

Saint Joseph Maronite Catholic Church



Visitation of the most holy Virgin to Elizabeth

November 29, 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
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"For us, the men and women of the East are a symbol of the Lord Who comes again." *Oriental Lumen*, John Paul II

- Qourboneh:** Masses: Sunday 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.; Tues. – Fr. 9:00 a.m.; Sat. 10:00a.m.
Sick Calls: To receive the Divine Eucharist and/or the Sacred Anointing, 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 \$30; Altar Bread \$25; Sacramental Wine \$45
Catechism: Lenore Boles, *Director* **Choir Director:** Dame Marie Fefa Deeb, DSG **Parish Council President:** Ex-officio
Council Members: Lenore Boles, *Religious Education*; Larry Mitchell, *Knights of Columbus*; Ruth Lunn, *Rosary Sodality*

THIS DAY'S EPISTLE¹ Ephesians 1: 1-14

Paul, an apostle of Jesus the Messiah through the will of God, to those in Ephesus who are holy and faithful in *Yeshu' Msheeho*:
Peace and grace be with you from God our Father and from our Lord *Yeshu' Msheeho*.
Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord *Yeshu' Msheeho*, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heaven through the Messiah, just as He previously chose us in Him from before the foundation of the world, so

that we might be holy and "blameless before Him" ²

In charity, He marked us for Himself long ago, and He set us apart as children through *Yeshu' Msheeho* according to the pleasure of His will, so that the glory of His grace might be praised, which He has poured out on us through His Beloved One, in Whom we have redemption and, through His Blood, forgiveness of sins according to the wealth of His grace, which has abounded in us with all kinds of wisdom and understanding.

¹ Based on The Syriac Peshitta Bible with English Translation, Gorgias Press, New Jersey, 2012, ed. George A. Kiraz and Andreas Juckel

² Genesis 17: 1

He has made known to us the mystery of His will, which He previously determined to accomplish in Him for the providential administration in the fullness of time: that everything, both in heaven and on earth, might be made new again in the Messiah. And in Him we were also chosen, just as He previously marked us and anticipated, He Who accomplishes everything according to the purpose of His will, that we might be the first who hoped in the Messiah – to the radiance of His glory – in Whom also you have heard the word of truth, which is the gospel of your salvation, through which you have believed and have been sealed with the Spirit of Holiness that was promised, and Who is the Pledge of our inheritance for the redemption of those who are saved and for the praise of His glory.



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)³

ABOUNA'S REFLECTIONS

Our imaginations can be both our greatest aid and our greatest detriment in living the life of the Gospel. Images and memories can either be good and edifying, or be bad and trip us up. Good and excellent memories/images are a consolation and instrumental in leading a life of virtue, while bad and sinful images/memories are most often a source of desolation and occasions of further sin. As a person progresses in the life of grace, the transformation requires at some point the “purification of the memory” as taught Saint John

of the Cross. To move closer to the Lord and approach the Kingdom, one must be purified in body, imagination, soul, and spirit.

The imagination is a human power that belongs to the material aspect of our existence. It is not the mind or intellect, but it does play an intimate part in the functioning of the mind. Understanding its place in human thinking, it works as a type of sieve or funnel in the perception of reality. Strong, active, and purified, the imagination is a powerful faculty in human flourishing; inert, flabby, inactive, or underdeveloped, the imagination becomes detrimental to thought and agency; it stifles human life.

Like the angels, human beings are intelligent. With a mind and spirit that *intelligizes*,⁴ angels and men reflect the Omniscient One. Although angels and men are both intelligent, the manner in which they “know” is vastly different. Human beings, composed matter and spirit, work in “stages” and through mediations; they derive all their knowledge through the senses. This is not so of the angels. For this reason, men are drawn to the stuff that can be sensed and experienced; again, this is not so for the angels.

Human beings, then, must labor to think, reason, reflect, ponder, abstract, and derive their knowledge engaged in the senses, but terminating in the spirit. The angels are pure immateriality – “watchers” – and what they know they know within themselves, within their very being.

Part of our **sense experience and intellectual process involves the imagination**. Memories are thus a large part of our overall intellectual make-up. The better our imagination and the more precise our ability to observe the world around us, the better will be our *intelligizing* of reality. This is why the exercise of the imagination as children is so important; the better and more skilled its use, the more apt an instrument it becomes in the work of human thought. On the contrary, when the imagination is lethargic, underdeveloped by lack of use,⁵ or filled with ignoble things it degrades the intellect’s ability to think, reason, and contemplate.

as they are in themselves and not just as they appear outwardly to the senses.

