

# Radiate His Light NEWS



**Dear Friends,**

*Glorious Nativity! Milaad Majeed! Joyeux Noel!*

*In this season of the Glorious Birth, we celebrate the Light of Lights who came from heaven as the light of the world. May the Son of God illumine your heart with his radiant light bringing you hope, joy and peace. Let us share this light of Christ by giving of ourselves in deeds of love.*



*This newsletter is filled with the mission efforts and journeys we have made since September. Please take a few minutes to look over our photos and stories (more on our web pages). You will glimpse our Maronite Servants of Christ the Light charism—spiritual mothers serving alongside our priests to radiate the light of Christ by nurturing faith in the hearts of our Maronites. We are grateful to God for the opportunity to serve our church in mission and especially in our daily life of prayer and sacrifice.*

*Our good news is the entrance of a new member to our congregation, Natalie Salameh of Sydney, who will join us in the convent early this coming year. Congratulations Natalie! Please keep her and the women discerning with us in prayer.*

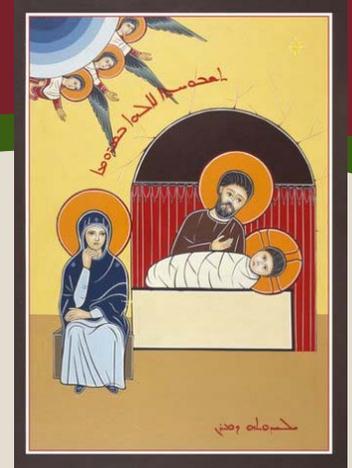
*We ask you to remember us in your Christmas giving. Thank you to our friends who have generously supported us throughout this year. Please know that we hold you close in prayer.*

*Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!*

*Sister Marla Marie*

## Pilgrimage—Rome

We attended the Papal Audience in the plaza of Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome and were fortunate to see Pope Francis close up as he stopped right in front of us in his pope-mobile (photo taken by Mother Marla Marie, can you find Sr. Therese Maria in it?). We also toured the Vatican, the Sistine Chapel, and the Scavi where we prayed for your intentions at the tomb of Saint Peter.



## Illumine Your Soul

“Praise and thanksgiving to you, eternal Child. You are the hidden light without beginning which illumines the world, the ancient of days who is born the infant son of the daughter of David. You are the Lord who is pleased with a manger in a cave, the Most High who was wrapped in swaddling clothes, the awesome One who was recounted in the songs of the daughters of David. We now contemplate in wonder the mystery of our salvation and exclaim: How marvelous are you, O God, who became man without changing anything in your divine nature; How marvelous are you, O God, who descended into a cave while heaven and earth are filled with your glory; How marvelous are you, O God, who gathered together angels, shepherds and magi that they might adore you. By your birth you reconciled heaven and earth and destroyed the will that separated those below from those above. By your birth we have received hope; by your birth you have saved us from bondage of evil and the chains of sin; by your birth light shone on the earth and darkness was dispelled; by your birth those who were far off came and joined in the feast with those who were near.”

*(Taken from the Sedro in the Ramsho prayers for the Feast of the Glorious Birth of Our Lord)*



## Lebanon

**Ordinations**—We had the joy of attending three ordinations during our visit to Lebanon. The first ordination was at Our Lady of Lebanon in Harrisa on Saturday September 28 for Father Elias Abdallah Zaidan who was ordained to the Episcopacy as the Bishop for the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon. On the same day in the evening we attended the ordination of Father Elias Khalil in his hometown of Horjael.

The following day we participated in the ordination of Father Antoine Kairouz in his hometown of Adonnis. May God bless their priestly ministries of love and service to our Maronite Church.



**Media Programs**—As part of our mission outreach and exposure in Lebanon we visited Telelumiere and filmed about twenty five-minute programs on vocations, prayer, faith, scripture, the rosary, and our Maronite Servants' mission and charism.

We were also interviewed by Christine Zataar for four episodes on various topics such as nurturing the faith in the family, a day in the life of a Maronite Servant, discerning a vocation and how to hear the call of God. In the interviews, we were asked to also share our individual vocation stories and give to witness to God's love and mercy and on how we came to be Maronite Servants of Christ the Light.



**The Saints**—We took a full day to visit and pray at the holy shrines of our beloved Maronite Saints. The highlights were to St. Charbel's hermitage in Annaya, Our Lady of Illge in Mayfouk, St. Nemetallah's tomb and Blessed Estephan Nehme's incorrupt body in the monastery of Kfifan, and St. Rafka's shrine. We also took the time to visit the home of Blessed Estephen Nehme in Lihfid. We prayed for the intentions that were entrusted to us.

