooms in the hall. 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.



Dedication Commemorative Ad Book

The Commemorative Ad Book published on the occasion of the dedication of our new church is available for purchase. Donation: \$25.

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.

Protecting God's children

Pamphlets outlining the pro-active policy of the United States Catholic Bishops to protect children are available at the church hall, 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.

Seating in church

Please always occupy the pews in the front of the church (The last four or five pews on each side are not to be occupied unless there are no free pews in the front).

Please be punctual for Mass. Readers, choir members and altar boys should be at church at least 10 minutes before Mass.

Everyone is required to be dressed with appropriate church attire.

Entrance door during Mass

In order to maintain quiet and undistracted atmosphere at Mass. The entrance door to be used during Mass is from the drop-off area.

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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 \$_____."

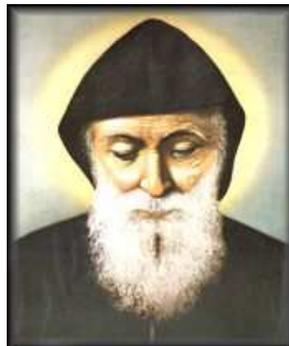
Tax-Smart Giving of Appreciated Stock or other Assets

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 Charbel

This year, October 11th is "Order of Saint Charbel Sunday" in both Maronite Eparchies in the United States.



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

The order of Saint Charbel, 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

Order of Saint Charbel Application Form

To apply for Membership in the Order of Saint Charbel, please follow these directions:

1. Fill out this Application Form (print all information)
2. Circle appropriate Membership category
3. Make check payable to "Order of Saint Charbel"
4. Mail check and application to: Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn
109 Remsen Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Membership Category (Please circle one)

Type	Donation
1) Perpetual	\$ 5,000 one time OR Four payments of \$1,250 within one year
2) Annual	\$ 500 each year OR Four payments of \$125 each year.
3) Youth	\$ 250 each year <i>(only for individuals under 25 years old)</i>

Member Information

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ M.I.: _____

Home address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Mobile Phone: _____

Email Address: _____ Occupation: _____

Member's Business Mailing Address

Business Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Business Phone: _____

Spouse's Information

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ M.I.: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____ Occupation: _____

Spouse's Business Mailing Address

Business Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Parish/ Mission

Name, City, State: _____

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Reflection of the month:

**“One sees clearly only with the heart.
What is essential is invisible to the eye”.**

Antoine de Saint Exupery