

The Visitation

December 3, 2017



Saint Joseph Maronite Catholic Church



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

"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-1st; Jane Lee, 2nd; Shana Page, 3-5th **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

THIS DAY'S GOSPEL St. Luke 1; 39-45

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah.
And she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.
And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the child leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a

loud voice, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And how is it that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?"
"For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who has believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

ABOUNA'S REFLECTIONS

Inevitable death: entrance into the burning light of charitable justice Part VII

Time marches onward. Moving toward the Divine Embrace – as all things must – in the full Epiphany of Glory that shall be the end of time as we know it, we do so both historically and individually; but the course is the same. The Hidden Creator chose freely to make things exist so that they might share in the Infinite Goodness of His divinity. For some creatures this means simply the blessing of existence, but for others it means to exist and to live; yet for others, it has been given to exist and live in an intelligent and free manner.

Human beings share in this last category: to live freely and intelligently by nature so that we might dispose ourselves to receive grace and collaborate with the divine charity of God as He generously offers us to do so. We have been created *from Love, in order to love*, and finally to *enter* into Love at its highest form. Therefore, individually and historically all things move toward the final and ultimate divine embrace of God. As all things must do this, each according to its nature, so there is little that can be done except to fulfill this purpose, and for men this means to be known, to know, and to learn to love correctly.

Perhaps as we approach the holyday season an image might be useful. When a grandmother sees her grandchild, especially when it has been a long time since last visiting, she wishes to greet, hold and cherish the child. The child may have a different idea. Often the child is focused on other things, like cookies or toys, or even the excitement of the day. Distraction makes little ones to squirm and crawl out of embraces – however loving those arms may be. We accept this behavior in children because they are by definition *immature*, but as time goes on we expect a more human and mature response to love. To reject love because one is distracted by other things would be hurtful to the one who loves, and even hateful if done seriously and habitually. So it is with God.

All things move towards the Divine Embrace that we call “The Day of the Lord” or “The Last Judgment:” the full manifestation of Divine Charity that is simultaneously a manifestation of Divine Justice. On that Day, the effects of definitive reciprocated love or final damnation result from how we have reacted earlier throughout our lives to the divine embrace that we call “grace.” If we have been loving and selfless, transformed by grace and made Christ-like as the children of light,¹ we will enter joyfully into the Divine Light. If, to the contrary, we have been rather self-centered and focused on the things of this world, deaf to grace and its transformation, then one is indisposed to the Fire of Divine Charity. It will be with great hesitation and fear that we will approach that Day of manifest Love. What is now light, warmth and love, will become blinding, burning and scathing to those so disposed – those who have been wrapped up in themselves.²

*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.³*

Should we have been fundamentally self-centered, then we will hate that Day and flee from that Love. Historically, this will end for all things at the end of time; individually, we each enter into this mystery of love/judgment the moment we die. The Last Judgment will only broadcast what we have already experienced.

The familial image of a grandmother hugging her beloved grandchild can be translated into the reality of the selfish person being “hugged” by

¹ Ephesians 5; 1-16

² “For the unrighteous, on the other hand, the celestial city’s walls remain impenetrable. They ‘cannot enter the fiery gate,’ and ‘gnash their teeth outside,’ for ‘the uncircumcised and unclean will not enter into her.’ They are ‘unclean’ and ‘uncircumcised’ because, we may assume, they have not been transformed from within, and in consequence the heavenly fire remains fire. For them, it burns, and, rather ominously, we hear no more about them.” p. 73; *To Train His Soul in Books*, ed. Robin Darling Young; Catholic University Press, 2011

³ *Bo’outho*, Friday Ramsho

Divine Charity; while it is true that there may be a little wiggle-room in the first example (you can get away from grandma without harm) in the divine Embrace, it will burn. As Divine Charity is eternal, so shall be the burn.

Thus, we might consider:

- 1.) The Lord God has revealed Itself as Tri-Unity: One Divine Nature/Subsistent Selflessness. Grace is meant to divinize each human being making us godlike, that is, selfless. In so far as one falls short of selflessness in life, she falls short of the divine embrace and entrance into Light.
- 2.) The love of God is portrayed as Fire, especially in the Syriac tradition, which both illuminates and burns according to the disposition of the recipient. We must learn to pray and be “from fire.”⁴ This is the meaning of Our Lord saying that He came not to judge/condemn, but to save. Charity is what is meant to save us, but we are often like the child who wriggles and squirms within grandma’s embrace because he wishes to run off and play. We are often too distracted, or selfish, to receive love. In immature children this is accepted as part of their childishness, but an adult who rejects or scorns love is suspect at best, and usually immature — at an age when this is contemptible. Our Lord stated that He came that they might have life and have it more abundantly, willy-nilly the outcome results from our response to divine love.
- 3.) Because the purpose of all existence is to manifest eternal Goodness, Love as fire can thus illuminate those who are receptive, but it burns those who refuse it. Our destiny is to stand in the full presence of Divine Charity. Freedom and love are the key concepts, not death or acceptance by faith or even justice. Spurned love is offensive to all involved; we know this from human experience. For this reason it has been said by the

⁴ “(T)he belief, common to both the Jewish *merkabah* mystics and Christian monks, (is) that those specially favored may on occasion (albeit briefly) be transformed and so become like the angels, creatures of heavenly flame ...” p. 72; *To Train His Soul in Books*, ed Robin Darling Young; Catholic University Press, 2011

saints that hell/damnation is the Love of God. It is being forced to be present forever to Someone Whom we *now* know to wish nothing but good to us. Ouch.

