

Radiate His Light NEWS



Dear Friends of the Maronite Servants,

Greetings to you all during this season of Great Lent. May these holy days of fasting and prayer lead each of you on a fruitful journey.

As each tiny glimpse of spring appears, it brings further signs of hope that the winter snows are over and warmer weather will soon be here. The snow bank in front of our monastery parking lot at Immaculate Conception in Weymouth is so huge that Joe, the parish maintenance man, predicts it will not be until June that the last of it will melt. Perhaps, by then, we will have moved to our "new" home in Dartmouth. Thankfully, the renovations are moving ahead, one step-at-a-time.

That also seems to be the pace we are taking during this important year for Sister Therese Maria as she undertakes her canonical novitiate formation. Our days are filled with prayer, classes, and duties at home, and our mission visits. Some of the classes that are part of the curriculum for the novitiate include: Scripture, Spirituality, Liturgical Syriac, the Typicon, Theology of Religious Life, and Human Development.

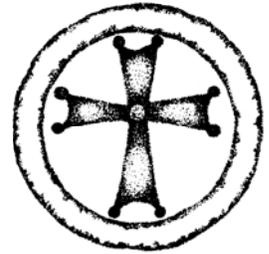
It is a privilege to be able to pass on my knowledge and experience of religious life to a new generation. My great hope is that more young women, like Sister Therese Maria, will say "yes" to Jesus and commit themselves to religious life as a *Maronite Servant of Christ the Light*. Join me in praying for vocations in our community so that we can multiply our prayers and ministry in service to our Maronite parishes all over the United States. I invite you to read the article, on page two, offering the suggestions of our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, on fostering vocations.

We are grateful to the many folks who have responded generously to our "Furnace Replacement" fund. As you know from our February letter, this was an unexpected expense. It is also a large expense that we are still trying to meet.

Since our next newsletter will be in June, Sister Therese Maria and I would like to wish you, in advance, a Blessed Easter. May the light of the Glorious Season of the Resurrection illumine your heart. During these remaining days of Great Lent, be assured that we hold each of you close to us, in our thoughts and prayers.

In Mary, Mother of the Light,

Sister Marla Marie



The Maronite Cross of Rabboola

Illumine Your Soul

LENTEN OBSERVANCE 2011

"All Maronites who are physically capable are to abstain from meat on Ash Monday and all Fridays of Lent. Ash Monday and the Great Friday of the Crucifixion are also days of fasting. All Maronites who are physically capable are to fast on these two days. Clergy, religious and laity who wish to observe the more traditional Maronite practice of fasting and abstinence are encouraged to do so. That practice is summarized in the following, taken from the Synod of Mt. Lebanon (1736): Every weekday of Lent (Monday through Friday) is a day of fasting and abstinence from meat and dairy products (eggs, butter, milk etc.) Fasting involves eating and drinking nothing at all (except water and medicine) from midnight until noon. The rest of the day normal meals can be taken but without meat or dairy products. Dairy products are excluded because they are animal byproducts. Saturdays and Sundays are exempt from fasting & abstaining."



Foster Vocations in the Parish

"Proposing Vocations in the Local Church" is the theme of a letter written by Pope Benedict XVI for the 48th World Day of Prayer for Vocations to be celebrated on May 15, 2011. The Holy Father calls on parishes and the wider community to make it a priority to foster vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

He writes, "It is essential that every local Church become more sensitive and attentive to the pastoral care of vocations, helping children and young people in particular at every level of family, parish and associations – as Jesus did with his disciples."

He also calls on the Christian community to assist men and women who are being called to serve the Church, especially since they face struggles and resistance in our secularized society.

"Particularly in these times, when the voice of the Lord seems to be drowned out by 'other voices' and his invitation to follow him by the gift of one's own life may seem too difficult, every Christian community, every member of the Church, needs consciously to feel responsibility for promoting vocations."

The Holy Father first and foremost urges that parishes and families pray for vocations, "Vocations to the ministerial priesthood and to the consecrated life are first and foremost the fruit of constant contact with the living God and insistent prayer lifted up to the 'Lord of the harvest', whether in parish communities, in Christian families or in groups specifically devoted to prayer for vocations."

In addition, he stresses the need to embrace those who have recognized the "call" with the embrace of the parish family. "It is important to encourage and support those who show clear signs of a call to priestly life and religious consecration, and to enable them to feel the warmth of the whole community as they respond 'yes' to God and the Church."

How You Can Involve Your Parish

Perhaps your parish can highlight this year's World Day of Prayer for Vocations by offering at least one opportunity to respond to the Holy Father's teaching. Here in the US, our young Maronites have the opportunity to offer their lives in service to the Church as a priest or consecrated religious nun or monk. Prayers for vocations are available on our US Maronite Vocations site, vineyardofthelord.com. Also, available on this website are video and print resources promoting vocations.



With our seminarians and Father Ignace Sadek at OLOL Seminary, Washington, DC.



Hosanna Sunday 2010 at St. Anthony Church, Lawrence, MA.

Maronite Liturgical Spirituality: Hosanna Sunday

"This Sunday takes its name from the joyful shouts of the children of Israel as Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem in triumph, crying out: "Hosanna", which means, "Save us now, we pray!" They also shouted out: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Jesus was thus greeted as the Savior of Israel, the Messiah and Lord.

