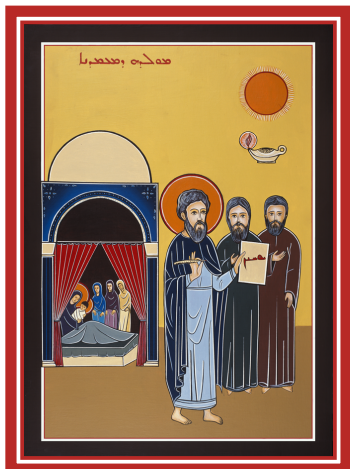


# The Birth of Saint John, the Forerunner



December 10, 2017

## Saint Joseph Maronite Catholic Church



3 Appleton Street  
Waterville, ME 04901  
Office Phone: 207-872-8515  
E-Mail: [stjoesinmaine@yahoo.com](mailto:stjoesinmaine@yahoo.com)

Pastor: Rev. Fr. James Doran  
Subdeacon: Mr. Stephen Crate  
website: <http://www.sjmaronite.org>

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*"The Eastern Rites are the Treasure of the Catholic Church"* Saint John XXIII, Pope

**Qoorboneh (Masses):** Saturday 4:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:00 a.m.; Tues. – Fr. 9:00 a.m. in the St. Jude Chapel  
The Miraculous Medal and the St. Jude Novenas are on Tuesday following the 9 a.m. Liturgy  
**Sick Calls:** To receive the Eucharist and/or the Anointing of the Sick, please call the rectory.  
**Confessions:** One half-hour before weekend Liturgies and by appointment.  
**Baptisms:** *Parents* should refer to the website and then contact the parish through the parish e-mail address.  
**Marriage:** Please refer to the parish website and contact the parish **a minimum 6 months before** finalizing the date of your wedding.  
**Mass Intentions:** For *specific* dates requested, please submit **three months in advance**. Recommended stipends: weekday intentions \$10; weekend intentions \$15  
**Monthly Memorials:** Sanctuary Candles \$20; Altar Bread \$25; Wine \$45

**Choir Director:** Fefa Deeb **Parish Secretary:** Paula Mitchell **Catechists:** Lenore Boles, Director & K-1<sup>st</sup>; Jane Lee, 2<sup>nd</sup>; Shana Page, 3-5<sup>th</sup> **Parish Council:** Sheila Bonenfant, Lisa Grard, Lowell Hawes, Rosanna Joseph, David Lee, Ruth Lunn, Kevin Michaud, Paula Mitchell, Elizabeth Wilson **Ex-officio council members:** Subdeacon Steve Crate; Lenore Boles, Catechism; Shana Page, Rosary Sodality; Larry Mitchell, Knights of Columbus

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### THIS DAY'S GOSPEL St. Luke 1; 57-66

Now the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered, and she gave birth to a son. And her neighbors and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they would have named him Zechariah after his father, but his mother said, "Not so; he shall be called John."

And they said to her, "None of your kindred is called by this name." And they made signs to this father, inquiring what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, "His name is John." And they all marveled. And immediately his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea; and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then shall be this child?"  
For the Hand of the Lord was with him.

## ABOUNA'S REFLECTIONS

### **Inevitable death: we lay our mortal bodies to rest** **Part VIII**

Time waits for no man, and the inevitable certainty is that each of us will one day die. It is a great consolation to know that we are not alone and that the Risen One is present to His disciples in each phase of death; none of us dies alone. In the great Mystery that is the Church, we are all joined as members to members and we share and console one another in this passage. As a practice, we should pray everyday for those are to die that day. This is not only a work of charity; it also disposes us to benefit better ourselves from the graces that will be given to us in our own death.

A few weeks ago we considered the Holy Mystery of Anointing and spoke of its grace to purify, elevate and prepare the individual for death. This Sacrament also joins the person receiving it to the Passion of Christ for his own good and for the good of the Church.<sup>1</sup> Death thus is not only transformed by the sacramental presence of our God and Savior in His historical suffering on Calvary, it also transforms that person's death into a grace-giving source of holiness for the other members of the Church.

