

August 9, 2009
Bulletin # 32

Our Lady of Lebanon Church

(Maronite Catholic Rite)

Faith ☩ Family ☩ Friends

2216 Eoff Street, Wheeling, WV 26003

Rectory: 304-233-1688 • Fax: 304-233-4714

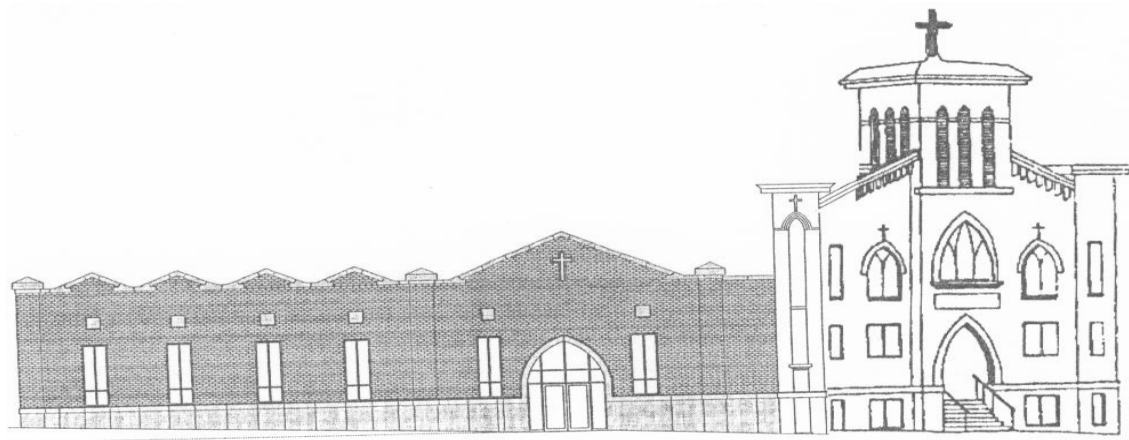
E-Mail: ololwv@Comcast.net • Web Site: www.ololwv.com

Rev. Bakhos Chidiac (Pastor)

Evelyn Ghaphery (Organist)

Charlotte Khourey & Thomasina Geimer (Secretaries)

76th Mahrajan (Festival)



Schedule of Divine Liturgies

- ***Weekend Masses:** Saturday evening at 4:00 p.m.
Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. [Rosary & Litany start at 10:10 a.m.]
- ***Weekday Masses:** **At Noon.** Please refer to the Mass schedule on page 3 of this bulletin for Mass times and changes due to special events. Thank you for your cooperation.
- ***Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament:** Every 1st Saturday of the month at 3:30 p.m. & 1st Sunday after Communion
- ***Miraculous Medal Novena:** Every 2nd Sunday of the month at 10:00 a.m.
- ***Reconciliation:** Saturday: 3:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. or any other time by appointment
- ***Baptism:** Kindly phone the Pastor as soon as the baby is born. Godparents must be Catholics.
- ***Weddings:** Please make arrangements at least six months in advance before any other plans are made.
- ***Sick Calls & Anointing of the Sick:** Please notify the pastor any time at 304-233-1688
- ***Parish Council:** Lou Khourey 304-277-3230, Linda Duffy 304-242-6853, Tom George 304-336-7142, P.J. Lenz 304-242-5606 and Carol Dougherty 740-782-0146
- ***Choir Members:** Rita Thomas Strawn, Shirley George, Allison Duffy, George Thomas, Ted Olinski, Earl Duffy, Lou Khourey, Robert Vawter, Jody & Abbie Seabright, Tracey Dierkes
- ***Altar Boys:** Louie Khourey & Dalton Haas
- ***Cedar Club:** Linda Duffy, President 304-242-6853
- ***Women's Society:** Sandra Dusick, President 304-232-7395



- *Remember the Church in your Last Will – Her prayers will accompany you to heaven
- *Please support Our Lady of Lebanon Church by patronizing our Advertisers
- *If you support the Church and need a Bulletin mailed to you, please call the Rectory
- ***Bulletin Announcements:** Submit all Bulletin Information to Fr. Bakhos. Deadline is: Every Tuesday by Noon
- ***New Parishioners:** We welcome you with great joy and invite you to be officially listed as one of our parishioners
- ***Parking:** Saturday & Sunday – both parking lots are for parishioners; Monday through Friday – park ONLY in the 3 ALLEY spaces

Gospel Reflection: 76th Mahrajan (Festival)

Readings of the Assumption: Rom 12:9-15 & Lk 1:46-55

Why will all ages call Mary blessed?

Since the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D., the dominant focus of the Church's understanding of Mary's blessedness has been her role as Theotokos (Bearer of God). While this term does not appear in the New Testament, it is congruent with the theme of Elizabeth's spirit-prompted words in Luke's gospel: "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (1:42).

Interestingly, though, Elizabeth's pronouncement climaxes not with further elaboration of Mary's unique status, but on quite a different note: "Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled" (1:45). This refers, of course, to Mary's acceptance of the role assigned to her by God as reported by the angel Gabriel: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (1:38). A praiseworthy response by any account. Yet its full significance is often overlooked. For Luke, the blessedness of Mary's belief derives not simply from the magnitude of its object (the birth of the Son of God), but from its primacy. Just as Elizabeth is the first character in the gospel to be filled with the holy Spirit, so Mary's is the first expression of faith. The point receives emphasis from Luke's juxtaposition of Mary's belief in the divine annunciation with Zechariah's lack of belief a few verses earlier (1:18-20). The silencing of Zechariah for his doubt contrasts with Mary's spontaneous outbreak of praise for God (1:46-55). Mary and Elizabeth matter because they are models to be emulated.

