

# Radiate His Light NEWS



The Maronite Cross of Rabboola

## Illuminate Your Soul

The Christmas Novena, beginning on December 15 is nine consecutive days of prayer and is a wonderful way of preparing ourselves for the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and getting into the true spirit of Christmas. The incensing of the Blessed Sacrament, the prayers, the Syriac hymns and the processions all help us to worship and glorify the Word of God who is coming to save us and live among us – Emmanuel. After the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the congregation kneels in worship and the chants “Shoubho-l-how qolo” or “Glory to the Word that became flesh.” Traditionally this “Ziah” is chanted in Syriac.

The nine prayers (one for each day representing the nine months that Mary was pregnant with Jesus) are rich in their imagery and poetry. They give us the opportunity to adore and love our Lord at His nativity. They help us to reflect on his humility, love and divinity and at the same time our weaknesses and failures. They help us to live our never ending love story with our Mother Mary with words such as “O Wine of the Virgins and Lily of Purity” asking for her intercession and the intercession of her beloved spouse Joseph. We then pray an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be before concluding with a beautiful prayer “We have offered you, O Wonderful Child and Unique Son, the perfume of our incense, the desire of our hearts, the surrender of our souls, the inclination of our bodies and the supplications of our lips...” Then as the priest begins to incense the Blessed Sacrament again, we sing the hymn “Arsal Allah” or “God sent his only Son, light for all the nations” which summarizes the prophesy of Isaiah about the incarnation of the Word of God. Benediction follows blessing the congregation to “Quodous, Quodous” or “Holy, Holy.”

## Dear Friends,

Blessings in this Season of the Glorious Birth! Please know of our prayers as we journey these in these coming weeks to Christmas.

The Sisters and I invite you to send in your special prayer intentions for us to include in our Christmas Novena (see enclosed envelope or send them via email). We also value your prayers, and ask you to join us in these intentions:

+Peace in the world, especially for our persecuted family in the Middle East

+Vocations to the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light



Our Holy Father, Pope Francis has begun the Year of Consecrated Life, which will continue through February 2, 2016. One of his objectives is that this year will offer the Church a time of “embracing the future with hope...motivated by the certainty that the consecrated life will never disappear from the Church because ‘it was desired by Jesus himself as an irremovable part of his Church.’” We will join in this year with the desire to deepen our consecrated life in service to the Church. One of our initiatives during this year is to produce a curriculum for our Maronite parish faith formation classes and MYO groups to catechize our youth on vocations.

As you will see from these few pages of the winter news, there are many stories to share about our mission. If you would like to read about our other events not included here, please visit our blog, which is posted weekly. Also, take another look at our website which has been given a makeover and tell us what you think.

God bless you and your loved ones.

*Sister Marla Marie*

## Praying With Our Patriarch for Persecuted Christians

The Maronite Servants of Christ the Light attended Divine Liturgy for the Christians of the Middle East on Thursday, September 11, 2014, at Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Washington DC. His Eminence and Beatitude, Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai, our Maronite Patriarch was the main celebrant and concelebrated with Cardinal Donald Wuerl, Archbishop of Washington, and his predecessor, Cardinal Emeritus Theodore McCarrick, and Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, Papal Nuncio to the United States, as well as other Catholic leaders and faithful.

Cardinal Rai was in Washington DC for the Conference on “Defending the Middle East Christians”, which was sponsored by an American NGO from September 9 to September 11.

Cardinal Rai spoke of the situation of the Christians in the Middle East, and that out of their great sufferings, united with Christ on His Cross, there will come a Resurrection Sunday. Please continue to pray and sacrifice for our brothers and sisters suffering persecution.





## Maronite Young Adult Workshop—Houston, Texas

We were in Houston, Texas for the Sixth Annual Maronite Young Adult (MYA) Workshop on Friday, October 31st to Monday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014. The workshop theme was GPS – God, People, Self: Searching for the Light, with approximately 180 young adults in attendance from throughout the U.S.

One of the main speakers was Paul Thomas, who gave a personal testimony of his conversion story, after a long period of drug abuse. His story was inspirational as he described how Jesus’ divine grace and light pursued him in his darkest times and led him back to the arms of the Maronite Catholic Church. Sr. Therese Maria assisted the MYA group during Morning Prayer with a moving reflection on Christ as the Light. Natalie Salameh also shared her witness and journey of faith.

God bless the efforts of the MYA Houston group, Fr. Tony Massaad, chaplain of the MYO group and Fr. Milad Yaghi, Pastor of Our Lady of the Cedars in Houston and Fr. Pierre El Khoury, Associate Pastor, for bringing this year’s Workshop to fruition.