As in all true friendship, love is reciprocated. The Holy Mystery of Anointing confers an "ecclesial" grace, that is, the recipient is strengthened by the united prayers of the Church, which intercedes for him in his suffering.<sup>2</sup> The Sacrament transforms the suffering of the one anointed into a source of holiness both personally and for the Church as a whole. The same suffering is itself simultaneously transformed to the benefit of the individual by the prayer of the Church.

No one dies alone in Christianity, and the time must come for each to lay the body to rest.

*Praise, glory and honor to the One  
Who raises the dead,  
and awakens those who sleep in the dust;*

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<sup>1</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1521

<sup>2</sup> CCC, 1522

*God of spirits and bodies,  
and Judge of the living and the dead,  
known in divine Unity  
and acclaimed in Trinity of Persons ...<sup>3</sup>*

There are three "stages" in death, and the Maronite ceremonies follow this process. These three moments parallel the three resurrection miracles recorded for us in the Gospels: the daughter of Jairus (St. Mark 5; 21-43); the widow's son at Nain (St. Luke 7; 11-17); and, the raising of Lazarus (St. John 11; 1-44). Our blessed Lord arrives at the home of Jairus just as his daughter dies. The young man of Nain is raised from the dead as the Living One meets the funeral cortege leaving the city. Finally, Lazarus is brought back from the dead after having been dead and buried for four days.

The three "stages" are thus the *home, procession-church-procession*, and the *grave*. "According to the ancient spiritual vision of the early Syriac Churches, the passage to eternal life is hampered by obstacles and dangers. The departed need special support and guidance on their journey. Thus, the funeral rites are a complex of psalms, hymns, Scripture readings and prayers that 'accompany' them on this 'other' journey. ... The funeral rites, are, therefore, rites of 'accompaniment' which are celebrated on the road as one begins the journey to new life."<sup>4</sup> This notion of "accompaniment of the dead" is one that is shared by both the Syrian and Chaldean traditions.

As we are used to it today, we consider the services of institutional funeral homes as the necessary step to use in preparing the dead for burial, but this is, in the history of mankind, a fairly recent development. Burying the dead is a work of mercy, so those who assist the grieving are to be commended. As practiced, however, it is only since the end of the nineteenth century that the sanitizing service been extant as we know it. When

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<sup>3</sup> *Proemion*, Saturday Safro. Saturday is the traditional day each week to commemorate the dead and pray for their repose.

<sup>4</sup> Bishop Doueihi from the introduction to the *Book of Ginnazat, Order of Christian Funerals According to the Rites of the Maronite Antiochene Church*, San Antonio, Texas 1988.

I was studying for the priesthood in Switzerland, the practice of the family preparing the dead for burial was still in practice – this was in the 1980s. The first time that I witnessed the process it was surprising, but profoundly beautiful.

The *Ginnaz* (Arabic for the funeral prayer) is tripartite commonly in the Christian traditions, and so it is in the Syriac-Maronite one as well. There are prayers and preparation of the body at home; the body is carried to the church for the proper reception, the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered for the “journey” of the departed, followed by the proper “farewell” and dismissal of the dead by the “absolution” of the body; and, lastly, the cortege to the cemetery for burial, where there are final prayers before the actual burial takes place. During centuries of tradition, it was the practice to anoint the forehead of the dead before the burial as a sign of respect.

Clearly, there can be small variances in the observances when occasion warrants and legitimate regional custom dictates, but this three-fold form of accompanying the departed is the norm. We know these stages today as the “wake” or keeping “watch” with the family of the dead, the Mass and Absolution, and the Cortege and Burial. Death is the great leveler of individuals and there is little variance in the prayers and ceremonies that take place around death.