The high esteem in which the Church came to hold Mary obscures the distinctiveness of Luke's portrayal of her. The Mary of Luke's gospel is a conscious participant in the drama of salvation. None of the other evangelists even comes close to this. In Matthew's gospel, for instance, Mary is not the recipient of any revelation, nor does she have any speaking role (1:18-25; 2:13-15, 19-21). In Mark, Mary's positive role and individuality evaporates into Mark's blanket criticism of Jesus' family (3:21, 31-35). The Fourth Gospel's portrait of Mary, while by no means unsympathetic, grants her no substantial role in the advancement of the good news (only accidentally in 2:3). Jesus exhorts her to an exemplary role as "mother" of the Beloved Disciple (19:25-27), but it is this anonymous figure, not Mary, who embodies John's ideal of discipleship (13:23-26; 19:35; 20:3-8).

Luke's gospel is notable for the visibility it gives to women. His attention to Mary is, therefore, not an isolated phenomenon, but (as in the case of Elizabeth) emblematic of his theology as a whole. This theology emphasizes the elimination of marginality, be it socio-economic, ethnic or gender-based. This rhetoric of reversal forms a major theme in Mary's own song, as it does in Jesus' inaugural address at the synagogue of Nazareth (4:18-27). In this sense, Luke's portrayal of Mary encapsulates what is good about the good news ... the first will be last and the last will be first.

From the Desk of the Pastor

When I arrived to Wheeling in June 2001, the parishioners told me about the Mahrajan they were proud of. When I realized the magnitude of that event and the manpower needed to run it, I asked myself, "How in the world could this small parish accomplish the task?"

Now, after nine years, I have come to the conclusion that this Festival is unique. It is different from all the festivals I have ever seen in my life. This Mahrajan is like a huge tree: its trunk and roots are still in Wheeling; but its branches have expanded into the four corners of the United States: from Texas to Florida to Cleveland to Seattle to California and to Maine. The living parents and grandparents who remain in Wheeling are the trunk and their children and grandchildren, sisters and brothers – spread all over the United States – are the branches. When the date of the Mahrajan approaches, they leave everything and travel to Wheeling to reminisce the memories of their childhood at Oglebay Park. They also come to serve and to extend a helpful hand to their relatives and friends – our volunteers who work extensively to keep the Mahrajan alive and vibrant. That's why our parishioners put their hearts and hands together to keep the Mahrajan a "first-class" event to honor the Blessed Mother on her Assumption and to build memories for the generations to come. For these reasons, I say that if only one parishioner of Our Lady of Lebanon remains alive, he/she should keep this Mahrajan alive and running year after year.

--Fr. Bakhos

Mass Intentions

THIS WEEKEND, August 8-9: Mahrajan – Mass of the Assumption of the Blessed Mother

Saturday, August 8 At 4:00 p.m.:

Vincent Steven Kloss by his brother Chester Kloss

Joseph, Victoria, Minnie, John & Gloria John by Marge & Lou John

Sunday, August 9 at 10:30 a.m.: (Festival Outdoor Mass will be celebrated at Oglebay Park)

Joseph, Victoria, Minnie, John & Gloria John by Marge & Lou John

Intentions of the chairpersons & volunteers at the Festival (Mahrajan)

Weekday Masses

Monday, August 10: No Mass. Pastor's Day Off

Tuesday, August 11: No Mass. Pastor's Day Off

Wednesday, August 12 at Noon:

Special prayers for the intentions of Don Fielding (FL)

Good health of Joyce Josephs (St. Paul, MN) by her children and grandchildren & Fr Bakhos

Thursday, August 13 No Mass: Fr. Bakhos is on religious duty at National Shrine, Ohio

Friday, August 14 No Mass: Fr. Bakhos is on religious duty at National Shrine, Ohio

NEXT WEEKEND, August 15-16: Assumption of the Blessed Mother

Saturday, August 15 At 4:00 p.m.:

Living & Deceased members of the Nicholas & Nimnoom Ghaphery Family & the David Abraham

Ghaphery Family by the Ghaphery Family

Shipleby Shipleby by Emily Vince

Sunday, August 16 at 10:30 a.m.:

Dale Seidler, Sr., by his wife Nettie & Family

Deceased members of Nimon & Mariam Joseph Family by children & grandchildren

Additional Donations Toward Paving the Parking Lot

Many thanks to Mrs. Charlotte Canestraro who donated \$25 and to Holy & Shirley Bine who donated \$100 toward the remaining un-sponsored balance of paving the new parking lot. Total raised so far: \$20,959 (cost \$25,000)

May the Blessed Mother reward each one of you many fold.

Donate to the Church Maintenance Fund

Help with the Endowment Fund to Keep Our Church Open and Active (Total Raised: \$1,189.00)

An Endowment Fund CD account meant exclusively for our church maintenance for the years to come has been opened. Many parishioners –primarily those who have no one to inherit their property or money– are willing to donate all or part of their assets to the church. These earmarked donations will be saved in this Endowment Fund. Only the yearly interest will be withdrawn and spent to pay for church utilities and general maintenance.

We understand that some members of our community cannot support our church as they would like to because of the need to retain funds for their retirement years. But after their death, their donation can bring stability and security to the future of the church. All benefactors will be enrolled in the daily Mass offering. Please put into writing in your will the following wording:

(I,, hereby give, devise and bequeath the sum of \$..... (or specify described real or personal property) to the Church of Our Lady of Lebanon, a non-profit organization located at 2216 Eoff Street, Wheeling, WV 26003, Phone (304) 233-1688. I want my donation to be deposited in the Endowment Fund account designated to maintain and support the church. I also wish to be enrolled as benefactor in the daily Mass intentions.)