⁵ e.g. through dependence on artificial images generated by screens or in gaming

³ Homily 1.7.8 “on Ezechiel”

⁴ From Latin, the English word “intellect” literally means “having been read within”. To “intelligize”, therefore, would mean the act of spirit by which the human being knows things

Now, the Christian and virtuous life is not so much to avoid sin, but to collaborate with grace, choose the good, and walk in imitation of Christ. This can be done, not by avoidance and prohibition, but only **by re-working our vision, motivation, and intent** – the transformation of our mind as to *how* we see the beauty of virtue, the conformity to the Word Incarnate, and *why* we should order our lives to seek these things. Not to commit adultery is one thing, but to seek to live the full and integral splendor of a grace-filled emotional and matrimonial life is quite another. Striving for the latter will always have one avoid the former. Guaranteed.

To attempt merely to “not choose” something is to collapse into frustration, capitulation, and defeat. This is why so many Catholics fall away from the Faith: they are either too weak to live in the Gospel or they have lived in the illusion that the Christian life is something that “just happens” or is “done to us” rather than understanding the collaborative effort that is the work of salvation: simultaneously divine and human. Religion is not “magic”; only the person who learns to love transcendent goodness can make progress in Christ.

This is the fundamental import of the commemorations of the saints. The Church has recognized in them the “standards”⁶ of Catholic behavior and the accomplished living of the word of truth found in the Gospel. This is why the **Sanctoral Cycle** is a fundamental part of our Catholic and orthodox life, it breaks us out of a superficial life of conformity to appearances as lived in the modern world.

The holy ones of the All Holy exemplify lives “gracified”. *Knowing them, and imitating them, is the easiest way to find holiness in our own lives.* The more and the better we know the lives of the saints, the better prepared we are to model our lives according to their pattern. Because these lives are historical, concrete, and knowable, we can place them before our eyes, imagine them, and see the Gospel as it has been lived-out. Our imagination, through this formation, becomes a fountain of light,

a beacon of strength in the midst of temptation, and a remedy for the malevolent and disordered images that bombard us in the modern world. Attentive to beauty, one becomes sensitive to ugliness. The more exquisite one’s musical sensibilities, the more she is sensitive to discord and disharmony. These are *the principles involved in knowing the saints*: the better that we know them, the more that we are edified in the Gospel, the more likely we are, in wisdom, to be justly repulsed by the contemporary and disordered modes of life surrounding us, and, therefore, the more easily avoid its superficial power of seduction. **Image against image**: filling our minds with the lives of the saints is the easiest way to combat the disordered examples and bad images that surround us.

Our minds and imaginations must necessarily be filled with something, so better it be that grace, nobility, honor, gratitude, and beauty fill them rather than the quickly-seductive, but tawdry attractions of sensuality proffered by the contemporary world in its titillating entertainment. The quick and superficial “fixes” that come to the passions require no effort to enter our imagination – they give a swift *umph* to our sensuality; but the nourishment of beauty and honor requires effort much as does a smart and healthy diet. Junk food is always available – indeed, in some places like “food deserts” they are the only thing available – and its unhealthiness is always within easy obese and diabetic grasp. Healthy nourishment and good diet require goals, effort, and perseverance to achieve the healthy life for which we were created – so it is with the spirit. “Garbage in, garbage out.”

Today, November 29th, is dedicated to the memory of **Saint James of Serugh – Mar Ya’coub de Serugh** – known as the “**Flute of the Spirit**”. He lived ca. 451-521 AD, the century after our holy Father Saint Maron. He was born in Kurtam on the Euphrates River. His poetic talents were recognized early in his life, and he studied at the famous School of Edessa, which influenced his development and use of poetic forms. Saint James is known primarily for his verse *memreh*.⁷ There are various liturgical texts attributed to the “Flute of the Spirit”, and our

⁶ “Canon” in Greek refers to a “measure, or a standard”. Canonization thus means a “standardization and recognition of this person’s life as a goal and a standard for other

believers”. Their “being in heaven” is merely the confirmation of this process, it is not the essential aspect of canonization.
⁷ The *memroh* is a narrative poem that employs couplets all in the same syllabic meter, twelve syllables being characteristic of

own Maronite Rite of Baptism is attributed to him as author. He finished the last years of his life as bishop of *Batnan da-Srug* (519-521). Saint James is recognized as second only to Saint Ephraim for the beauty and educative radiance of his poetry; hence his soubriquet.