During our two week stay in Lebanon we were blessed to visit *Wadi Qannoubine* or otherwise known as *Valley of the Saints*. In particular, we went to pray at the shrines of Mar Elisha, Mar Antonious, Sadet Qannoubine, Mar Marina and the Patriarchs' former residence. We thoroughly enjoyed walking in the valley surrounding these significant shrines in our Maronite history and spirituality. Our website photo gallery highlights some of the shrines we visited.

## MYA—Atlanta

We participated in the National Workshop for Maronite Young Adults November 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> where 170 attended from across the country in Atlanta, G.A. During the weekend, we facilitated a pro-life discussion group and assisted with the Adoration and Reconciliation service. The workshop concluded with Divine Liturgy at St. Joseph's, the host parish, followed by a farewell brunch. We also visited the Religious Education classes at St. Joseph's.



## MYO Groups Visits the Sisters By Natalie Saleme

The Maronite Servants of Christ the Light began the Season of the Glorious Birth of Our Lord by hosting a Maronite Youth Organization (MYO) gathering at the Mother of Light Convent in Dartmouth on Sunday November 17. The Sisters welcomed the teens of the MYO groups from the parishes of Boston, Brockton and New Bedford including a number of parents and coordinators (whose assistance throughout the afternoon helped make the event a success).

Sister Therese Maria led fun games engaging the teens to think about the beauty of giving, particularly in this liturgical season. Mother Marla



Marie helped the teens focus on how they can best prepare for the Glorious Birth. Oftentimes, the Christmas season is encumbered by materialism and commercialism that people lose sight of

the fact that they should be getting ready to welcome the Savior and Light of the world into their hearts and lives.

The afternoon continued with a beautiful meditation of the Gospel scene of the Annunciation. The teens were encouraged to reflect on how they could best echo Mary's "yes" in their everyday lives and follow the promptings of God with trust and confidence. Everyone participated in Eucharistic Adoration, it is only in allowing Jesus to fill us, that we are then able to give him to others. What greater gift can we give to others than the Son of God present within us?

## Catechist Training—Worcester

On Saturday September 7 we were invited by Father Gaby Hoyekas to offer catechist workshops at Our Lady of Mercy Maronite Church in Worcester. The catechists found the sessions to be useful, refreshing



and encouraging in their mission and service to the Church in guiding the children closer to our Lord Jesus by their Christ-like witness and love for our Maronite heritage. If you would like the Maronite Servants to visit your parish and present a catechist workshop please call (508) 996-1753 or email [sister@maroniteservants.org](mailto:sister@maroniteservants.org).



## Outreach at St. John Maron—Orange, CA

The Maronite Servants of Christ the Light were invited by Father Tony Bakh, pastor of St. John Maron parish in Orange, CA to give a family and MYO retreat from Friday evening October 18 until the following evening Saturday, October 19.

Mother Marla Marie on the Friday evening gave an interactive and visual presentation to the adults and youth on Mary, Fatima and the Rosary. The following day she continued with the adults on the theme of "Coming Home to God the Father" using the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Sister Therese Maria facilitated the MYO program for the weekend and began Friday evening with fun icebreakers and a pro-life movie *October Baby*. After the movie the teens had a fruitful discussion on key themes such as the sanctity and dignity of every human life beginning in the womb, the gift of good friendships vs. bad friendships, jealousy, living purity and deepening one's prayer life with Mary as our model.

Saturday evening concluded with Divine Liturgy, adoration and confession.

Also during the week the Sisters visited the homebound and had an event with the MYA.





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**Petersham—MA**

On Sunday October 27 we attended the ordination of Fr. Patrick Kokorian, a monk in the Maronite Monks of Adoration, Petersham, M.A. His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour officiated.



**What Do You Want Me to Do, Lord?**

Words of encouragement from Pope Francis: *"God calls you to make definitive choices, and he has a plan for each of you: to discover that plan and to respond to your vocation is to move toward personal fulfillment. God calls each of us to be holy, to live his life, but he has a particular path for each one of us. Some are called to holiness through family life in the sacrament of Marriage. Today, there are those who say that marriage is out of fashion. Is it out of fashion? In a culture of relativism and the ephemeral, many preach the importance of 'enjoying' the moment. They say that it is not worth making a life-long commitment, making a definitive decision, 'for ever', because we do not know what tomorrow will bring. I ask you, instead, to be revolutionaries, I ask you to swim against the tide; yes, I am asking you to rebel against this culture that sees everything as temporary and that ultimately believes you are incapable of responsibility, that believes you are incapable of true love. I have confidence in you and I pray for you. Have the courage 'to swim against the tide.' And also have the courage to be happy."*

**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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