We thank each of the following individuals for their generous contribution to this Endowment Fund. They will be remembered in every Mass: *Bill & Mary Stees* (\$200), *Tom Ferris* (\$275), *Sylvia Long* (\$100), *Catherine Arthur (Memorial)* (\$100), *Women's Society total Fundraising* (\$514),

Our Lady of Lebanon Community Calendar

Date	Event
Sun., August 9	Set Up Mahrajan Booths – meet at Oglebay at 8:00 a.m. Sunday
Sunday, August 9	Mahrajan – Oglebay Park, Site 1; 10:30 a.m. – Mass; Noon – Booths open
Tuesday, August 11	Mahrajan Chairperson & Volunteer Appreciation Dinner – at 6:00 p.m.
Sunday, August 30	Women's Society Meeting – after 10:30 a.m. Mass
Sunday, August 30	Women's Society Gift Basket & 50/50 Raffle Drawing – after 10:30 a.m. Mass



2009 Mahrajan Update

Mahrajan Outdoor Mass (Sunday, August 9, at 10:30 a.m.)

Please remember that on Sunday, August 9th, there will be no Mass at our church. The Sunday Mass will only be celebrated at the beautiful outdoors setting at Oglebay Park – Site 1 at 10:30 a.m. Many thanks go to Dr. Al Ghaphery for sponsoring the Maronite Antonine nuns of Youngstown, Ohio, who will sing – along with our choir – at the Mahrajan Mass.

Mahrajan Entertainment Schedule (Sunday, August 9)

Our musical entertainer this year is Ghada Haddad, the wife of our previous years' singer Kamil, of Illinois. She will stimulate the audience and the dance floor will be filled with enthusiastic dancers. Sets of her performances will alternate with sets of the Alhambra Troupe of Cincinnati, which will perform Dance Shows according to the time schedule listed below. The seven dancers will perform their best and most memorable "Wings" show at 5:00 p.m. Don't miss that show. It is phenomenal and fantastic.

<i>Time</i>	Entertainment
Noon – 1:00	Entertainer Ghada: Lebanese Songs & Dabke
1:00 – 1:30	Alhambra Troupe Dance Show # 1
1:30 – 2:30	Entertainer Ghada: Lebanese Songs & Dabke
2:30 – 3:00	Alhambra Troupe Dance Show # 2
3:00 – 4:00	Entertainer Ghada: Lebanese Songs & Dabke
4:00 – 4:30	Alhambra Troupe Dance Show # 3
4:30 – 5:00	Intermission (Recorded Music)
5:00 – 5:30	Alhambra Troupe Final Dance Show # 4
5:30 – 7:00	Entertainer Ghada: Lebanese Songs & Dabke

Thanks to Generous Mahrajan Benefactors & Supporters

- 1- **Dr. Al Ghaphery** for sponsoring the **Maronite Antonine Nuns** from Youngstown, Ohio, so they may join with our choir at the Outdoor Mass at Oglebay Park
- 2- **Janet Shutler** for the **Mahrajan Ad Book design and Art work**
- 3- **Tom George of Sledd Co.** for sponsoring the **Refrigerated Truck**
- 4- **McKeen Security** for sponsoring the **Security Guards**
- 5- **Chamse Rahi** for sponsoring some **Rice & Lemon Juice**
- 6- The **Nagem Family** for donating the **Altar Flowers** in Memory of Dr. Tom Nagem

- 7- **Gold Khourey & Turak** for sponsoring the **\$1,000 Cash Grand Prize Raffle Tickets** and the **Billboard** (just North of Moundsville),
- 8- **Anonymous friend** for donating 2 cans of **coffee**
- 9- **Peggy Justice** for sponsoring the **children food supplies**
- 10- **Christine Faulkner** for **soliciting** area restaurants to donate **prizes, gift certificates and coupons** for **Children's Booth Prizes:**
- a. **Acapulco Mexican Restaurant** (Moundsville) for donating a **\$20 Gift Certificate**
 - b. **Dairy Queen** (South Wheeling, Elm Grove, Moundsville & Dallas Pike) for donating **over 250 Free Dilly Bar Gift Certificates**
 - c. **DeFelice Bros. Pizza** (Moundsville) for donating a **\$15 Gift Certificate**
 - d. **Generations Restaurant & Pub, Inc.** (Wheeling) for donating **4 Gift Certificates \$5 ea.**
 - e. **Huddle House** (Moundsville) for donating a **\$10 Gift Card**
 - f. **Ponderosa Steakhouse** (Glen Dale) for donating **4 Free Buffet Coupons**
 - g. **Young's Cafeteria & Restaurant** (Glen Dale) for donating **2 "Buy-One-Get-One" Certificates**
 - h. **Ye Olde Alpha** (Wheeling) for donating a **\$25 Gift Certificate**
 - i. **Panera Bakery** (Triadelphia) for donating **2 Coupons for "You Pick 2"**
 - j. **Eat N Park Restaurant** (Triadelphia) for donating a **\$10 Gift Card**
 - k. **Bob Evans Farm Restaurant** (Triadelphia) for donating a **\$10 Gift Card**
 - l. **Hardee's** (Wheeling) for donating **6 "Free 1/3 lb. Thickbergers"**
 - m. **Foggy Bottom** (Wheeling) for donating a **\$10 Gift Card**
 - n. **Subway Sandwiches & Salad** for donating **6 Coupons for 6-inch Subs**
 - o. **Fiesta Hair & Tan Salon** (Bethlehem) for donating **2 Gift Cards for \$10 each**
- 11- **Tom Ferris** for making 2 trays of **baklava** for the Mahrajan
- 12- **Nick Ghaphery** for donating \$800.00 worth of **cookies** for the Mahrajan
- 13- **Nettie Seidler** for donating \$500.00 toward the **kibbee** expenses
- 14- **Angela Nagem** for donating \$54.00 toward the **baklava** expenses
- 15- **Larry & Becky Ferrera** for donating some **steaks and a leg of lamb**
- 16- **Joe Coleman** for donating **100 plastic bus pans** to freeze and transport food to the Mahrajan
- 17- **Pepsi** for donating **4 cases of pop**
- 18- **Riesbeck's** for donating a **\$50 Gift Card**
- 19- Cash Donors:

--**Diamond Sponsors** (\$100 & over): Donald Fielding, Sylvia Long, John & Dee Shiben, Earl & Linda Duffy, Lou & Marge John, Mike Linton (In Memory of Suzanne Linton), Kenny & Nancy Joseph, Lou & Charlotte Khourey, Lois & Bob Hammond, Sam & Bernadine Elias, Larry & Lillian Siebieda,

--**Gold Sponsors** (\$26-\$99): Julia Tappe, Debbie Elias Kull, Larry & Lillian Siebieda, Tom Ferris,

--**Silver Sponsors** (up to \$25): Cecilia Ammar, Gary Lewis, Chamse Rahi, Bob & Fran Saseen, Anonymous Friend, Emily Vince, A Friend for Special Intention, Josephine Joseph, Anonymous,

May all the above generous benefactors be rewarded in good health and long life. May the Blessed Mother intercede for their deceased beloved one and lead them to the light of her Son, Jesus.

Mahrajan Dinner for Chairpersons & Volunteers (Tue., Aug. 11, 6 p.m.)

We deeply appreciate all the sacrifices of time, talent and treasure that each person who helps us with the mountain of work involved with the Mahrajan each year – both in advance of the event and on the day of the festival. This year, for the first time, all Mahrajan Chairpersons and volunteers are invited to attend an Appreciation Dinner at the Cedar Hall on Tuesday, August 11th, at 6:00 p.m.

No Daily Mass on Thursday and Friday, August 13 & 14

Fr. Bakhos will be helping the bishop and the clergy at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in Youngstown, Ohio.

Mahrajan Evaluation Meeting (Monday, August 17, at 7:00 p.m.)

All chairpersons of the Festival are asked to attend the meeting on Monday, August 17, at 7:00 p.m. to evaluate this year's Mahrajan and submit their suggestions and remarks for entry in our computer to improve next year's event. Please bring written (or typed) notes about your booth to the meeting. Thank you for your dedication and for offering your best work to the Blessed Mother.

Other Church Events

Women's Society Monthly 50/50 Raffle (Drawing after Mass: Sunday, August 30)

The Women's Society continues to sponsor the Monthly 50/50 Raffle. Tickets cost \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. Proceeds now will benefit the maintenance of our church through the "Endowment Fund."

The drawing from entries received **for the August 50/50 Raffle Tickets**, which are provided at the church entrance and in the weekly Church Bulletins, will take place in the Cedar Hall after Mass on **Sunday, August 30**.

Please check the ticket sheets carefully to be sure you are completing the correct ticket stubs. All raffle tickets are now printed on white paper only. Buy or sell the tickets, and return the completed stubs as soon as possible in the collection or mail to: Our Lady of Lebanon Church, 2216 Eoff Street, Wheeling, WV 26003. Please write as "Memo: 50/50 Raffle."

For more information or additional tickets, contact the church office at (304) 233-1688. May the Blessed Mother reward you manifold and we ask for your continued support. Congratulations to the July 50/50 winner of \$54: Anthony Lallone of Wellsburg (ticket was purchased by Mary Lish).

Women's Society Gift Basket Raffle (Drawing: After Mass on Sunday, August 30)

The Women's Society's next Raffle will feature a "Gardner's" Gift Basket contains: *a gift certificate from Klug's Greenhouse, a watering hose extender attachment, a frog statue, a bear statue, 2 gardening books, 2 sets of gardening gloves, a bulb planter, shears, a kneeling pad, a note pad, a garden marker and various other items.* **Won't you take a chance ... or two ... or eighteen!**

The Gift Basket Raffle proceeds benefit the maintenance of our church through the "Endowment Fund." Tickets cost \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00 **or triple your chances of winning by sending in 18 ticket stubs (3 sheets of tickets) at one time for only \$10.00.**

All Gift Basket and 50/50 Raffle Tickets are now printed on white paper in the bulletins so please check the ticket sheets carefully to be sure you are completing the correct ticket stubs. Buy or sell the tickets, and return the completed stubs as soon as possible in the weekly collection (with Gift Basket Raffle noted on the front of the envelope) or write Gift Basket Raffle on the "Memo" line of your check when you mail it to: Our Lady of Lebanon Church, 2216 Eoff Street, Wheeling, WV 26003. Tickets are available now at the church entrance and in our weekly Bulletins or call Kay at 304-232-0492.

Please Pray for Those on Our Prayer List

Please Remember Those Hospitalized Recently In Your Prayers:

Frank Lish, Peggy Justice, Josephine Joseph, Mary Piko, Pat McNeil (FL) niece of Kay Garvey

Also please pray for those who asked us to pray for them:

Rosella Saseen, Barb Sobota, Laura Wellman, Virginia Khourey Bryan (aunt of Lou Khourey in Toledo, OH), Richard & Mary Ryncarz (Shadyside, OH), Manell Brice (Arlington, VA), Rose Mary Bris-Roybal (Albuquerque, NM), John Vawter & his mom (brother & mother of Dr. Rob Vawter)

Happy Birthday

August 10: Kory Douglas Bratton, Thomasina Geimer
August 14: Jude Bowman, Mary Thomas
August 16: Tara George-Musilli
August 20: Tricia Committee, Irene Schuler
August 22: Kathleen George
August 23: Georgene Weisner- Manning, Emily John, Bill Daniel

Your Church Support Last Week

\$1,232	Collection
48	Candles
30	Utilities
20	Parking
125	Donations to Church
150	Mahrajan (Rental of Booth Space)
60	Mahrajan (Tables)
160	Mahrajan (Raffle Tickets)
\$1,825	Total. May God reward you many fold

What's New?