We consider his life today not only because of the commemoration, but that he is an excellent exemplar of our needs as Christians: he was a **creator of beauty**. The Syriac Churches' poetic repertoire is among their greatest treasures. The poetic form used once used by the Old Testament prophets and writers continued to flourish among the Aramaic peoples well into the centuries following the arrival of the Messiah. We are heirs of this excellent tradition. The poetic imagery, beauty, and lyricism infuse and inspire almost all the expressions of the Syriac tradition. And it is precisely beauty, radiance, splendor, goodness, and loveliness that are sadly missing to modern life. These things are essential and key to a virtuous life – one that is motivated, inspired, sustained, and ordered to the Beautiful One of all glory. All gratitude be to the Luminous One for making us heirs of such treasures!

A properly formed mind and a healthy imagination are supports throughout life. Well-trained and experienced in our early years, we will be strong to engage with the decades to come.⁸ This is why in a number of our Hoosoyeh we pray for a good “formation/education of the young”. Strengthened and well-educated in our youth we will be fortified as adult disciples of the Lord. Effort and perseverance this all requires (junk food and junk “spirituality” require none) but it this for which we were created and it is this which most thoroughly satisfies the spirits of men. Now we must labor; as said Saint Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother, “our rest will be in heaven”.

Beauty encourages and fosters beauty, and when we have seen the loveliness of our ancestors' lives as set forth in the examples of the saints, the more likely and the more easily we will strive to emulate them in our own lives.

St. James of Serugh. The *memreh* were probably recited rather than sung. cf. The Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage; “poetry”.

Secure the imagination and mind with supernatural beauty, and the grace of God will flourish. Suffocate our minds, and submerge our imaginations in the filth and unhealthiness found so easily in the media – the internet especially – the more we are weakened, numbed to the omnipresence of ugliness and disorder, and the more readily we succumb to its sensual enticements; and we fall. Quite the opposite, when we have seen the Luminous and Beautiful One as reflected in His saints, we are transformed in mind and see the world anew.

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

Attentive to the sanctoral cycle, mindful of the saints' commemorations, we know them in their lives and render thanks to God for their existence. We model our lives upon theirs. True *knowledge*, a profound grasp of *beauty*, a well-formed *imagination*, a heart filled with *gratitude*, and a disciplined and strengthened will are all inclined to honor the *saints' excellence*.

The saints have opened a path, and they beckon us by their examples. Can we do other than follow them in such a work of exquisite grace and beauty?

<u>SCHEDULE OF READINGS</u>	
<u>THE VISITATION OF THE VIRGIN TO ELIZABETH</u>	
November 29, 2020	
Eph 1: 1-14	St. Luke 1: 39-45
<u>THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE FORERUNNER</u>	
December 6, 2020	
Gal 4: 21-5: 1	St. Luke 1: 57-66

VOCATION ICON

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

Sun	Nov	29	Michael & Gayle Misner
Sun	Dec	6	Bruce & Doreen White
Sun	Dec	13	Steve & Allison Crate
Sun	Dec	20	Sue Paré & Lolo Salazar

⁸ Psalm 90: 12 So teach *us* to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Sun Dec 27 Daja Gombojav & Family
 Sun Jan 3 Larry & Lisa Grard
 Sat Jan 9 Jim & Lenore Boles
 Sun Jan 17 Chris & Diane Wyder

Thu 10 Catholic Extension Society & Donors
 Fri 11 Private Intention
 (Abouna James)
 Sat 12 †Rachel Salazar & Lucille Paré
 Sun 13 9:00 For the Members of the Parish
 11:00 Catholic Extension Society
 Mon 14 -----
 Tue 15 †Richard Elias
 (Cindy Elias)
 Wed 16 †John & Mary Mitchell
 (Barbara Atkins)
 Thu 17 Catholic Extension Society & Donors
 Fri 18 Misner Family
 (same)

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTIONS

(Budgeted: \$3,100.00)

Regular Collection Last Week: \$1,329.00

(Deficit 2020: \$33,158.00)

Today's Special Collection, November 29th,

Catholic University of America

(This provides funding for academic scholarships at CUA. Our own seminarians are given a 50% discount in tuition.)

Second Sunday each month is a second collection to cover our monthly fuel-oil costs.

Please remember to sustain the apostolic work of this parish through regular contributions.