The procession with the palms and olive branches that takes place on this day, originated in Jerusalem as a commemoration of Christ's triumphant entrance into the Holy City. By the fourth century the Church in Jerusalem gathered each year to recall the Lord's entrance into Jerusalem. The faithful gathered on the Mount of Olives with their bishop. There they sang psalms and hymns and listened to readings from the Old Testament and to the Gospel account of the Lord's entry into the city. Late in the afternoon they went in procession from the Mount of Olives to the city of Jerusalem.

The parents carried their children on their shoulders and all waved branches of palm and olive trees as they cried out: "Hosanna!" and "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" Upon entering the city they went to the Church of the Resurrection, which was built over the tomb of the Lord, where they ultimately celebrated the Eucharist.

As we prepare for the great week of the Lord's Passion and Death, we begin by recalling that Jesus was first rightly greeted by the crowds as their Messiah. These same crowds that today cried "Hosanna," would later shout, "Crucify him." However, the Lord's disciples, who today rejoiced over the reception that he received from the crowds, would desert him and hide in fear. And yet Jesus remained Messiah even on the cross for his true glory came not at the hands of the people, but from his Father. As we follow the Lord on the way to the cross, may we remain ever faithful to Him who is our Savior and Lord." (From *Prayer of the Faithful According to the Maronite Liturgical Year*)

NY Teens on Mission Visit Our Monastery

By Sister Therese Maria Touma

On Sunday February 20th, we had an enthusiastic group of youth from Immaculate Conception Parish in Fayetteville, NY visit our monastery. Kelly Colangelo, their youth minister and a friend of Mother Marla Marie, arranged for a "Boston Plunge" designed to engage the youth in various mission work for five days. Some of their events included helping the Little Brothers of St. Francis with street ministry, and visiting with the elderly at the Little Sisters of the Poor nursing home.

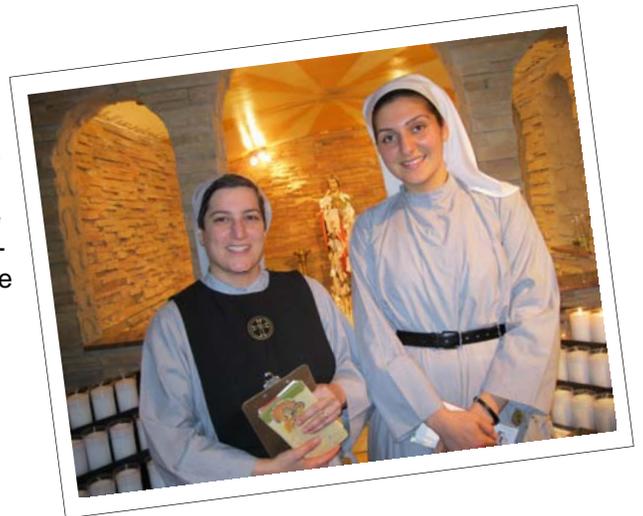
It was certainly a gift for me to join them on one of their mission days with the Little Sisters of the Poor. I enjoyed being with the teens as they took great initiative in entertaining the residents by their joyful singing and dancing, and in helping the residents make different crafts. They sure brightened their day with their energetic presence and smiles!

Overall, I could see how this mission trip gave the teens the unique opportunity to reach out to others with compassion, and to see Jesus in the person they speak to and serve. One of the teens happily shared with me that this trip has been "enlightening." Their perspective on the Church was broadened for the better, as they met with and spoke to various religious brothers and sisters throughout the Plunge.



Monastery Retreats

Take a break from the hectic rush of daily routine, and come apart for a time to renew your spirit in the presence of the Lord. We have opened our monastery for women to come for day or overnight periods of retreat. Retreat visitors will participate in our Maronite schedule of daily prayer, in our meals, and our spirit of prayerful silence. Also, arrangements can be made for a guided time of retreat offered by one of the Sisters, including talks, reflections, sharing on topics of spirituality. Women are invited to contact Sister Marla Marie via email or phone to make arrangements.



Vocation Prayers for Parish Bulletin

The *Maronite Servants of Christ the Light* have written prayers of petitions for vocations according to each Sunday of the Maronite Liturgical year. These brief prayers are designed to be included in the weekly church bulletin as a reminder to the faithful to pray for vocations. The prayers are available on the vocations website: VineyardoftheLord.com at the "Get Involved" link, under the category of "vocations." Please encourage your bulletin editor to make use of these weekly prayers by including a vocations corner in each bulletin.

Web Photo Gallery Updated

Please visit our website Photo Gallery to view new albums containing over 100 photos of the Maronite Servants mission.



On the Web

Check our blog up-dated every Friday. Visit our website for a copy of this newsletter. Also, friend Sr. Marla Marie Lucas on FACEBOOK and LINKEDIN.

Contact Information

EMAIL

sister@maroniteservants.org

WEBSITE

maroniteservants.org

BLOG

RadiateHisLight.blogspot.com

VOCATIONS

Vineyardofthelord.com

PHONE

(781) 331-3290

MAILING ADDRESS

Maronite Servants
109 Remsen St
Brooklyn, NY 11201

*This Newsletter is printed courtesy of
Kamal Jowdy, owner of Delft Printing, Inc.*

Maronite Servants
Eparchy of St. Maron
1199 Commercial St
Weymouth, MA 02189

Radiate His Light NEWS