*O God, we beseech Thee;  
when those on Thy Right shall be glorified,  
and those on Thy Left condemned;  
when the fire of judgment shall illumine the just  
and inflame the impious;  
when those on each side shall have their destiny,  
with no possibility of change,  
grant that those who have died in the Faith –  
clothed themselves with Thee and received Thee,  
the blessed Food for their Journey –  
may behold Thy Radiant Face  
and rest in the heavenly dwelling place of light and joy,  
in the New Jerusalem, City of the saints,  
with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>5</sup> *Sedro*, Saturday Safro.

Often in our prayers for the dead we note that reference is made to the fact that Our Lord’s Divine Flesh in the Eucharist has been consumed by the deceased person. This harkens back to Our Lord’s teaching about the necessity of receiving His Body and Flesh in order to have Life within us.<sup>6</sup> It also emphasizes the Syriac Fathers teaching on “mingling:”<sup>7</sup> the emphasis on the corporeal interaction – mingling – by the Eucharistic Flesh of the Messiah with our own bodies and souls.<sup>8</sup> This is the fundamental reason that so *much importance is placed upon the human body in death*: baptized, chrismated by sacred grace and oil, it has been cleansed, purified, transformed into the living *Temple of Holy Spirit* and elevated by the Mysterious Eucharistic Flesh of Christ into His Body. We stand in awe before such reality. Those who died before Our Lord had at best only the faith in the *promise* of a Redeemer to come on which they relied as they passed into the shadow world of Sheol, but now the faithful who die in Christ have within themselves the “seed of the Resurrection” already planted in their bodies. It is why these latter “wait in life-giving hope.”

In the Anaphora of Saint John Chrysostom we ask that God make us “worthy of the Gift of Your forgiving Body and Blood, so make us worthy to be one with You in holiness as You are one with Your Father”<sup>9</sup> and that this Body “renews our souls and bodies” and a Blood “that guides us to safe harbors and the dwellings of light, a Blood that renews our souls and bodies.”<sup>10</sup>

It is easily seen why then preparation and burial of the dead is one of the great seven corporal works of mercy. The preparation of the dead body is one that is to be inspired by respect, love, reverence and prayer. It has always been considered not only the duty, but the distinct privilege to “lay out” the member of the family in death. This does not mean that only the family can prepare a deceased body

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<sup>6</sup> St. John 6; 52-59

<sup>7</sup> *H - l - t*

<sup>8</sup> This more or less corresponds to the Hellenic notion of “theosis” in the transformation of a Christian through the Sacred Mysteries.

<sup>9</sup> p. 883

<sup>10</sup> p. 884

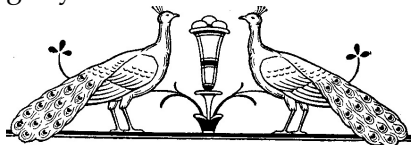
for burial, but it does mean that the greatest respect is to be shown in all the details dealing with the dead.

Historically, Maronites, as with the other Syriac traditions, used to “sit shiva,”<sup>11</sup> similar to the practice of modern Jews, that is they spent seven days in mourning the dead following the burial, mostly in silence at one of the homes of the immediate relatives of the deceased. The desolate spirit and sadness of the living were often expressed in outward wailing and lamentation (e.g. throwing dust into the air or tearing garments) especially at the graveside. This custom, too, is very ancient and can be seen in the “din” being performed outside the house of the young girl in the Gospel<sup>12</sup> and in the group of women lamenting our Lord’s Death on His way to crucifixion.<sup>13</sup> For Christians, these observances were not to deny the hope of the resurrection, but were to express the profound sense of *loss* at the repose of a loved one and *compassion* to the family, similar to the use of *black* as the liturgical color for funerals.

In the twentieth century, these practices were reduced to two days of “wake,” and then they were further shortened; today we usually observe but a single evening of vigil before burial.

The vigil and wake is a day to extend sympathy and condolences to the family and for paying respects to the dead. It is likewise a day of prayer for the family and the deceased. The Ginnaz ceremony of incense is customary during the wake at the home.

