



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

December 2014

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Beloved parishioners:

Thanks be to God always.

The big challenge of building our new church is now behind us; the stressful challenge of organizing the solemn Dedication event, that happened to be extremely successful, is also behind us. Now we are faced with the ongoing challenge of maintaining the house of God. This endeavor is the task and the responsibility of every one of you. The growth of the church is dependent on the participation of all its members; everyone is required to provide support in any way possible. We ought to always maintain the strength and the love for God to keep His house as He wants it.

Bodies need nourishing, whether it is an individual body, a corporate body or a spiritual body. We need to be fed with the food that sustains, that is most appropriate to each body. Historically we see the corporate body of Israel provided provisions by God in the wilderness with the material stuff of manna; even though the manna was a guide to spiritual food.

The ultimate sustenance necessary for eternal life was given to the world in the **incarnation** of the Son of God. Our **Lord Jesus Christ** as the **Eternal Word of God** and as the **heavenly Bread** is the spiritual food for the life of every soul.

The church as a corporate body that is physical is in need of physical support. The type of nourishment, prescribed by God, that the church needs to stay alive is called “**Tithing-‘Oshr-Baraka’**”. Without this essential nutrient the church cannot survive. Actually, this need is also for every true believer because without giving a believer is spiritually dead. Love and generosity are the eloquent evidence of faith, and an integral part of worship.

We feel blessed this year, and we are very happy and excited, to celebrate Christmas for the first time in the new church. Christmas is not an event of the past. Christmas is about **Emmanuel-God with us- in the present**, and as the most precious **present** every day and forever.

I wish you all a Blessed Christmas.

Father Elie



Church's News & Events

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 Monday, December 15th.

Christmas Midnight Mass

Our solemn and traditional Midnight Christmas Mass will be celebrated on **Wednesday 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 day of obligation; it is the feast of the circumcision of our Lord, World Day for Peace, and the beginning of a Christian Year (2015 AD). Divine Liturgy will be celebrated on Thursday, January 1st **at 6:00 PM.**

Christmas flowers

Your donations toward Christmas flowers, in memory of or in honor of, are welcome.

Second collections

A second collection will be taken for Maronite Patriarchal charities on Sunday December 7; and for our church's building fund at Christmas Masses.

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.

Choir Practice

Choir practice will be taking place on Wednesdays at 6:00 PM.

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.

Christmas & New Year's Parties

The Annual celebration of Christmas party will take place this year on Sunday December 21 after Mass. Volunteers are needed to be in charge of organizing the party. Please notify the priest if you like to help. Sponsors for Christmas party are welcome.

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



Christmas Party



Join us in the celebration of a Christmas Party at Saint Maron Hall on Sunday December 21, 2014, at 12:30 PM (after Liturgy).

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

Entertainment features music, dance, and raffle.

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





Ring in the New Year

At

Saint Maron's Church

New Year's Party will be held at
Saint Maron's Church/Hall
7032 Bowden Road, Jacksonville, FL 32216

On Wednesday, December 31st, 2014

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: \$60

Please make checks payable to
Saint Maron Church

**For tickets information & purchase please contact
the church
(904) 448-0203**



Antonine Village

Bishop Gregory has given the Antonine Sisters the permission to ask all the Maronite Faithful in his Eparchy for their support with their "Antonine Village" Assisted Living and Memory care project.

Attached please find a letter addressed to parishioners in this regard.

Dear Maronite Faithful,

"I don't know what I'd do without you!"

At the Antonine Sisters Adult Day Care, we hear these words all the time. They're said by the grateful families of the people we care for.

But those words also describe **the way my Sisters and I feel about you.** Let me explain.

In 1995, we were building an Adult Day Care center. We asked the Maronite faithful in America for help. Donations came in from around the country and the response was overwhelming!

Because of this generosity, we were able to build a bright, cheerful Adult Day Care center. Here, elderly and disabled men and women are welcomed with Christian hospitality and treated with love and dignity.

Today, we're asking again for help from every Maronite faithful in America.

We are building a new residential assisted living and memory care facility next door to the Day Care. Called "Antonine Village," this project will extend our ministry to older adults who need more care than is possible in a day care setting.

Antonine Village will feature a mix of independent living, assisted living, and memory care units. Residents will enjoy three dining rooms, two activity rooms, and a computer room. Religious services will take place in the Antonine Village's very own chapel.

We are asking you to support this growth in our ministry with a generous gift in the next four weeks. **Your timely donation will help us finish construction on the Antonine Village this year.**

As I said earlier, we don't know what we would do without you. The support of individual parishioners like you has been a vital part of the Antonine Sisters' ministry in America for more than two decades. Our ministry is *your* ministry. Won't you please help us finish the construction of the Antonine Village?



We're grateful for all the support we receive from the Maronite faithful. We thank God for our benefactors and pray for them daily.

May God bless you and your loved ones.

Sincerely,

Sr. M. Madeleine Iskandar

Sister Marie Madeleine Iskandar
Superior, Antonine Maronite Sisters of Youngstown

P.S. Your gift received in the next 4 weeks will help ensure that elderly men and women can move in to the Antonine Village before winter. All gifts are tax deductible.

Women's group meeting

A meeting for our church's women group is scheduled for Tuesday December 2, 2014 at the church.

Maintaining God's House

We thank all families and individuals who give their annual registration dues. Those who did not yet fulfill this requirement for the year 2014 are urged to make this contribution (\$250) 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.

Dedication CD / DVD / Commemorative Ad Book

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

Also, copies of recorded DVD and audio CD of the dedication Mass and banquet will be made available soon.

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 talk to the priest about the contribution you would like to make towards this fund.

Use of the church hall

Our church hall is available for use for your special celebrations. Please contact the church for reservations.

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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, 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.



In-Parish tuition rates at Catholic schools

Bishop Felipe Estevez, Bishop of Saint Augustine Diocese, wrote to Father Elie informing him of a new Diocesan policy he introduced that the children of Eastern rite parishes located in this diocese be afforded the same in-parish tuition rates as Latin rite children attending the same parochial school. The only condition is that they reside within the territorial boundary of the parish whose parochial school they want to attend.

The parents of an Eastern Rite Catholic student should never be required or encouraged to register in a Latin Rite parish against their will, solely to obtain the Catholic in-parish tuition rate.

At the same time he asked that every effort should be done from Eastern parishes to support parochial schools which our students attend.

We heartily thank Bishop Estevez for his consideration.



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 supporting God's House and presently help according to their ability pay back the church's loan; 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 to help pay off the church loan.



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.

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, 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:

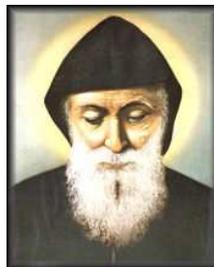
"I give and bequeath to St. Maron Maronite Catholic Church, located on 7032 Bowden Rd in Jacksonville, Florida, _____% of the residue of my estate [Or: The sum of \$_____."

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:

“All for God and for His glory: In whatever you do, think of the glory of God as your main goal”.

St. John Bosco