- 4.) Purgation/purification is the state of those who have loved God fundamentally, but who squirmed too much and too often in selfish endeavors. They are not fully selfless (they are un-godlike, stained by selfish concerns) and thus they are unable to enter into the eternal Light of Subsistent Selflessness.

We pray for the dead because we pray for all, and we know the destiny of no one except Judas on the one hand, or the saints on the other. The blemished and rather selfish lot that is the rest of us we commend to God’s Mercy.

*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 Your Port,
the place of eternal rest,
with all who have been pleasing to You.
Glory to You: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, forever.
Amen⁵*

So, in the end, it’s all about how well we have learned to love and allowed ourselves to be taken out of — transcend — our naturally occurring egocentric selves. Sin is not the problem: it’s a symptom of the problem. This is why the disciples of the Messiah are ordered to take up their crosses daily and follow Him. Nothing has the capability to teach selflessness better than suffering; of course, wrongly received it can also embitter. The choice is ours. That we suffer is not God’s intent, but rather that we allow ourselves to be removed from the habitual self-reliance that is the source of arrogance and self-centeredness so natural to us all. Drawn out of our navel-gazing, grace can elevate us and transform our hearts into God.

How we do in all this determines how well we enter the pure Fire of Divine Charity. *Judgment* thus is more the result of how we’ve chosen to

⁵ First Prayer, Friday Safo

participate in divine charity and love rather than “a place” to which we are sent.

*O Lord, through the intercession of all Your saints,
grant Your believing servants a good end
which shall allow them to praise You, forever.⁶
Amen*



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) or let Fr. Dominique know, and he will gladly give him a call.

LAST WEEK’S COLLECTIONS

Regular Collection: \$1825.00

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

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

There will be a parish council meeting on Tuesday, December 5th at 6:00 p.m. in the parish hall.

⁶ *Hoosoyo - Qolo*, Safo of the Martyrs.

THE SOLEMNITY
OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

This Friday, December 8th, is the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Mother of God.

The Holy Mother of God is the patron saint of the United States of America under her title as the Immaculate Conception. December 8th is therefore the *patronal feast* of the United States and a *holyday of obligation for all Catholics*.

Masses will be at **9:00** in Saint Jude,
and at **6:00** in the main church

VOCATION ICON

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

Sun	December 3	Lowell & Mary Hawes
Sun	December 10	Larry & Lisa Grard
Sun	December 17	Mary Jo Hodgkin
Sat	December 23	Lenore Boles
Sat	December 30	Audrey Yotides
Sun	January 7	Chris & Diane Wyder
Sun	January 14	Greg Gillespie
Sun	January 21	Alice Lachance
Sun	January 28	Larry & Paula Mitchell

CHOIR REHEARSALS

Thursdays at 6:00 p.m.:

December 7, December 14, December 21

NEEDS OF THE FOOD BANK FOR DECEMBER

Ravioli, Stews, Jiffy mixes and Personal Care Items



THIRD PRAYER FROM WEDNESDAY SAFRO

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

READERS' SCHEDULE

VISITATION OF THE VIRGIN TO ELIZABETH

Ephesians 1; 1-14 **St. Luke 1; 39-45**
December 2 Lila Hallowell

BIRTH OF SAINT JOHN, THE FORERUNNER

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

BLESSING OF CRÈCHE FIGURINES

There will be a blessing of statues for Nativity Scenes and Crèches on Sunday, *The Announcement to Saint Joseph*, **December 17th**, 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.

COFFEE SCHEDULE 2017-2018

Dec 10 Mary Bard & Lenore Boles
Dec 17 Jan Bourque & Pam Casavant
Dec 24 Sharon Crowe & Cindy Elias

*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, Rebecca Bernard and Paul Mitchell

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, it is thus also known as "Theophany." As a time of renewal, there is among the eastern traditions a special blessing for homes at the season of the Epiphany. These blessings can take place from January 6th - the actual feastday - through the second half of January.

For those who may wish, the form below 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.

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 2 For the members of the parish
- Sun 3 †Richard Elias, Sr.
(Cindy Elias)
- Mon 4 -----
- Tue 5 †For the Souls in Purgatory
(M/M Mark Camarano)
-- Catholic Extension & Donors
- Wed 6 †Lester Giguere
(Ann Giguere)
-- Catholic Extension & Donors
- Thu 7 Rachel Bergman
(Ann Kersh)
- Fri 8 9:00 For the members of the parish
6:00 †Lawrence Byrne
(Dan & Pam Casavant)
- Sat 9 †Ronald Stevens
(Herb Joseph)
- Sun 10 For the members of the Parish
-- †Raymond & Georgette Veilleux
(Larry & Paula Mitchell)

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

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 * Waterville, ME 04901
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 Visitation

p 38

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

Entrance Hymn: LB p 27 Gards oace

Glory: SB p 1 #2 Glory (English)

Qolo/Hymn: LB p 32 Yohird

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 Prais

Communion: SB p # Hry

Recessional: SB p 20 #133 Imry

*LB=Liturgical Book SB=Song Book