

Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church
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Msgr. George M. Sebaali, Pastor

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

December 25, 2022, Christmas Day

Saturday, December 24, 2022 (Christmas Eve) at 5:30 p.m.

Members of Our Lady of Lebanon Parish, living and deceased

Sunday, December 25, 2022 (Christmas Day) at 11:00 o'clock

Private intention

Saturday, December 31, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

Living and deceased members of the Touma, Haddad, Tawil, Khair, Lahood and Aou families

Sunday, January 1, 2023 at 11:00 o'clock

Friday, January 6, 2023 at 7:30 p.m.

Faten Abou Chabke

Sunday, January 8, 2023 at 11:00 o'clock

Georgette El Alam Frangieh

Sunday, January 15, 2023 a 11:00 o'clock

Alice Gebara

Thursday, January 19, 2022 at 7:30 P.m.

Divine Liturgy and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Sunday, January 22, 2022 at 11:00 o'clock

Khalil and George Ghanem

Reconciliation (Confession) is available every Sunday between 10:15 and 10:45 a.m. before the Divine Liturgy.

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 for Sunday, January 1, 2023

Fawzi Abouchabke, Maroun Mezher, Tony ElKhouri and Mark Malkoun

Ushers for Sunday, January 8, 2023

Halim Younes, Victor Beasley, Rafah Elias and Salah Dagher

Altar Servers for Sunday, January 1, 2023

Matteo Abou Jaoude and Marek Oszwaldowski

Thank you for your generosity

Summary of the Collection for Sunday, December 18, 2022

Regular Collection \$1617

Pledge \$1050

Donation by mail \$ 650

Thank you for your generosity and may God bless you all.

Religious Education

Due to the Christmas holiday, there will be no Sunday School [Religious Education] **December 25 and January 1**. Religious Education will resume on **Sunday, January 8, 2023 at 10 o'clock**.

Holy Day of Obligation

Friday, January 6, 2023, (Epiphany of the Lord) is a Holy Day of Obligation. The Liturgy will be at **7:30 p.m.**

Blessing of the Epiphany Water will take place during the liturgy. You may bring a bottle of water to have it blessed if you wish.

Scripture Readings

Sunday, December 25, 2021, Birth of the Lord

Heb 1:1-12; Lk 2:1-20

Monday, December 26, 2021, Felicitations to Mary

Eph: 1-3-14; Lk 1:46-55

Sunday, January 1, 2023, Circumcision of the Lord

Eph 2:11-22; Lk 2:21

Liturgical Schedule

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

★ **Saturday, December 24, 2022 (Christmas Eve)**

★ **4:15 p.m. - 4:45:** Confession will be available

★ **5:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Divine Liturgy**

★ **(Please note there will be No Midnight Liturgy)**

★ **Sunday, December 25, 2022 (Christmas Day)**

★ 11:00 A.M. Divine Liturgy

Monday, December 26, 2022 (Felicitations to the Virgin Mary)

★ Divine Liturgy at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, December 31, 2022 (New Year's Eve)

★ **6:30 P.M.** Divine Liturgy

Sunday, January 1, 2023 (Circumcision of the Lord) at 11:00 o'clock

Friday, January 6, 2023 (Baptism of the Lord)

★ **7:30 P.M.** Divine Liturgy and Blessing of the Epiphany water

Visit of Bishop Simon Faddoul

Sunday, January 15, 2023, His Excellency Bishop Simon Faddoul, Maronite Bishop of Nigeria and Africa, will visit our parish and celebrate the Divine Liturgy. Following the Divine Liturgy, a **luncheon reception** will be held in the social hall. All are welcome to attend and meet and greet Bishop Faddoul.

Christmas Reflections

On this day when the Rich One was made poor for our sake,

Let the rich man also make the poor man a sharer at his table.

On this day a Gift came to us without our asking for it,

Let us then give alms to those who cry out and beg from us

(St. Ephrem, Hymn on the Nativity, 194-95).

Merry Christmas and a Blessed and Peaceful 2023.

May the Star of Bethlehem guide you always to "where you find a Child wrapped in swaddling clothes."

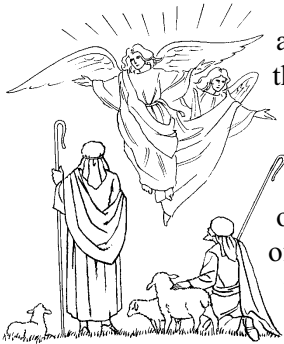


Birth of Our Lord

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). [Maronite Divine Office, Volume 1]