## Our Lady’s Maronite Church—Austin, Texas

We visited the parish of Our Lady’s Maronite Church in Austin, Texas on Thursday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Monsignor Don Sawyer, pastor and several ladies of the parish, welcomed us cordially. On our arrival, Abouna Don gave us a beautiful tour and history of Our Lady’s, which is detailed, with several authentic furnishings of the Maronite worship tradition.

During Divine Liturgy, Mother Marla Marie addressed the parishioners and told them about the history and mission of the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light. Many thanks to Abouna Don and the parishioners for making us feel so welcome!



## Day of Reflection

The Sodality of the Blessed Mother of St. George Maronite Church attended a Day of Reflection at the Mother of Light Convent on Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup> hosted by the Maronite Servants. The theme focused Our Lady’s place, role and influence in our Maronite tradition, with emphasis on the rosary.



Mother Marla Marie explained to the ladies that our Maronite tradition has always reserved a special place of honor for the Blessed Virgin. The Maronite heart is, after all, a Marian heart.

With a focus on the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, Mother Marla Marie gave the ladies plenty of food for reflection as she took each Mystery and explained its central spiritual themes. This proved to be a beautiful segway into the morning’s Adoration Hour. Sr. Therese Maria led the ladies in a lectio divina (divine reading) of the scripture passage of the Visitation.



## 350th Anniversary of Dartmouth— Giving Thanks

for the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Town of Dartmouth at St. Julie Billiart Roman Catholic Church. This was an ecumenical and inter-

faith prayer service, which boasted of the various faith communities of Dartmouth coming together to give thanks to God for their 350 years as a town and community.

Mother Marla Marie spoke to the community about the history of the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light in Dartmouth, and the Mother of Light Convent. Natalie offered a prayer of gratitude as a Maronite Catholic. At the conclusion of the prayer service, we were able to meet and greet the people during the refreshment hour in the hall of the Church. It was here that we were able to witness to the people to our Maronite Catholic tradition and spread the word about our mission.

## Veneration of the Relic of St. Anthony of Padua— Springfield, MA

On Saturday, September 6, 2014, the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light witnessed the arrival and veneration of a relic of St. Anthony of Padua at our Maronite Parish of St. Anthony in Springfield, Massachusetts. The relic of the great saint had come all the way from its native shrine in Padua, Italy from the Basilica di Sant'Antonio, and was welcomed in the parish by a great number of pilgrims.



## Serving Our Lady of Purgatory and St. Anthony of the Desert Parishes

the teens and children of Our Lady of Purgatory Parish, New Bedford and for the children of St. Anthony of the Desert Parish, Fall River in October. The theme of the weekend's catechesis was the centrality of Our Blessed Mother in our Maronite Tradition and a catechesis on the rosary. The teens and children were shown by the sisters how to pray the Rosary, and were then able to make their own rosaries, which they were encouraged to pray daily with their families.



The Maronite Servants of Christ the Light hosted the MYO and MFF meetings for



## Monthly Prayer and Supper—Dartmouth

Our monthly Ramsho Prayer and Supper evenings at the Mother of Light Convent have included several parishioners from our area Maronite and Latin parishes, and the Daughters of Mary of Nazareth, the Dominican Sisters of the Presentation, the Holy Cross Fathers. The November event hosted several of our MYA friends. If you are interested in attending our next event, please contact us by phone or email.



## Our 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.*

## First Profession of Vows—Boston

By Sister Therese Maria Touma

The Maronite Servants attended the first profession of two Pauline Sisters, Sr. Theresa and Sr. Cheryl at their provincial house in Boston on Saturday August 30<sup>th</sup>. In participating in the beautiful profession liturgy and witnessing the sisters take their vows, I was taken back to the joyful time in which I took my vows in December of 2012. It is by God's grace that we freely respond to his divine invitation of love, and moreover, deepen our baptismal promises through the total offering of our lives in the love and worship of God.



When the sisters professed their vows before the altar to their superior I recalled the profession I made nearly two years ago. The vows of obedience, chastity and poverty which we take essentially capture our being totally given over to the praise and glory of our loving Father. A beautiful witness so needed in our world today. Jesus is the true joy and light of our lives. Have you considered giving your life in service to God and his people?

### 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.

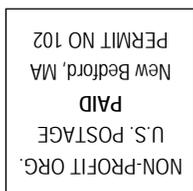


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