



The Maronite Cross of Rabboola

Dear Friends & Family,

We share our joyful news of the profession of first vows of Sister Therese Maria Touma on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 2012. It was a beautiful Divine Liturgy celebrated by His Excellency, Bishop



Gregory Mansour, several clergy and guests. We are grateful to Chorbishop Joseph Kaddo for hosting us at Saint Anthony of the Desert parish in Fall River, Massachusetts.

Thank you, Sister Therese Maria, for saying "yes" to God as a Maronite Servant. May your consecrated life radiate God's love and hope through your faithful living of obedience, chastity and poverty. The day was God's continued blessing on this new beginning in our Maronite Church. May the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light have many more celebrations like this. Please see our blog for details and photos (not available in time for the newsletter deadline).

Our Church is now celebrating the Year of Faith called for by Pope Benedict XVI who in his apostolic letter (Porta Fidei) has asked us to keep our gaze fixed on Jesus, "...in him, all the anguish and all the longing of the human heart finds fulfillment." The witness of faith by Sister vowing her life to God in service to others is a luminous light that sheds rays of hope, mercy and love into our world. Her consecration is this gaze that is fixed on the Lord who is, as the Pope continues, "the joy of love, the answer to the drama of suffering and pain, the power of forgiveness in the face of an offense received and the victory of life over the emptiness of death: all this finds fulfillment in the mystery of his Incarnation."

During this season of the Glorious Birth, the Church meditates especially on the Incarnation. It is our prayer that you will be blessed with a renewal of faith in Christ who is our Lord and Savior. "The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son." (John 1:14)

Merry Christmas. Thank you for supporting our mission.

In Mary, Mother of the Light,

Sister Marla Marie

Illumine Your Soul

Here are a few simple things we can do during this Year of Faith:

- **Pray the Rosary.** The Holy Father asked us to pray each day the Nicene Creed. Why stop there? We can do the entire Rosary; it will take us twelve minutes, and we will be all the better for it.
- **Do something good for your marriage.** If you are not married, do something good for someone else's marriage. Live true to your state in life and find God's presence there.
- **Read Saint Ephrem:** Get to know better your Maronite liturgy, history and tradition and the valuable contribution our Church continues to make in the Middle East and throughout the world.
- **Go to Confession.** Attend daily Liturgy once a week. Forgive someone who hurt you. Reach out to someone who is estranged from you. Volunteer for something at Church.
- **Read the Catechism of the Catholic Church** or YouCat or the Compodium. Know better your faith. Read our eparchial website (www.stmaron.org). Talk to those around you about the importance and meaning of faith.

-Taken from a letter of His Excellency, Bishop Gregory J. Mansour



His Excellency, Bishop Gregory Mansour, His Excellency Bishop Nicholas Samra of the Eparchy of Newton, Sisters and Melkite young adults.

Encounter 2012 – New Jersey

We attended the Eastern Catholic Churches Encounter 2012 last weekend October 11-14 at St. Mary's Byzantine Catholic Church in Hillsborough, New Jersey. The theme of the conference was *"Together In Christ"*. Clergy and the laity from the Armenian, Chaldean, Malankar, Malabar, Maronite, Melkite, Romanian, Russian, Ruthenian, Syriac and Ukrainian Churches were invited to attend and approximately 80 priest and 200 lay people were present.

Dynamic speakers included Bishop Nicholas Samra (Melkite Bishop of the U.S.), Fr. Damien Geiger (Melkite pastor, Florida), Bishop Peter Anthony Libasci (Bishop of Manchester, New Hampshire), Maureen Daddona, PH.D and Sr. Marla Marie, who spoke on the *Blue print for Church Growth*. Sister Marla Marie emphasized the importance of deepening our prayer life and personal desire for holiness, in order to become effective witnesses of Jesus Christ especially in this Year of Faith.

His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour also attended the conference and beautifully led Safro (morning prayer) for the clergy and lay faithful. We also befriended a group of vibrant and active Melkite young adults pictured here. It was a successful event and a great opportunity for us to deepen our ties with one another, witness to the beauty of our faith traditions and come together as one body in Christ

MYA – Washington DC

We attended the MYA Workshop Nov. 2-4th held in Washington DC where 170 young adults from across the U.S. were present. The main presenter speaking on Maronite history and spirituality, in particular the Maronite Liturgy was Chorbishop Seely Beggiani, Rector of the Maronite Seminary. At the workshop we assisted by leading Maronite morning and evening prayer. Sr. Therese Maria also shared her journey of faith to the group.

The MYA also had the opportunity in their program to go to confession, receive the mysteries of the Eucharist celebrated by His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour and other priests from our eparchies. The highlight of the program was the visit to the Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in the National Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Washington D.C. On Sunday the MYA group attended Divine Liturgy at Our Lady of Lebanon Church, followed by a brunch.



Youth Ministry Training

Sister Therese Maria attended a three day Life Teen Leadership Conference in Dedham, M.A. This was a great opportunity to learn how to effectively engage teens in their faith and bring them closer to Jesus through; relational ministry, authenticity, joy, love, modeling prayer, breaking open the Word of God, skits, fun activities, dynamic small groups, praise and worship. It was an awesome and uplifting experience.



Sodality Retreat - Dartmouth

On Saturday October 27th we hosted a retreat day for St. George's Rosary Sodality, Providence, R.I.. In the morning, Fr. Ed Nedder, pastor of St. George, offered Divine Liturgy in our chapel assisted by Deacon Enzo Digiacomio. The day's program include two presentations on prayer and scripture, lunch, group sharing, quiet time for reflection, and adoration. The women found the day to be spiritually refreshing, peaceful and relaxing. We were assisted by two young adults, Sandra Mattar from Our Lady of the Cedars Church, and Emiy Lattouf from St. Theresa's Church. They did a great job in helping us to facilitate the day.

Syriac Library - Rutgers

We attended the dedication of the Rutgers University "Beth Mardutho Research Library: The Syriac Institute on October 15, 2012. During this event, Doctor Sebastian Brock, the world-known Syriac scholar, gave a presentation.



MYO – New Bedford

On Friday September 21st at 7:00PM Our Lady of Purgatory, New Bedford had its first MYO meeting in eight years. MYO is back. We had eight eager teens attend and more to come! It was a fun and eventful evening as we introduced the teens to what MYO is and gave them an opportunity to express what they would like to see in their meetings.

We had different faith activities, ice-breakers, and minute-to-win-it games to kick off our first meeting. Abouna Jack Morrison, pastor, led the group in prayer, and spoke to them about the nature of prayer as talking to God, loving him, thanking him, asking for his help, and forgiveness.

Catechesis - New Bedford

At the request of Fr. Jack Morison, pastor at Our Lady of Purgatory, we began a Maronite Faith Formation program on Saturday September 15 for children in grades Kindergarten to sixth. These monthly classes will include Scripture, teachings on Maronite traditions, spirituality, doctrine and prayer, crafts, videos, music and interactive technology to help our children to grow in their Maronite faith and love for Jesus.



Parish Visit - Utica NY

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.



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