New Account Established for Parish Families Assistance

Upon request of a benefactor who donated \$750.00 to be used exclusively to help the families of the parish who are in dire need, Fr. Bakhos opened an account called, "**Parish Families Assistance Fund.**" Any money earmarked to be used toward helping our own parish families and half of the money collected from the Poor Box will be deposited into this account and used when needed at the discretion of the pastor and the Parish Council. The other half of the Poor Box money will be sent to Catholic Charity on 18th Street to be used for the poor of Wheeling. They are better able to screen the needs of those non-parish individuals seeking help than we are. May God reward those who share their blessings with the brothers and sisters of the Lord.

Many Thanks

To all our wonderful parishioners and volunteers who helped prepare the food for the Mahrajan this past week. You are the pillars and the backbones of our church – the trunk supporting the many branches of our parish – and your dedication to the Blessed Mother and to the continuation of the Mahrajan is noticeable. May your labor shine before the Lord.

Lamb Shish Kebab for sale

If you need 5 skewers of lamb shish kebab at cost price of \$17.00 please call the church office at 233-1688

Use Both Parking Lots on Saturdays and Sundays

Both parking lots are available for our parishioners who attend Mass on Saturdays and Sundays. They are rented during weekdays but not on weekends. Please fill them up.

Around Us

Assumption Pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon

When: Friday - Sunday: from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. August, 13 thru 16, 2009
Where: Shrine of our Lady of Lebanon, North Jackson, Ohio. Phone 330-538-3351
Program: 7:00 p.m. daily – Divine Liturgy followed by candle light procession

Church Blood Drive (Saturday, August 15th)

Info.: 304-547-4184 or 304-905-9000 American Red Cross Blood Service.
Where: Linsly School, Paul Gym, from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

Maronites = Catholics of the East

Lebanese Americans and Canadians: Making a Difference

Super-Fact: Did you know that the highest-rated episode in television history was the last episode of "M*A*S*H"? And who played the role of not-so-crazy Corporal Klinger for its entire 11-year run? A talented Arab American from Toledo, Ohio, Jamie Farr.

On NBC, "Saturday Night Live's" bandleader for many years was guitarist G.E. Smith. (His family's Lebanese name, Haddad, means 'blacksmith').

The best-known Lebanese in America was also the founder of St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital -- the late, great comedian and actor Danny Thomas. His son is a television and film producer and multi-E Emmy winner for "The Golden Girls" and other TV shows -- Tony Thomas. Danny's daughter is Emmy Award-winning Marlo Thomas, the first actress ever to play a single, independent young woman living apart from her parents in a TV series, "That Girl."

The leading man who starred in the movie Flashdance was Michael Nouri, later seen in TV's "Love and War" sitcom. Tony Shalhoub, of TV's "Stark Raving Mad," and Amy Yasbeck appeared in the hit sitcom "Wings" -- the first time two Arab Americans have been featured in the same TV series. Amy has also starred in films like Mel Brooks' "Robin Hood," "Men in Tights," and "Dracula: Dead and Loving It." Tony has moved to the big screen as well, in films like "Big Night," "Men in Black," "The Siege," "Paulie" and "A Civil Action."

Crusty but soft-hearted Mel in TV's "Alice" was portrayed by the late Vic Tayback. One of the co-stars of the series "Empty Nest" was Kristy McNichol. A star of TV's "Head of the Class" was once picked by People Magazine as one of the "50 most beautiful people in the U.S." -- Khrystyne Haje.

Two other fine movie and television actors who also starred in popular TV dramas are James Stacy, who played the title role in "Laramie," and Michael Ansara, who played Cochise in "Broken Arrow."

An award-winning comic actress from San Diego played a fun-loving nun in the "Sister Act" films, Kathy Najimy. She co-starred as Olive, a Lebanese-American, in NBC-TV's "Veronica's Closet" with Kirstie Alley. Kathy also does the voice of Peggy Hill on Fox-TV's animated hit, "King of the Hill." Lovely Salma Hayek is another actress who has lit up both the small screen (in cable-TV's movie, "The Hunchback," as the gypsy Esmeralda) and the big screen ("Desperado," "Fools Rush In," "Wild Wild West," etc.). The former head of Carolco Pictures, handling the "Rocky," "Rambo" and "Terminator" films, was billion-dollar producer, Mario Kassar.

The producer of the epic "The Message: The Story of Islam" (a biography of the Prophet Mohammed) and "Lion of the Desert," not to mention all the blockbuster "Halloween chillers," is Moustapha Akkad. The director of Jim Carrey's looney comedy hits "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" and "Liar, Liar," Eddie Murphy's "The Nutty Professor" and Robin Williams' "Patch Adams," is Tom Shadyac. (Together, these films have grossed more than \$1 billion worldwide.)

(To be continued)

Saints from Lebanon: Saint Sharbel (1828 - 1898)

The Maronite Church is a monastic community in her way of life. She exalts special virtues of sacrifices and mortification. The Maronites live the virtues of the Gospel. Everyday, they recite the Divine Office in the Church and also the Divine Liturgy.

Saint Sharbel represents the pure Maronite tradition. His life was a perpetual presence of God in his life, especially when he was praying before the Blessed Sacrament or when he celebrated the Divine Liturgy. He liked to be in the shadow of life. The monks discovered the accounts of his life after his death. His body remained incorruptible for many years, and many received graces by touching his miraculous body.

