

# Radiate His Light NEWS

Dear Friends of the Maronite Servants,



Peace and blessings to you all as we begin the transition to a new season, Autumn, and a new spiritual season as well, that of the Holy Cross. The summer seemed to pass too quickly. However, it was filled with many blessings as you will see from the pages of this Fall newsletter.

One of our summer experiences which I would like to share with you is Sister Therese Maria's inaugural experience with gardening. I reasoned with her that by gardening, she was being true to our Maronite heritage in following the example of our patron, Saint Maron, who tilled the ground.

So back in May, I began to teach Sister gardening to help beautify our convent grounds. Since it was a new experience for her, it took several lessons. First, Sister Therese Maria had to clear the ground of grass, weeds, and rocks. This took hours spread over days, along with much physical effort and perseverance on her part. She was amazed how the weeds' deep roots could get entangled and be so stubborn

to remove. Once the ground was cleared and the soil prepared for planting, Sister enjoyed arranging and designing the seedlings of various flowers. After the planting was complete, however, Sister looked at our garden and said to me with a hint of disappointment, "It looks so sparse." I reassured her that, as the summer progressed, she would witness the amazing transformation of these young plants where they would not only grow in height but fill out the garden to overflowing. I encouraged her to be faithful to tending them, watering them and keeping the weeds in check. Still, I could sense that Sister was doubtful that those thin seedlings would eventually explode into colorful bouquets. We named our flower bed, the *Little Flower* after Saint Therese of Lisieux who is recognized as the patron saint of all florists and gardeners because of her love of flowers especially roses. Sister Therese, for her part, gave our little garden daily attention with great results. Its glorious blooms have been a source of great joy to us and our visitors.



I have always liked how the "garden" image provides a wonderful metaphor for how we must nourish the "garden" of our soul—quite an appropriate lesson for Sister Therese as she continues her novitiate into our religious community. Her story of hard work, rooting out weeds, rocks, persevering efforts, daily attention, and trust are all good images of the spiritual journey that can bear great fruit for us too. Saint Maron used that image of the garden to teach how we can grow in virtue. *Saint Maron, pray for us to grow in virtue-- in faith, hope and love.*

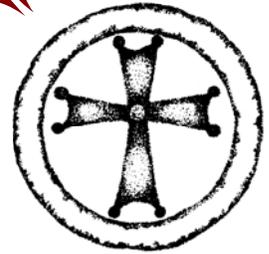
This garden story also reminds me of our convent renovations journey. So many of you have asked how we are doing

in our new convent in Dartmouth, Massachusetts. Unfortunately, our moving-in date has been delayed by the work of the contractors, an experience some of you may know firsthand. I am happy to report that the house has truly transformed over these summer months, but it's not quite there yet. As I write this, we are living in Dighton, MA at the convent of the Dominican Sisters of the Presentation (read more on page 2) while waiting for the day (hopefully soon) that we can move in to our own home.

Please remember us in prayer and in your charitable giving. We keep each of you in our prayers, and especially during the Friday Liturgies which we have been able to have at our convent.

In Mary, Mother of the Light,

*Sister Marla Marie*



*The Maronite Cross of Rabboola*

## Illuminate Your Soul

### Supplication of Saint Ephrem

*A glorious cross appeared to Constantine in battle. He was encouraged and strengthened, and he emerged victorious. The faithful Church has found a refuge in your cross, O Lord. Defend, protect, and save her from Satan.*

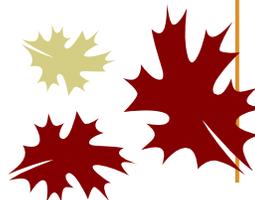
*The faithful Church observes the memorial of your cross, O Lord. Lift her head above empty fears and save her.*

*Blessed is the flock of Christ because of the Lord's gifts to them: the cross of life to guard them and righteous priests to serve them.*

*The living cross is extolled, and the standard of our King is honored. May it be our tower of mercy in this world and in the next.*

*On this day, let heaven and earth rejoice. Let them praise and confess the good One who saved us by his cross.*

*Glory to the Father, who sent his only Son for our salvation; thanksgiving to the Son, who descended and saved us by his cross; and joyful praise to the Holy Spirit. May mercy and compassion come upon us, for ever. Amen.*



## Convent Blessing - Dartmouth

On Saturday August 27<sup>th</sup>, the Maronite Servants happily welcomed His Excellency, Bishop Gregory Mansour to their convent in Dartmouth. In between his pastoral visit to the parish of Our Lady of Purgatory, New Bedford, Sayedna came to bless our Mother of the Light Convent and growing community. We were deeply touched by his spontaneous, simple gestures and blessing, as he dedicated everything in our home, including our mission and the two present members to God, and to the building of His Kingdom of love and peace. After the blessing, we offered Sayedna and Abouna Jack Morrison (pastor of Our Lady of Purgatory) hospitality and refreshments in the main vestibule of the house.

We thank God for Sayedna Gregory, and we as a Maronite Church are truly blessed to have him as our shepherd, loving father and spiritual guide. We appreciate his dedication and ongoing support as we continue to establish our mission as *Maronite Servants of Christ the Light*. Our prayers are with you Sayedna wherever you go!



