

# Radiate His Light NEWS



*The Maronite Cross of Rabboola*

## Dear Friends & Family,

*Our recent visit to Sydney Australia and our efforts there are the highlight of this issue. We pray that our service there was a fruitful mission during this Year of Consecrated Life to "wake up the world!" in response to the inspiring call of Pope Francis.*



*We had the blessing to meet with His Excellency, Bishop Antoine Tarabay of the Maronite Eparchy of Australia (see photo). Our two weeks were filled with visits to many of the Maronite parishes, schools, youth groups in Sydney, and the only Maronite parish in Perth. We also visited with our friends the Nashville Dominicans, the Melkite Bishop of Australia, Sayedna Rabbat, and the faithful at Saint Dominic's parish. Thank you to all our family and friends who came to see us and to support our Maronite Servant of Christ the Light mission. Our blog gives more photos and details than we can include here.*

*In this Year of Consecrated life, Pope Francis is calling us as religious to "be witnesses of a different way of doing things, of acting, of living." Our Maronite Servant vocation has spoken to the heart of Petra Nahkoul, who joins us June 1. We are pleased to have several young women in discernment with us and invite others to consider our life as consecrated religious.*

*Please continue to pray and assist our persecuted brothers and sisters who suffer daily for our Christian faith, and pray for the conversion of those inflicting this violence.*

*In advance, we would like to wish you a blessed feast of the Glorious Resurrection. He is Risen, Alleluia! El Massih kam! Our prayers are with you.*

*In Mary, Mother of the Light-*

*Sister Marla Marie*

## Illumine Your Soul

### Prayer for the Year of Consecrated Life

*O God, throughout the ages you have called women and men to pursue lives of perfect charity through the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience.*

*During this Year of Consecrated Life, we give you thanks for these courageous witnesses of Faith and models of inspiration. Their pursuit of holy lives teaches us to make a more perfect offering of ourselves to you. Continue to enrich your Church by calling forth sons and daughters who, having found the pearl of great price, treasure the Kingdom of heaven above all things.*

*Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.*

## March for Life 2015

Our Maronite faithful with Bishop Gregory joined with hundreds of thousands of pro-lifers for the annual March for Life in Washington January 22, 2015. In the 42 years of legalized abortion since the Roe v. Wade decision, almost 58 million children have been killed in abortions. Stand up for the dignity of human life and join in our Maronite efforts, contact: Marise Frangie, Office of Family and Sanctity of Life, Eparchy of Saint Maron, 914-393-8907, sanctityoflife@live.com





## Highlights of Mission - Sydney Australia

We were live on the air on the Voice of Charity radio station, on a program known as "The Good Fight". During the program we were able to share about the establishment and foundation of our community, our personal conversion and vocation stories, the Maronite Church in the US and its diversity, and details about our Maronite Catholic Tradition and how we practice it as consecrated religious.

Sr. Therese Maria led a discussion night at St. Charbel's Church with the "Handmaids" young women's group on the topic of combating temptation. The discussion night generated good sharing, as the women were curious to know how we as religious practice ascetism and penance during Great Lent.

We addressed the youth at Our Lady of Lebanon Co-Cathedral about the various vocations that God may be calling us to and the various tools we should utilize for discerning specifically a religious vocation.

At St. Charbel's High School, we spoke to the seniors about our mission and particularly the gift of consecrated life to the Church. The students were interested in learning about our everyday life in the convent.

## The Support of Family and Friends—Sydney, Australia

By Natalie Salameh

During our mission time in Sydney Australia, the outpouring of love and support we received from our families, friends and parishioners overwhelmed us.

Sr. Therese Maria Touma, Natalie Salameh and Petra Nakhoul (who will join the Maronite Servants in June) are Australian. All three families of these young women graciously and generously hosted four "friendraisers" for the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light. These "friend-raisers" were an opportunity for us to share our vocation stories and witness to the joy of consecrated life (fitting for this Year of Consecrated Life). The friend-raisers were a great way to raise awareness of our mission as Maronite Servants of Christ the Light and thereby generate a wider group of supporters.

