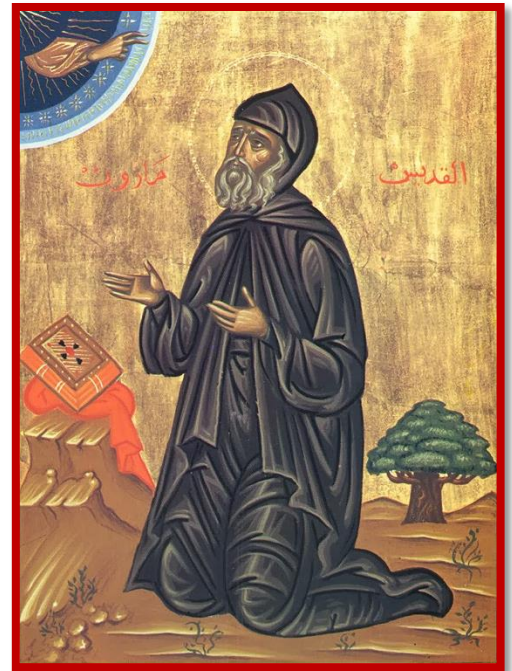


# Saint Joseph Maronite Catholic Church

## The Feast of Our Father, Mar Maroun

### AND COMMEMORATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE JUST

February 9, 2020



Welcome all visitors to the beautiful heritage of Antioch

3 Appleton Street  
Waterville, ME 04901  
Office Phone: 207-872-8515

Pastor: Rev. Fr. James Doran, KHS  
Subdeacon: Mr. Stephen Crate  
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e-mail: [stjoesinmaine@yahoo.com](mailto:stjoesinmaine@yahoo.com)

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*"For us, the men and women of the East are a symbol of the Lord Who comes again."* *Oriente Lumen*, John Paul II

- 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 at least **two months in advance**. Recommended stipends: weekday intentions \$10; weekend intentions \$15
- Monthly Memorials:** Sanctuary Candles \$20; Altar Bread \$25; Wine \$45

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**Catechists:** Lenore Boles, *Director*   **Choir Director:** Dame Marie Fefa Deeb, DSG   **Parish Council President:** Lisa Grard  
**Ex-officio Council Members:** Lenore Boles, *Religious Education*; Larry Mitchell, *Knights of Columbus*; Ruth Lunn, *Rosary Sodality*

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## **THIS DAY'S GOSPEL<sup>1</sup> St. John 12: 23-35**

Jesus answered them,  
*The hour has come for the Son of Man*

*to be glorified.  
Amen, amen, I say to you,  
unless a grain of wheat falls on the ground  
and dies, it remains alone;*

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<sup>1</sup> *The Syriac Peshitta Bible with English Translation*, Gorgias Press, New Jersey, 2012, ed. George A. Kiraz and Andreas Juckel

but if it dies, it produces much fruit.  
 Whoever loves his life<sup>2</sup> shall lose it,  
 while whoever hates his life in this world  
 shall keep it for eternal life.<sup>3</sup>  
 The person who serves Me shall follow Me,  
 and where I am,  
 there my servant shall also be.  
 My Father will honor the one  
 who serves Me.  
 Now My soul is troubled,  
 and what shall I say?  
 “My Father, deliver Me from this hour?”  
 Yet this is the reason I have come  
 – for this hour.  
 Father, glorify Your Name!

Then a voice was heard from heaven:

*I have glorified It, and I will glorify It again*  
 The crowd standing there heard it and said it  
 was thunder; others said an angel had spoken to  
 Him.

Jesus responded to them,

*This voice came not for My sake,  
 but for yours.*



*You will progress in understanding  
 the Holy Scriptures  
 only to the degree that you yourself  
 have made progress through contact  
 with them.*

St. Gregory the Great (AD 540-604)<sup>4</sup>

## **ABOUNA'S REFLECTIONS**

In the Syriac tradition, the image of “pearler” is often mentioned. Pearlers are those fishermen who strip down, swim deep in the sea, and gather the oyster<sup>5</sup> in which is found the pearl of great value. Saint Isaac of

<sup>2</sup> *nafsheh*: “his life, his soul, or himself”

<sup>3</sup> *hayeh d'l'olam*: “life forever”

<sup>4</sup> Homily 1.7.8 “on Ezechiel”

<sup>5</sup> Hard shelled and slimy on the inside, the oyster it is a perfect image of the world.