His parents were farmers. When his father died, his uncle took care of the family. St. Sharbel attended the parochial school and learned Syriac, which is the language of Christ. He consecrated himself to God and he had a great devotion to the Blessed Mother. He used to cut fresh flowers and decorate the statue of the Blessed Mother in a nearby grotto and spend hours of prayers there.

He left his home and joined a monastery and turned deaf ears to the plea of his family to go back to lay life. Even he refused to meet his crying mother who wanted him to establish a family and not to be a monk. The last part of his life was at a hermitage located on top of a mountain. In 1898, Saint Sharbel collapsed on the altar during the Elevation when he was reciting: "Father of Truth." It was a stroke, but it did not stop him to pray and praise God day and night. On Christmas Eve, he passed away and then his body was shown in the Church and buried in a nearby tomb.

Years after his death, everything changed. People living on the other side of the ravine and passerby noticed a light emanating from his tomb. When they opened it, his body was untouched. The doctors examined the body and said that his body was like a man sleeping. His body became a source of miracles and healings through the grace of God. It was moved to a new tomb that was sealed afterward.

Million of visitors from around the world visit his tomb every year seeking his intercession and healing grace. In a room next to his tomb you see millions of letters, and many scratches and this inscription: "They left their scratches and walked." May his prayers and blessing be with us, Amen.

Saints from Lebanon: Saint Rafqa

On the July 7th, 1832, the sound of the steeple bells of St George's Church filled the air of the small village of Hemlaya, in Mount Lebanon. Mrad Saber El-Shabq (El-Rayes), and his wife Rafqa El-Gemayel, had just had their baby girl baptized with the name of Pierette. Joys and sorrows are shared in the small villages of Lebanon, and this was yet another occasion for shared jubilation. Pierette was born on June 29th, 1832.

Surely not one happy person in that village suspected that one day Pierette would bring them even greater joy, as the Saint Rafqa we know and honor today.

Pierette's parents were upright and pious, and instilled the love of God in their little girl, and placed her under the protection of the Virgin Mary.

In 1839 God called Pierette's mother to Himself, and the little girl of seven years was nurtured by her father with the love and care of a mother and father. Unhappily in 1839 Mohammed Ali Basha of Egypt attacked Lebanon. Seized by terror the inhabitants of the village fled. Those who stayed found no work and became very poor.

Assad Badawy and his wife, who were close friends of Pierette's father, took the ten year old girl to their home in Damascus, where she spent four happy years and became skilled in household chores. At the age of 14 she returned to her home.

Pierette blossomed into a beautiful young maiden and her physical beauty was enhanced by her many virtues – among them were piety, meekness and obedience. During her growing years she sought the guidance of Father Gemayel, who was the Parish Priest of Our Lady of Deliverance in Bikfaya. He was so impressed by deep rooted virtue and spirituality, that he called her the Lily of Hemalaya.

Because of her striking beauty, Pierette attracted the attention of suitors. Her step mother wanted her to marry her brother and her aunt wanted her for her son. Pierette refused every suitor and felt it was time now to realize her dream of being a nun. Her father objected to this and she knew that she would have to educate herself further. She was beside herself with joy when the Superior of the Convent of Our lady of Deliverance accepted her unconditionally. Her vocation became crystal clear to her now.

Pierette was sent to the Jesuit School at Ghazir to be given a basic education. On the 9th of February – the Feast of St. Maron – she commenced her novitiate, choosing the name of Agnes. She began her journey with Christ with utmost generosity, sacrifice and detachment from things unspiritual. She spent her novice year at Ghazir in 1861. At the age of 30 years, on the feast of St. Joseph, she took the religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Sister Pierette began her teaching assignments in the schools of the Mariamite Order. Her students later testified to how spiritual and virtuous she was, and how deeply they were inspired by her holiness, which left a lasting impression on their lives. They spoke of how they learned to love God; how they enjoyed their religion classes with her and how they looked forward to school, just to be near Sister Pierette.

In 1871, when plans were being made to combine the Mariamite Order with that of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, Sister Pierette entered the Lebanese Maronite Order and took the name of Rafqa. She entered

upon a life of intense prayer and penance and with her Sisters followed a very rigid daily schedule. Rafqa's holiness could not be hidden. Her own Sisters testified to her saintliness, and despite her penances and fasts, she enjoyed sound health. But she took this as a sign that the crucified Lord she loved had overlooked her, and she cried out to Him and begged for a share in His suffering.

After fourteen years of robust health, Rafqa was afflicted with an agonizing pain in her eyes, and finally with blindness. For the next twenty-nine years Rafqa endured her condition, not merely in abandonment to God's will, but with joy that she had a share in Christ's Passion. In addition to her blindness, she began to experience debilitating nose bleeds that reduced her to skin and bones, and she became paralyzed. She lost nothing of her joy, and constantly called out aloud to God in joy and thanksgiving. Her only sorrow was that she felt her Sisters were burdened with caring for her.

At the dawn of March 1914, Sister Rafqa asked to receive the Eucharist. As long as she had breath, she kept repeating; "Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul." When she could no longer speak, she gave a sign requesting for the Last Sacraments and the Plenary Indulgence. Four minutes later, the God she had so ardently loved all her life, embraced her soul in His peace and love. She was 82 years of age.

On July 10th, 1927, Rafqa's body was transferred to a shrine in the corner of the Monastery chapel. Many miracles were attributed to her intercession with God, and so the case for her Beatification was introduced on December 23rd, 1925. Pope John Paul II declared her Venerable on February 11th, 1982. She was beatified on the 17th of November, 1985, and canonized on June 10th, 2001.

May St. Rafqa obtain for each of us, who love and venerate her, a spark of her ardent love of God and her total, unquestioning surrender to His will in every situation of life.