If you would like to host a similar event in support of the Maronite Servants, please contact them via phone or email.



## Year of Consecrated Life—“Wake Up the World!”

By Sister Therese Maria



Pope Francis declared that a Year of Consecrated Life be celebrated throughout the world which began on November 30 and concludes on February 2, 2016. In his message, the Pope underlined the key goals to “look to the past with gratitude, to live the present with passion and to embrace the future with hope.” The Pope also expressed his expectations for the yearlong observance: “that consecrated men and women would be witnesses of communion, of joy and the Gospel, and go evermore to the peripheries to proclaim the Good News.”

This Year for Consecrated Life concerns not only consecrated persons, but also the entire Church. Pope Francis asks that the whole Christian people “be increasingly aware of the gift which is the presence of our many consecrated men and women, heirs of the great saints who have written the history of Christianity.”

The Pope is counting on religious “to wake up the world” by their radical witness of Gospel living and Christ’s merciful compassion. In answer to this call to wake up the world and raise awareness about the gift and beauty of religious life, the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light are developing a vocation curriculum for parish religious education programs and are available to give presentations and witness talks. Please invite us to your parish to share on religious life. We also plan to have an Open House & Day of Prayer on September 13 (details to follow). Join us in praying for vocations.

## Vocation Reflection—My Journey to the Maronite Servants

By Petra Nakhoul

“All I have ever sought is the truth,” are the words of Saint Therese and the words of my own heart. This truth I have found in the gift of my faith. It hasn’t been easy but it has been my greatest joy. I knew that my life was to be only His. One question remained, “Lord, where do you wish for me to serve?” I prayed to be guided to the place Jesus and his Mother wished for me to be.

A while back, a friend asked if I knew the Maronite Servants in America. She encouraged me to enquire about their way of life. I was hesitant though remained open to the suggestion. Some time later I decided to read up about the Maronite Servants of Christ The Light. I emailed Mother Marla. I must say it was possibly the quickest response I have ever received. We followed with a Skype session and an application to *Come and See*.

As I continued praying and asking the Holy Family to lead me, I sent an email to Sayedna Antoine Charbel Tarabay of the Eparchy of Australia and New Zealand who responded with his blessing and reminded me to repeat the words of Samuel, ‘Speak Lord, your servant is listening.’ In the following weeks I was to quiet myself down in order to hear the voice of my Lord speaking. I was invited to visit the Mother of Light convent in the U.S. I had the opportunity to spend 10 weeks over two visits in the winter and the summer of 2014. I saw the hand of the Lord in everything and also the blessing of the heart of the Mother that loves ever so mercifully.

The charism and apostolic works of the Maronite Servants attracted me. I hope to live the joy of the Gospel fully with the Maronite Servants, radiating the Light of Christ. My hope as I approach the 1<sup>st</sup> of June is that I may be worthy to receive my Lord and give myself totally to him and to his unfathomable love and mercy.



## Our Maronite Servants' Mission

The Maronite Servants of Christ the Light are a congregation of consecrated religious serving the Church in the parish as spiritual mothers in imitation of Mary, radiating the Light of Christ in their mission to children, youth, young adults, families, the sick, the dying, the grieving... They serve alongside the priests in pastoral ministry reaching out with a maternal touch to many needs of the parish family.



*We are at the shrine of Australia's first saint, Mary McKillop.*

*"Religious life ought to promote growth in the church by way of attraction. The church must be attractive. Wake up the world! Be witnesses of a different way of doing things, of acting, of living! ... It is this witness that I expect of you. Religious should be men and women who are able to wake the world up." —Pope Francis*

### ON THE WEB

Check our blog updated every Friday. Visit our website for a copy of this newsletter. Also, find Maronite Servants on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.



**Follow us on Twitter and Facebook** (MaroniteServant)

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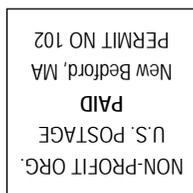
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