Nineveh, referring to Our Lord as *the* great and hidden Pearl, wrote that it is only those who strip themselves of all and plunge into the sea who will discover the Pearl, and that with that Pearl they have access to the Harbor of Salvation<sup>6</sup> at the end of their voyage upon the rough seas of this world. As you well know, “harbor” is also an oft cited image in our Church.

*O God, we began our lives with Holy Baptism,  
 may we end them by a blessed death.  
 Let us walk always with Thy elect  
 that we may join them  
 in Thy Heavenly Kingdom  
 and praise Thee, now and forever. Amen.*<sup>7</sup>

What does it mean to “walk always with Thy elect”? Note well that it is not simply that we should “join the elect after death”, but that we should be *now* walking among them in order that we might join them in the fullness of the Kingdom at death. The logic is simple; if we do not walk with them now, we shall not join them later.

Within the Church, the Presence of the Spirit must transform our individual lives, otherwise we are not even on the same path as the elect. There is an ancient Syriac poem, The Song of the Pearl, in which the young prince must make a voyage, but loses his way in foreign countries. It's only when he discovers the pearl that he is robed anew in a “shining garment”, at which point he can return to his father in triumph. We are that prince who loses himself in worldly and mundane concerns in a foreign land. We are too easily distracted.

Makarios the Elder, disciple of Saint Anthony the Great, wrote of the signs indicating the presence of the Spirit, Who in maternal charity transforms the heart and spirit of the baptized children of God as they move through this valley of tears. These markers, briefly enumerated, indicate how we are meant to walk on the path of salvation, with the Pearl of great value in our possession. This transfigured path is that of the elect so that we might join them all later in the definitive Harbor of security and the fullness of salvation.

<sup>6</sup> *Safro*, Friday, First Prayer: *Hope of the living and Harbor of safety, where all who are weary and troubled by the surging waves and misfortunes of this world find rest; grant that we may safely reach Thy Port, the place of eternal rest, along with all who have been pleasing to Thee. Glory to Thee, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, forever. Amen.*

<sup>7</sup> *Safro*, First Prayer, Office of a Confessor

Makarios counseled *great diligence* and *seriousness* to those who wish to arrive at the Haven of rest, and who seek to enter into the perfect and divine world-to-come. It is the Divine Spirit alone Who can bring us into the Heavenly Jerusalem, the Assembly of the Firstborn, but, as I often repeat, this is not done without our full and free cooperation. Salvation and Heaven are not done by magic, they require the collaboration and engagement of our free-will and with minds devoted to the Gospel of light. Thus the following “signs of the Spirit’s operation” within the human soul.

The first sign is when *the thought of charity and the love of God burns within a person’s heart like fire*. We must note that Makarios says that this love of God produces a “hatred for the world” and its deceptive baubles. This turning from darkness, in its logic, leads to the renunciation of the world (fully for the monastics and *ihidoyeh*) and, in any case, to a serious pursuit that places God first among all things in this life. This noteworthy love for God is also why true Christians have always had an admiration for the religious/monastic life and supported its labors. Stripped of all, they are fine examples of the diving pearler in search of true value and purpose.

Even in the West, this love of God has been portrayed as a purifying fire. To attain the Kingdom of Light, our own worldly nature must be purified of dross – like gold in the fire – and then be elevated in similitude to the Hidden One. The soul/spirit and complete life of each must be purified, by divine fire. The Divine Fire must consume all iniquity and fault within us like thorns and stubble are burned off in a fallow field.

The second sign is *the production of humility within the soul*. Makarios points out that this is seen in exemplary form in the life of Patriarch Abraham, when, in approaching the Hidden Majesty, he spoke of himself as “dust and ashes”<sup>8</sup>. We each must make real this same humility in our lives – a humility that also brings forth *simplicity* and *honesty* – if we wish “to walk with the elect” here below. The Fathers comment that one cannot be “poor in spirit” without

this humility, because until that moment one always has an “opinion” of himself/herself. It is this “opinion” and “self-esteem” (as it is called today) that cloud our minds and complicate our lives. They limit our judgement and obscure our interactions with both God and other human beings. Without humility we are by nature and tendency<sup>9</sup> manipulative and self-centered. Only Divine Holiness can burn this falsity out of our hearts and allow us to be fully illumined. It is at this stage that *grace calms the heart* and opens the mind/soul to flourish like “a child” in simplicity and wonder before the marvels of God.<sup>10</sup>