Saints from Lebanon: Saint Hardini

On 16th of May, Pope John Paul II canonized Saint Nemetahah Kassab Al-Hardini. A great crowd of pilgrims of Maronites from all over the world crowded St. Peter's Piazza for the impressive ceremony. All around the world, fellow Maronites watched the ceremony live on television.

This event completes the great trilogy of Maronite Saints to be canonized in the last 30 years, commencing with St. Sharbel –the first Saint of the East to be canonized by a Pope. St Sharbel was beatified in 1965 by Pope Paul VI (on the last day of the second Vatican Council), and canonized in 1977. Next was St. Rafqa, beatified in 1985 and canonized in 2001, the first year of the third Christian millennium. Now, last among them, comes St. Hardini, who lived the earliest of the three. One writer has suggested that Father Nemetallah, out of his characteristic humility waited to be glorified by the Church until the others had been recognized first!

Life of Fr. Hardini.

Father Hardini was born as Joseph Kassab in 1810. He had four brothers and two sisters. His brother Elias was a hermit. His grandfather was a priest. Joseph entered the school of the monks from 1816 to 1822 and then entered the monastery and became a novice of the Lebanese Maronite Order in 1828. He adopted the name Nemetallah ("Grace of God") and while there learned the art of book-binding. He took his first religious vows in 1830. After he finished his theological studies, he was ordained a priest in 1833. He became a member of the General Council of his Order three times: 1845-48, 1850-53 and 1856-1858. As a member of the Council he continued to bind books and he taught in monastic schools.

Reputation for Holiness

Saint Hardini was a man above all of prayer, totally enraptured by God. He spent days and nights in meditation, his arms uplifted in prayer and adoration of the Blessed Eucharist. The Virgin Mary was his patron and he prayed her Rosary faithfully. He was also a very humble, compassionate and patient man who lived his monastic vows of obedience, chastity and poverty to perfection. He said Mass with extraordinary reverence and devotion, as the high point of his day and center of his life. His fellow monks and the people who knew him called him "The Saint" even while he was still alive. One of his students was the junior monk Saint Sharbel in the years 1853-1858 who modeled himself on Saint Hardini.

His Example

People have remarked that Saint Hardini's life was a miracle in itself, but the greatest miracles performed by him are in the many people who have turned back to God because of his intercession and his way of life. This is especially so of many monks, for whom his example has been the occasion for a complete self-giving in their vocation and a new determination to walk on the same path of loyalty to their Lord Jesus Christ. To Saint Hardini is attributed the start of a whole school of sanctity in his Order. His name became synonymous with holiness and virtue, and some even coined the word 'Hardana' which in Arabic means 'to be like Al-Hardini' and follow his way of holiness.

Sayings

The holy monk's sayings have become widely quoted: "The monk in his monastery is a king in his castle. His nation is his religious Order, his soldiers are his brother monks, his glory is his virtue, his crown is his love of God and his Order, his garland is his chastity, his weapons are his poverty, obedience and prayers and his robe is his humility." One of his best-known sayings is, "The clever man is the one who knows how to save his soul." In a time of political turmoil and division, the new Saint kept his eyes always on the Lord and on his supreme duty of living a spiritual life, never getting involved in faction-fighting.

Miracles in His Lifetime

During his life, Saint Hardini exhibited a very deep spirituality, outstanding virtues and a radiance that came from his constant union with his God and Creator through prayer. It is no surprise that this holy man and friend of God performed many miracles. Saint Hardini had the gift of prophecy. On one occasion, when he was teaching his students and facing a large wall outside the monastery, he had a sense that the wall was suddenly going to fall. Thereupon, he asked his students to move away just before the wall fell down – and all present were spared injury. On another occasion, Saint Hardini was divinely enlightened to know that the barn where the cows of the monastery were kept was going to collapse on them. The cows were vital assets of the monastery, and so he asked the monk in charge to move the cows outside. At first the monk hesitated, but Saint Hardini insisted. After the cows were removed, the roof of the barn collapsed and not one cow perished.

Healing of the Altar-boy

One day, Saint Hardini wanted to celebrate his daily Mass but his usual altar boy did not arrive at church on time. Saint Hardini then went to the boy's home, found him in his room and asked him to get up and serve Mass. The altar boy was not able to because he had a high fever. Saint Hardini then requested the boy to stand up, and he ordered the malady: "Leave him!" At once the boy was cured and he went and served Saint Hardini's Mass with joy and liveliness.

Provisions Box

Saint Hardini once prayed over and blessed the provisions box which contained wheat and other foodstuffs at the monastery when it was very short of supplies. After a little while, the box was filled and spilled over. Everyone was amazed and praised God at what they saw. His fellow monks and ordinary lay people, judging him to be a saint, often asked him to pray for them and even bless water to be used on their land and for their livestock. His presence always imposed a special respect, reverence and solemnity.

Death and Further Marvels

Saint Hardini died in the monastery on the 14th of December, 1858. He passed away after struggling ten days with a high fever which he contracted from the cold winter wind of northern Lebanon. He was only 48 years old. He died holding a picture of the Virgin Mary, his last words being: "O Virgin Mary, into your hands I entrust my soul." People who were nearby at the moment of Saint Hardini's death perceived a heavenly light illuminating his room and an aromatic smell which remained in his room for a number of days afterwards.

When the Maronite Patriarch heard of Saint Hardini's death, he commented: "Bravo to this monk who knew how to profit from his monastic life."

