

Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church

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Phone (202) 291- 5153

Msgr. George M. Sebaali, Pastor

Pastor's Email: Gmsebaali@aol.com

Pastor's cell number: (804) 240-9820

Sunday after Christmas, December 29, 2019

Sunday, December 29, 2019 at 11:00 o'clock

The Helou and Wehbe families

Tuesday, December 31, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, January 1, 2020 at 11: 00 o'clock

Sunday, January 5, 2020 at 11:00 o'clock

Faten Abou Chabki

Monday, January 6, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

For the Parish

Sunday, January 12, 2020 at 11"00 o'clock

Toufic and Zahida Fahed

Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, January 19, 2020 at 11:00 o'clock

Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

Let us Pray the Rosary

Please join fellow parishioners as we pray the Holy Rosary every **Sunday at 10:15 a.m.** in preparation for the Divine Liturgy and in honor of our Blessed Mother, Mary.

Ushers

Sunday, January 5, 2020

Fawzi Abou Chabki, Victor Beasley, Kevin Pitzer & Tony EL-Khoury

2020 New Year's Eve

Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church invites you to celebrate New Year's Eve on Tuesday, December 31, 2019 at Sheraton Tysons Hotel, 8661 Leesburg Pike, Tysons, VA. For more information, please contact Gebran Fattouch at (443) 600-9484.

Holy Day of Obligation

Wednesday, January 1, 2020, Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord and World Day of Peace is a Holy Day of Obligation. The Divine Liturgies will be on **Tuesday, December 31, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. and on Wednesday, January 1, 2020 at 11 o'clock** in the morning.

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

Monday, January 6, 2020 (Baptism of the Lord) is a Holy Day of Obligation. The Divine Liturgy with the Blessing of the Epiphany Water will take **place at 7:30 p.m.** A Holy Day of Obligation means that a Catholic Person must attend the Divine Liturgy on that day under the penalty of mortal sin.

Sunday School

Religious Education Program or Sunday School will resume on **Sunday, January 5, 2020 at 10 o'clock.** Again let us resolve to make the religious education of our children a top priority in 2020.

Meeting

Saturday, January 11, 2020, the Pastoral Council will have its monthly meeting at 10 o'clock in the office.

End of the Year Statements

End of the year statements will be mailed during the first half of January to all our active donors. If you do not receive yours, please let **the Pastor** (not a third party) know.

If your address or phone number has changed, please call **the church office only** and update your file. It is vital that we keep your file up-to-date.

While we welcome everyone to worship with us, we encourage you

to contact the Church Office as soon as possible if you would like to register in the parish. Please keep in mind, in order for you to get any correspondence from the Church, you must be registered. Registration gives you the sense of belonging to the Parish and gives us the opportunity to try to better serve you.

Please make sure you pick up your envelopes for 2020 from the back of the Church, if you have not already done so. If you used the envelope system in 2019, your number remains the same for this year.

Pastoral Visit

On Sunday, January 26, 2020, His Excellency Bishop Gregory Mansour will make a pastoral visit to our parish. He will celebrate the Divine Liturgy and a gathering with the MYA and MYO at the Seminary Library.

Festival Summary

Thanks to your hard work, dedication and love for your church, our annual food festival was a success this year. Thank you for all that you have done and will continue to do to make your parish grow and flourish. Below is a financial summary of the festival:

Sales	\$ 52,663.96
Ad Book	\$ 25,300.00
Gross	\$ 77,963.96
Expenses	\$ 28,976.37
Profit	\$ 48,987.59

Thanks
for a great year

Indeed God has blessed us tremendously in 2019. For that let us offer a prayer of praise and gratitude and beg Him to make 2020 another year filled with His blessings and graces. Thank you for all your cooperation, zeal and generosity during this year. May God reward your efforts and grant you His love and peace.

Happy, Blessed, Peaceful and Prosperous New Year to you all

Birth of Our Lord

The Maronite Divine Liturgy often mentions the title *Mary, Mother of the Light*. This title is rich in theological and spiritual significance and is indeed one of the treasures of the Maronite Church.

The image of light conveys a sense of joy, festivity and life. Religion uses the image of light to express the notion of purity and the presence of God. Since light is the element which is proper to the divine being, from ancient times the pagans adored the sun. At the end of December, the pagans celebrated a feast dedicated to the *unconquerable Sun*. In fact, on December 21st the nights, which had been becoming longer and longer, begin to shorten. The ancient celebrated this conquest of the light over darkness.

When Constantine granted freedom for Christians to worship publicly, it was appropriate to replace the celebration of the *Unconquerable Sun*, with the feast of the New Sun of the world, to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Light of the World (John 3:19).

The image of light is found throughout salvation history. The Aramaic Fathers of the Antiochene tradition teach us that creation is a preparation for the incarnation of the Son of God. All was created by the Father through the Son. Scripture tells us that the first thing that was created is the sun. It is the heavenly body which gives forth light, warmth and life itself. The sun is the image of the Son of God because Christ Himself is that light which comes from heaven. As a ray of light coming through a cloud, He appeared from the Virgin Mary. When God created the world, He separated the light from the darkness. In the New Testament, there is a

constant struggle between light and darkness.

The genealogy in the gospel of Matthew describes the human ancestry of Jesus in the flesh and, as such, lists the sinners whose sins Jesus had to bear. This is the side of darkness in the spiritual realm. St. John describes Jesus as coming from God, Light from Light.

The account of the birth of Jesus contains the image of light throughout. The shepherds saw a great light (Luke 2:9) and the Magi saw a brilliant star in the skies (Matt. 2:9-11). Throughout the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, we find the image of light used to express His divinity. His baptism was a true revelation, a great enlightenment. During the transfiguration, Jesus was surrounded by light. When Jesus died on the cross darkness came upon the earth. The Resurrection itself was a blinding light (Matt 28:2). The descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is described as *tongues of fire* (Acts 2:3). Upon seeing a great light and being thrown from his horse, Saul came to believe (Acts 9:3) While in prison, Peter saw a great light and was freed from his chains (Acts 12:6).

Just as the Magi and Shepherds saw and followed the light, we who have seen the Light must follow. This feast of the Birth of Our Lord should be an incentive for us to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14).

The night shall be no more. They will need no light from lamps or the sun, for the Lord God shall give them light and they shall reign forever (Revelation 22:5).