Lastly, the third sign of the Spirit’s presence operating in the human soul is *the engendering of mercifulness that arises in the heart*. This mercifulness is not sentimentality or “do-good-ism”, but a universal view and embrace of charity toward all. This universal compassion is accompanied by the *gift of tears*. Tears, for the Fathers, are the inevitable and necessary result of compunction for sin and compassion for the wickedness of this troubled and unhealthy world. At this stage, it becomes impossible for the individual to think ill of any other person. Makarios wrote that these spiritualized persons “are so humbled beneath all others in the humility of the Spirit, that they think they are the last and least of all”.<sup>11</sup>

So, where do we figure on this scale of indicators of the workings of divine grace?

We often, perhaps even usually, fall short of that which the Lord God wishes to accomplish in our lives, and these weeks commemorating the reposed are an excellent time to consider what we must do before the inevitable occurs and we too join the dead.

It is perhaps a bit frightening to think about, but *to walk among the elect* and *to dive for the Pearl of Great Price* is not similar to a lackadaisical saunter around the block. It is a serious path where one must carry his cross daily in order to follow the Lord Messiah if he wishes to learn the ways of salvation.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Genesis 18: 27

<sup>9</sup> A nature fallen and wounded

<sup>10</sup> St. Matthew 18: 3 “Amen I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

<sup>11</sup> As quoted in *The Wisdom of the Pearlers*, ed. Brian Colless.

<sup>12</sup> St. Luke 9: 23

Death. Every day through our free choices and habits we make preparations for our final exit from this world. These daily choices work in us either good or bad. To each of us comes the moment when we must leave this valley of tears – the world of time, fragility, and ephemeral value – and enter into searing light of the just judgment that is meant to usher us into the Kingdom of God. If this judgement does not bring the individual into the Kingdom, it is because the just light will have become for that person a burning fire either of purgation, or scorching eternally in divine justice. For the eastern Fathers, it is the same love of God, with its light and warmth, that either rewards eternally or scalds forever the individual in body and spirit.<sup>13</sup> Which outcome occurs is not due to the love of God – which is eternally the self-same – but is due entirely to the disposition of the life of the individual who dies.

Grace is offered to each person and bears within itself both transcendent light and divine life. Our final steps anticipating death, then, are meant to be truthful and purified:

- 1.) recognition and *contrition* for all our shortcomings, faults, and sins;
- 2.) a *free and full confession* of these sins within the Mystery of Penance;
- 3.) by the *final Anointing* in Sacred Oil, which purifies the body and senses of past sins, and disposes the spirit to divine light; and,
- 4.) by reception of *Viaticum*, the last Holy Communion we receive of the Divine Mysteries. These are great moments of healing and mercy that God offers us so that we might “cross over from the world of darkness to light”<sup>14</sup>. How we prepare our home for the Mysteries was written up in last week’s bulletin.

Even if we have not always walked faithfully with the Elect during our lives – with burning charity enlightening our minds, in profound humility, and being universally merciful – Divine Compassion is always available to those who do not sin directly against its presence.<sup>15</sup> Without grace,<sup>16</sup> our lives cannot achieve the worth they were created to possess and, absent grace, human life does not have

<sup>13</sup> *Ramsho*, Friday, Bo’outho: *The Son God comes for trial and judgement. Who would not fear the awesome Judge, Who holds in His Hands the burning torch? By fire He will judge, and with flames He will separate the good from the evil.*

<sup>14</sup> Previous prayer of ablution in the Alohooyoh Qourbonoh.

the radiance required to traverse safely the “lake of fire” that follows upon death.

We celebrate, honor, and imitate the holy ones and the righteous because they have achieved that for which God created them, and their example has been left for us follow. Canonization<sup>17</sup> means quite literally that one’s life has been raised up as a standard for all to imitate and by which human life can be measured in the Gospel. This week we honor those who have set such a standard – both those known and those unknown to us.

May we venerate the holy one, esteem their examples, model our lives on theirs, and accompany them in this life by so doing, so that we may later find ourselves among them *into the age of ages* and in the fullness of light and joy within the Kingdom.

Surely, our venerable Father, *Mar Maroun*, would expect nothing less from his children and heirs!