Incorrupt Body

Some time later, the monks opened Saint Hardini's tomb and to their surprise they found his body had remained incorrupt. He was then removed and placed in a coffin near the church. From 1864 until 1927, visitors were allowed to see his intact body. His body was then reburied in the wall of his monastic cell, before being transferred to a little Chapel where Masses are celebrated for visitors. At the behest of the Maronite Patriarch, his body was examined and placed in a new coffin in 1996. It is now kept in a cedar coffin in the Monastery of Kfifan where people may visit. Saint Hardini was declared Venerable in 1989. Pope John Paul II beatified him on May 10, 1998, the first anniversary of his pastoral visit to Lebanon. The Maronite Church celebrates his feast-day on December 14th.

Miracles after Death

Several cures have taken place through his intercession. These include the raising to life of a Moslem child whose mother claimed had died, the healing of a person with a neurological disease, the restoration of sight to a blind person, and the curing of a person suffering from cancer. The case of the cure of Andre Najm is of particular note, due to its very recent occurrence and a thorough investigation by the international medical community that followed. Andre Najm, born in 1966, enjoyed excellent health for the first twenty years of his life. However in June of 1986 he began to experience chronic fatigue and a nervous collapse, making him unable to walk even a short distance. Many physicians in Lebanon and abroad treated him, but to no avail. He was suffering from a form of blood cancer and required frequent blood transfusions. On September 26, 1987, accompanied by family and friends, Andre went to the monastery of Kfifan where he prayed fervently at the grave of Saint Hardini. The people around him heard him say, "I beg you, Saint Hardini, give me a drop of blood for I am so tired to the point where I cannot even beg for blood on the street." He then asked to wear the monastic habit, moments later he was cured, and cried out with joy, "I put on the monastic habit, I am cured, I don't need blood anymore!" Andre has not required any blood transfusions since that day, and in 1991 he married Rola Raad. They have two children, a son named Sharbel and a daughter named Rafqa. Today Andre is in excellent health. The miraculous cure of Andre Najm was thoroughly investigated by the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. In 1997, the five-member medical team unanimously voted to accept the miraculous cure. This was followed by the approval of the seven-member theological team, and then the General Assembly of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, which includes twenty-four cardinals. Finally, in the presence of Pope John Paul II, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints published a decree accepting the miracle attributed to the intercession of the servant of God, Saint Hardini.

Saints for Us

The Church honors the Saints because they are our heroes in the faith, friends of Christ and intercessors in Heaven. We praise and honor them because God Himself has honored them. We seek their intercession, because in Heaven they have not ceased to care for us pilgrims struggling here below, who are hoping to join them. The Saints are given to us to inspire us by their example, to teach us how to imitate Christ, and to aid us by their intercession.

At his beatification, the Pope said that Saint Hardini "is an example of Christian and monastic life for the Maronite community and for all disciples of Christ today.... He is a sign of hope for all Lebanese, particularly for families and young people... Today there is a new celebration for Lebanese all over the world, for one of their brothers is held up to them as a model of holiness." The Holy Father also said, "May Lebanon continue to be a land of witnesses and saints, and a land of ever greater peace and brotherhood!"

May God be praised in His Saints!

Joke (553)

Knitting

A highway patrolman pulled alongside a speeding car on the freeway. Glancing at the car, he was astounded to see that the blonde behind the wheel was knitting! Realizing that she was oblivious to his flashing lights and siren, the trooper cranked down his window, turned on his bullhorn and yelled, 'PULL OVER!'

'NO!' the blonde yelled back, "IT'S A SCARF!"

Parrot and the Plumber

A woman owned a parrot that could say only one thing – "Who is it?" For years and years she had been trying to teach the bird to extend its vocabulary, but it refused to utter anything other than "Who is it?"

One day the woman had sent for the plumber, and because she had to go out shopping, she arranged for him to find the key under the mat outside the front door. The plumber duly arrived, found the key, let himself in, and set to work. Naturally the parrot, hearing someone in the house with an unfamiliar tread, decided to give a recital. "Who is it?" called the parrot.

"The plumber!" called the workman.

Hearing a strange voice the parrot again decided to utter his one and only phrase: "Who is it?"

"The plumber!" came the response.

The parrot was not satisfied; he wanted to see who the stranger was. "Who is it?" he called again, and again the plumber yelled out, "It's the plumber!" Again and again the bird called out, "Who is it?" and again and again the poor bewildered plumber responded, "It's the plumber! It's the plumber! *It's the plumber!*"

Eventually in a fury the man roamed the house, going from room to room trying to find out who was calling him, but he failed to realize that it was the parrot. For a whole hour he dashed around the house, growing increasingly desperate and shouting out, "It's the plumber!" Finally, the exhausted man fainted in the hall.

Just at that moment the woman of the house entered, saw the unconscious figure on the carpet, and said, "Who is it?"

The parrot replied, "It's the plumber!"

Early Identity

A story is told of a grandmother who proudly presented her two young grandchildren to her friend.

"Oh," remarked the friend, "They're so cute. How old are they?"

The question brought a definite response: "The lawyer is two and the doctor is four."

Small Phone Holes

A little boy ran to answer the phone for his mother. His mother called from the other room, "Who is it?" The boy answered, "I can't tell who it is, Mommy. The holes in the phone are too small."

Not a Bit of Influence

A market research interviewer was surveying people in the grocery store after they picked up their bread. One man picked up a loaf of Wonder Bread, and the interviewer asked him, "Sir, would you be willing to answer a couple of questions about your choice of bread?"

The man responded, "Yes, I'd be happy to."

"Fine," the man said. "The question I'd like to ask you is this: Do you feel that your choice of Wonder Bread has been at all influenced by their advertising program?"

The fellow looked shocked and said, "Of course not. I'm not influenced by that sort of thing at all!"

"Well then," he said, "could you tell me just why you did choose Wonder Bread?"

He replied, "Of course I can. Because it builds strong bodies eight ways!"