INTENTIONS FOR THE QOURBONEH (MASSES)

Sun 29 9:00 For the Members of the Parish
 11:00 Catholic Extension Society
 Mon 30 -----
 Tue 1 Godchildren of Gary & Rosalie Gallant
 (Rosalie Gallant)
 Wed 2 Teresa Paré
 (Suzanne Paré)
 Thu 3 Gary Allen and Family
 (Rosalie Gallant)
 Fri 4 Fortieth Day of Rosanna Joseph
 (Paul & Larry Mitchell and family)
 Sat 5 Catholic Extension Society & Donors
 Sun 6 9:00 For the Members of the Parish
 11:00 Catholic Extension Society
 Mon 7 -----
 Tue 8 †Edward Atkins
 (Barbara Atkins)
 Wed 9 †Anita Marchetti
 (Mike & Maureen Martin)

The Life-giving Cross

Please, take notice of our present protocols:

- 1.) All Catholics, of whatever Ritual Church, are more than welcome at Saint Joseph. We are all one Body of Christ.
- 2.) During this pandemic, there is no obligation to assist at the Divine Sacrifice.
- 3.) Those who are sick, or carry symptoms of sickness, must remain at home.
- 4.) All are recommended to give contact information (a list is provided at the door) in order to inform you if need arise from a case of the virus.
- 5.) All vulnerable, elderly, and at-risk individuals should remain at home and follow the Liturgies as posted on the parish's website.
- 6.) The **Vigil** Masses are suspended until further notice.
- 7.) All who are retired, or who may have a freer weekday schedule, are asked to consider assisting at Mass during the weekdays, **Tues-Fri, 9:00am**; and on **Saturday at 10:00am**.
- 8.) **Everyone is asked to wear a face-mask.**
- 9.) Hand sanitizers are available at the entrances and at the confessional.
- 10.) Seating at church must be "*first-come-first-served*" and will be closed at "50".
- 11.) Everyone must sit in such a way that there is *no one immediately in front* of them and *no*

one immediately behind them. The pews have been blocked off for this purpose.

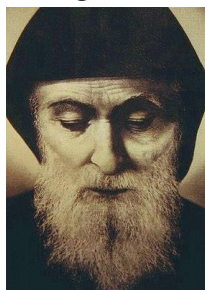
12.) To control crowd flow and bring greater security, **doors** will be **locked** at the beginning of each Liturgy.

13.) A *six-foot distancing* is to be observed by those who approach the Divine Altar and wish to receive the Divine Eucharist in **Holy Communion**.

14.) And, lastly, at the end of Mass, those who wish to **remain and pray** in the church are welcome to do so, but all others are asked *not to linger and visit within the church*. Please exit through the Appleton Street doorway. If one wishes to visit, please do so outside the church, being *mindful of the proper physical distancing*.

Please think about your *Christmas Giving opportunities!*

Introduce your friends and family to the wonders of the Maronite tradition through her saints. We still have available Chorbishop Eid's wonderful introduction to **Saint Sharbel**, now updated and in its fourth edition. Chorbishop Joseph Eid was Vice-Postulator for the Beatification of Mar Sharbel, and originally he wrote this work to introduce the great hermit to an American audience.



This book is available online at the **parish website** and from the **sacristy** directly after Mass. *Beautiful brand-new hardcover edition, with dust jacket, only \$25*

PLEASE NOTE **THE GIVING TREE** DURING THE SEASON OF **ANNOUNCEMENTS** IS DEDICATED TO CHARITABLE AID TO THE DOMESTIC ABUSE SHELTER.

Monthly Memorial

The Sanctuary Lamp is being lighted this month by Dame Fefa *in memory* of **Sam, Lottie,** and **George Deeb.**

May their memories be eternal!

*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: Daja Gombojav, Anne El-Habre, Richard Karter, Lolo Salazar, and all those who suffer from disease, want, or depression.

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Visitation of the Most Holy Virgin to Elizabeth

p. 38

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

Entrance Hymn: LB *fsheeto* 59A

Glory: SB *glory*

Qolo/Hymn: LB *l'maryam yoldat* 60A

Creed p 748

PRE-ANAPHORA:

Transfer of Gifts: LB *The Lord Reigns*

Incense Hymn Offertory: SB *l'maryam yoldat*

ANAPHORA:

The Twelve Apostles: LB p 754

Sign of Peace: SB *tou ba*

Communion: SB *Your Body is our Food; O Sanctissima*

Recessional: SB *O Come, O Come*



Saint Barbara, Martyr
December 4th