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|--|---------------------------|
| <b><u>SCHEDULE OF READINGS</u></b>                       |                           |
| <b><u>FEAST OF OUR FATHER, SAINT MARON</u></b>           |                           |
| February 9, 2020   |                           |
| <b>II Tim 3: 10-17</b>                                   | <b>St. John 12: 23-30</b> |
| <b><u>COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED</u></b> |                           |
| February 16, 2020  |                           |
| <b>I Thes 5: 1-11</b>                                    | <b>St. Luke 16: 19-31</b> |

### VOCATION ICON

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

|     |     |           |                           |
|-----|-----|-----------|---------------------------|
| Sun | Feb | <b>9</b>  | Chris & Diane Wyder       |
| Sun | Feb | <b>16</b> | Bruce & Doreen White      |
| Sun | Feb | <b>23</b> | Steve and Allison Crate   |
| Sun | Mar | <b>1</b>  | Sue Paré and Lolo Salazar |
| Sun | Mar | <b>8</b>  | Lowell Hawes              |
| Sun | Mar | <b>15</b> | Larry & Lisa Grard        |
| Sat | Mar | <b>21</b> | Jim & Lenore Boles        |

<sup>15</sup> St. Matthew 12: 32

<sup>16</sup> “Without Me you can do nothing.” St. John 15: 5

<sup>17</sup> “canon” means a standard or measure.



*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 our Savior and Benefactor,  
the Lord of lords and Weaver of crowns,  
Thou art Lord and King of all. Amen*

**Those for whom we pray:** Rosanna Joseph,  
Doreen Nader, Louise Saliem, and Virginia  
Poulin



**LAST WEEK'S COLLECTIONS**

(Budgeted: \$2,800.00)

**Regular Collection: \$1,466.00**

**(Deficit: \$1,334.00)**

For those who may wish to assist in the beautification  
and dignity of the Holy of Holies,  
we have remaining expenses of **\$600.00**  
to pay for the new altar linens.

*Blessed be the Merciful One Who gives us  
the ability to sustain this apostolate.*

**INTENTIONS FOR THE QOURBONEH (MASSES)**

- Sat 8 †Mary Hawes**  
*(Sheila Bonenfant)*  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors
- Sun 9 For the Members of the Parish**
- Mon 10 -----**
- Tue 11 Anna Bearce**  
*(Pam & Dan Casavant)*
- Wed 12 Catholic Extension Society & Donors**
- Thu 13 †Mary Hawes**  
*(Cindy Elias)*
- Fri 14 Private Intention**  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors
- Sat 15 †Paul LaVerdiere**  
*(Sheila Bonenfant)*  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors
- Sun 16 For the Members of the Parish**
- Mon 17 -----**
- Tue 18 Anna Bearce**  
*(Pam & Dan Casavant)*
- Wed 19 Catholic Extension Society & Donors**
- Thu 20 †Helen Bard**  
*(Pam & Dan Casavant)*  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors
- Fri 21 Private Intention**  
*(Abouna James)*  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors
- Sat 22 †Mary Hawes**  
*(Barbara Joseph)*  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors
- Sun 23 For the Members of the Parish**
- Mon 24 9:00 am Aly Lee *(the Choir)***  
**6:00 pm For the Sick of the Parish**
- Tue 25 -----**
- Wed 26 Catholic Extension Society & Donors**
- Thu 27 †Thelma Jean Wood**  
*(Brian Walker)*  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors
- Fri 28 Private Intention**  
*(Abouna James)*  
-- Catholic Extension Society & Donors

# Feast of Our Father, Saint Maron

p 678

**Lighting of the Church:** LB\* p 5  
*Jesus Christ, O Source of Light*

**Entrance Hymn:** LB *soogheeto (Ramsho)* 678

**Glory:** SB *al majdu*

**Qolo/Hymn:** LB *enono nuhro shareero/ balbebo'outho 'asheento* 683

Creed p 748

**PRE-ANAPHORA:**

**Transfer of Gifts:** LB *The Lord Reigns*

**Incense Hymn Offertory:** SB *iqbal*

**ANAPHORA:**

**Saint John Chrysostom:** LB p 876

**Sign of Peace:** SB *tou ba*

**Communion:** SB *I am the Vine; Holy Ground*

**Recessional:** SB *Glorious in majesty*



**Commemoration of all  
the Righteous and the Just**

\*LB=Liturgical Book SB=Song Book



Saint Meletius of Antioch, Confessor

February 12<sup>th</sup>