## Blessed Hospitality - Dominican Sisters, Dighton, MA

We are currently living in a convent in Dighton with the Dominican Sisters of the Presentation as a temporary arrangement while we await the completion of the renovations our convent in Dartmouth. Due to the delays and the extensive renovations, we were not able to move in as was scheduled in June. Moreover, the Dominican Sisters we are staying with have so beautifully and graciously open their doors and hearts to us. They are an international community of religious sisters founded by Blessed Marie Poussepin in France during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Now, they are more than 3000 sisters present in 34 countries including. We thank God for the Sisters' warm hospitality and generosity in housing us and making us feel right at home with their community. We thank them especially for their goodness in reaching out to us in our needs as we transition into our new home. Please keep the intentions of their community in your prayers.



## My Summer Experiences with the Sisters

By Evette Franjeh

As my freshman year at U-Mass Dartmouth came to a close, I found myself helping Sister Marla Marie at the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light's new convent in N. Dartmouth. I am so blessed to have the Sisters about ten minutes away from my University, so that during the year I can always look to them in my time of need or stress and share Divine Liturgy in their new home.

I volunteered to help clean the convent and spend some quality time with Sister Marla Marie and Sister Therese Maria. I write this only a few days after I have visited with the sisters. My first encounter with them in July was a quick visit to the Dartmouth beach for a picnic supper and walk. Sister Marla Marie prepared a quaint picnic for us and Sister Therese Maria shared God's messages to me during our walk on the beach. It was very enlightening to have the endless water, the serenity of the small beach, and the presence of the Sisters with me.

Because I was attending a summer course in Chemistry, I was not able to attend Sunday Liturgy. My mother so happened to mention this to the Sisters at a Sunday Liturgy, at St. Theresa's parish in Brockton. Therefore, on Friday, July 29th, I attended the Divine Liturgy at the new convent. It was the first time that the Divine Liturgy was held in the new chapel. After the refreshments, Sister Therese Maria and I dusted and cleaned the sacristy. Their new home has developed quite nicely since my last visit in May, although, there is a lot of work and time to be had. I know that in time, next year I will seek their guidance and prayer more often and that they will always be there for me.



## NAM Convention - Philadelphia

By Sr. Therese Maria Touma

"One of the highlights for me during the week of the Convention was listening to Joumana Moudawar sing live at the concert on Thursday evening. In the lead-up to NAM, I was thrilled to hear that Joumana had been invited from Lebanon to perform a selection of hymns, both in Arabic and English. It sure was more than just a performance and a show of her talent; it was prayer, joyful praise to our God and a delight to my heart to hear such beauty! Thank God for her awesome gift of music and generosity in the sharing of her talent."

"I also enjoyed the informative and engaging conferences I attended throughout the convention. They included the following: 'Discovering Our Faith of the Mountain' presented by Fr. George El-Khalli and Deacon Lou Peter, 'Theology on Tap' with the Young Adults facilitated by Bishop Gregory Mansour, 'Maronite Liturgical Music' given by Fr. Geoffrey Abdallah, 'Saints of Lebanon & Our Pursuit of Another Canonization: The Massabki Brothers' given by Archbishop Samir Nassar of Damascus & Mr. Louis Ragy."



## Meeting with Bishop Coleman - Fall River

The Maronite Servants met with Most Reverend George W. Coleman, bishop of the Fall River Diocese. The Sisters introduced themselves to His Excellency and shared about their mission and convent in Dartmouth, Massachusetts. This was a courtesy visit to meet the local ordinary of the Latin diocese in which Dartmouth is located. Bishop Coleman gave the Maronite Servants a beautiful blessing on their mission.



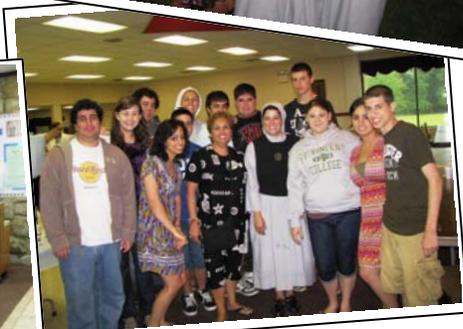
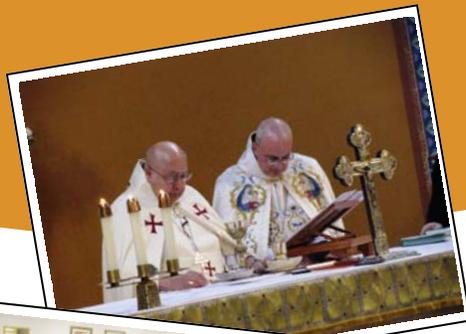
## Continuing Renovations



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# Assumption Pilgrimage 2011, Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon - Ohio



## On the Web

Check our blog up-  
dated every Friday.  
Visit our website for a  
copy of this newsletter.

Also, friend Sr. Marla  
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FACEBOOK and LINKEDIN.

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