



Saint Maron Maronite Catholic Church

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Pastor: Father Elie Abi Chedid
Deacon: Elias Shami

Mass Schedule: Sundays: 11:15 AM

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Beloved parishioners:

How beautiful were our Christmas celebrations held this year for the first time in the new church! I was happy to see the joy and the amazement in the glowing eyes of our youth and kids. I could also sense your cheerful hearts fused with feelings of gratitude and pride.

As we wrap up the year 2014 and enter the year 2015, we entrust ourselves and our church over again to Divine providence; at the same time, we commit ourselves to enhance our service to God and to His Church.

Endings and beginnings are indeed an opportune time to reflect on our achievements, to situate ourselves with regard to our identity, to our life's purpose and goal, and to make valuable resolutions.

When I reflect back on the concluding year, I can't but thank God for the fruits I was able to bring forth for His glory.

In 2014, we moved to the new church, we finalized all remaining items pertaining to construction. We extended the construction's project to the erection of Our Lady's shrine and the area around the retaining pond (that was a big challenge that had a heavy toll on me as you know).

Also by the grace of God, we were able to successfully organize the dedication ceremony and reception (which was also a very big challenge). All these achievements were described by many as a miracle...Even our Bishop in a post-dedication letter he addressed us described them as a miracle. This accomplishment was a miracle because of the very small size of our Mission, and because of the poor support, the unfulfilled pledges or even the betrayal of many.

With the beginning of the New Year, may we be determined to largely invest in the values and principles we cherish most such as faith, church, and family. May we resolve to be more supportive of our church!

The growth of the church is dependent on the participation of all its members; everyone is required to provide support in any way possible. I am very impressed with the outstanding support that some of our parishioners exemplify. And I think, as a Father, that it is unjust, immoral and sinful for the unsupportive majority of members to take unfair advantage of a benevolent minority.

Some people asked me to talk more about "Tithing"; some others say we never heard about "such thing"! A tithe is a Biblical term that is generally and literally understood as a one-tenth part of something ("oshr" in Arabic), paid in recognition and thanksgiving to God as a contribution to church (religious institution). However, in our church, the requirement for tithing is set to a minimum of 3%.

Every member of the church, young or adult, male or female, should joyfully and thankfully tithe to the church in a very honest way, according to one's means and income; such sincere giving is a source of tremendous blessing. Simultaneously, the church should exert charitable help to parishioners who may experience desperate financial need.

Our physical support to the church is not only a religious obligation and a need for the church but it is mainly a need for us; without giving and caring for the Church (Which is the Body of Christ) a believer is spiritually dead likened to a barren tree. Generosity is the indication of a living faith, and an essential part of true worship.

May the Lord fill our hearts with passionate love and admiration for Him and for His Church!

Father Elie

Church's News & Events

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 new Christian Year (2015 A.D.).

Divine Liturgy will be celebrated on Thursday, January 1st at **6:00 PM**.

Feast of Epiphany

The Feast of the Epiphany of our Lord is celebrated on January 6. The Epiphany Mass will take place at 7:00 PM on Tuesday January 6.

Blessing with the Epiphany Water

Honoring our Eastern traditions during the Epiphany season (which starts with the Feast of Epiphany-Baptism of the Lord- on January 6), the priest will be available upon request to conduct the blessing with Holy Water of homes and businesses.

St Maron Women Guild new officers

Our sincere thanks and wishes go to the new officers of St Maron women Guild who offered to serve on the board: Rita Assi, Sawsan Sousou, Sylvia Baboyan, Joyce Bahri, and Salome Assi.

Second collection

A second collection will be taken for "United States Catholic Bishops' Worldwide Charities" on Sunday January 25.

Loan payment

Our next goal for the coming year is to pay off the church loan (\$361,000.00). We hope before long we can organize a "Mortgage Burning Party".

Donations towards loan payment are welcome.

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.

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, if you like to have a DVD and/or audio CD copy of the dedication Mass and banquet, please place your order with Mrs. Sanaa Saliba.



Use of the church hall

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

Maintaining God's House

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 fulfillment.

All families/Individuals are urged to make this contribution, which is usually taken at the beginning of the year, 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.



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.



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.

Welcome to St. Maron Catholic Church, Jacksonville Florida

Home Events Gallery Our Church Donate Prayers Maronite History Links

St. Maron Prayer
O Lord, accept the prayers

Donations Buttons

Sunday Mass
11:15am

Donations

Mission Statement

Contacts:

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:

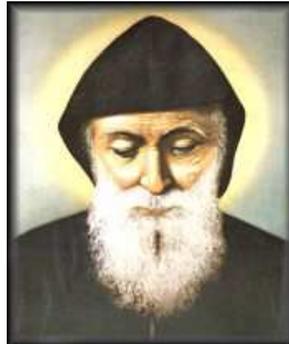
"I give and bequeath to St. Maron Maronite Catholic Church, located on 7032 Bowden Rd in Jacksonville, Florida, _____% of the residue of my estate [Or: The sum of \$_____."

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:

“Spiritual life consists not only of our prayer and worship times, but all of our time”.

St John of the Cross