May the eternally compassionate Living One grant each of us to understand deeply and to show the utmost reverence to the bodies of our deceased brothers and sisters as He places within us a hope-filled consolation that looks to the future life of unending glory.



<sup>11</sup> Sirach 22; 11  
<sup>12</sup> St. John 8; 51-53  
<sup>13</sup> St. Luke 23; 27-31

**VOCATION DISCERNMENT WEEKEND**

Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary will be holding a discernment weekend from **Friday April 13 to Sunday April 15 in Washington DC.** If you know of anyone discerning a vocation to the priesthood, or would like to know more, please give him Fr. Dominique Hanna’s phone number (404-525-2505).

**LAST WEEK’S COLLECTIONS**

**Regular Collection:** \$1803.00

*Blessed be the Hidden One Who gives us the ability to sustain the apostolate of our Savior*

**VOCATION ICON**

*“Request therefore the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into His harvest.” St. Matthew 9:38*

Sun	December 10	Larry & Lisa Grard
Sun	December 17	Chris & Diane Wyder
Sat	December 23	Lenore Boles
Sat	December 30	Audrey Yotides
Sun	January 7	Chris & Diane Wyder
Sun	January 14	Greg Gillespie
Sun	January 21	Larry & Paula Mitchell
Sun	January 28	Lowell & Mary Hawes

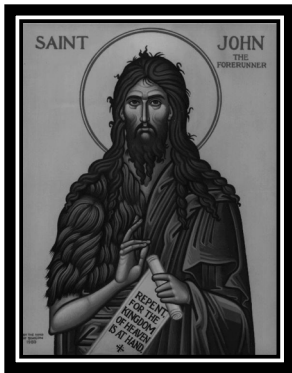
**EVENTS FOR DECEMBER**

**Sun 10** Rosary Sodality Christmas Party 11:45am  
**Thu 14** Choir Rehearsal 6:00 pm  
**Sun 17** Children’s Skit and Party  
**Thu 21** Choir Rehearsal 6:00 pm

**NEEDS OF THE FOOD BANK FOR DECEMBER**

Ravioli, Stews, Jiffy mixes and Personal Care Items





### THIRD PRAYER FROM WEDNESDAY SAURO

O Lord, grant peace to  
the world.

May wars and battles  
cease throughout the  
earth, protect the  
churches and monasteries;

unite them in the unity of the true Faith.

Support and care for the people Thou hast  
acquired through Thy Precious Blood.

Thus, strengthened by Thy calm and peace,  
we shall render glory and thanksgiving unto Thee,  
now and forever. Amen

### BLESSING OF CRÈCHE FIGURINES

There will be a blessing of statues for Nativity  
Scenes and Crèches on Sunday, *The Announcement  
to Saint Joseph, December 17<sup>th</sup>*, at the 10:00 a.m.  
Mass.

Please place any figurines that you may wish to be  
blessed on the table at the front of the bema. They  
will be blessed at the end of the Qoorbonoh.

### EPIPHANY HOUSE BLESSINGS

Epiphany is the great day of baptisms and renewal  
in the Syriac tradition. It is a celebration of the  
historical appearance of the Hidden One among us.  
It thus commemorates God's *manifestation*  
("epiphany") to the world.

As the appearance of God among men, it is thus  
also known as the "Theophany." It is a time of  
renewal, and there is among the eastern traditions  
a special blessing for homes at the season of the  
Epiphany. It is something of an annual spiritual  
renewal for the home. These blessings can take  
place from January 6<sup>th</sup> - the actual feastday -  
through the second half of January.

For those who may wish, the form following can be  
used to sign up for a visit to your home that the  
blessing might be given. Simply fill it out, put it in

an envelope, and place it in the collection basket.  
Contact will be made later to schedule a day and  
time for the blessing.

AM+DG

Yes, Father, I would like to have the Epiphany  
Blessing for my home.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

### INTENTIONS FOR THE QURBONEH (MASSES)

Sat 9 †Ronald Stevens  
(Herb Joseph)

Sun 10 For the members of the Parish  
--- † Raymond & Georgette Veilleux  
(Larry & Paula Mitchell)

Mon 11 -----

Tue 12 †For the Souls in Purgatory  
(M/M Mark Camarano)  
-- Catholic Extension & Donors

Wed 13 †David Suttie  
(Knights of Columbus)  
-- Catholic Extension & Donors

Thu 14 †Lester Giguere  
(Ann Giguere)

Fri 15 Charlotte Jones  
(M/M Jones)

Sat 16 †Kathleen Hawes  
(Hawes Family)

Sun 17 For the members of the Parish

**Liturgical notes:** † = Deceased, SI = Special Intention,  
AV = Anniversary, H = Health

## READERS' SCHEDULE

### THE BIRTH OF SAINT JOHN, THE FORERUNNER

Galatians 4; 21-5; 1 St. Luke 1; 57-66  
December 9 Ruth Lunn

### ANNOUNCEMENT TO SAINT JOSEPH

Ephesians 3; 1-13 St. Matthew 1; 18-25  
December 16 Lenore Boles

*Grant them health, and raise them up  
from their illness and make them  
to have perfect health of body and soul  
and strengthen them in spirit;  
for Thou art the Savior and Benefactor,  
the Lord of lords and Weaver of crowns,  
Thou art Lord and King of all. Amen*

Those for whom we pray: Jerry Fortin, Albert Joseph, Doreen Nader, Tala Poulin, Virginia Poulin, Beverly Rideout, Gordon Webber, Melissa Karter, Maxine Morrisette and Paul Mitchell

## COFFEE SCHEDULE 2017-2018

Dec 17 Jan Bourque & Pam Casavant  
Dec 24 No Coffee Hour  
Dec 31 Lisa Grard & Mary Hawes  
Jan 7 Elaine Hoag & Mary Jo Hodgkin



**CENTURY 21 - SURETTE REAL ESTATE**  
Pam Casavant -- Partner/ Associate Broker  
Tel: 207-873-5634 Ext 219  
e-mail: pcasavant@surette-realestate.com

**LEBANESE CUISINE**  
34 Temple Street \* Waterville, ME 04901  
207-873-7813

## GALLANT FUNERAL HOME INC.

Dana R. McInnis, Owner  
John O. Gallant, Director  
10 Elm Street \* Tel 873-3393 \* Website: gallantfh.com

## GHM Insurance Agency

Auto \* Home\* Business \* Life \* Benefits  
51 Main Street - Downtown Waterville  
Tel: 207-873-5101 www.ghmagency.com

## GRONDIN'S CERTIFIED DRY CLEANERS

259 Main Street - Waterville, ME 04901 tel. 207-872-8132

## SII Investments, Inc.

29 Mt. Merici Ave. - Tel: 207-872-8689

## Waterville Florist

287 Upper Main Street  
Tel: 207-872-7422 also 888-616-4880

## The Birth of Saint John, the Forerunner

p 48

**Lighting of the Church:** SB\* p 21 #135/LB p 5  
Jesus, Christ, O Source of Light

**Entrance Hymn:** LB p 48 John, the Newborn  
Child, Has Come

**Glory:** SB p 1 #2 Glory (English)

**Golo/Hymn:** LB p 52 Zechariah's House  
Resounds

Creed p 748

## PRE-ANAPHORA:

**Transfer of Gifts:** LB p 750 The Lord Reigns  
**Incense Hymn:** SB p 3 #8 *Ikbal*

## ANAPHORA:

**St. John:** LB p 815

**Sign of Peace:** SB p 32 #159 Prayer of St. Francis

**Communion:** SB p51 #201 *Arsal Allah*

**Recessional:** SB p 35 #165 Sent Forth by God's  
Blessing

\*LB=Liturgical Book SB=Song Book