

*Eparchy of
Saint Maron of Brooklyn*

*Eparchy of Our Lady of
Lebanon of Los Angeles*



July 23, 2020
Feast of Saint Sharbel

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The world is going through a difficult time due to the coronavirus pandemic, civil unrest, and political divisiveness which impact the various aspects of our lives. The Church, like a mother, loves her children and cares for each one of them. We realize many are facing hardships and economic uncertainty. We assure you of our spiritual closeness with each one of you. We call on every person to support the less fortunate and suffering, and we stand in solidarity, as did the early Christian community.

The situation of our brothers and sisters in Lebanon is critical and getting worse. Governmental corruption, hegemony of the political system, financial hardships from the banking crisis, the devaluation of the Lebanese pound, government debt, high unemployment, and financial sanctions threaten to bring more than half of the population under the poverty line. Moving forward will bring Lebanon to the brink of a failed state that threatens the lives and hopes of people, the fragile stability of the region, and the face of the Lebanon we know and love.

We actively support the positions of our beloved Patriarch, His Eminence and Beatitude Bechara Peter Rai, in his call to safeguard Lebanon as independent state, sovereign over all its territory, free from any political hegemony and corruption, neutral in order to build proper relationships with the world, and initiate a constructive dialogue among the various factions. We hear the cry of the people who are demonstrating peacefully for justice, for fundamental rights. We applaud the efforts of the Church and many nonprofit organizations that provide the basic needs of those less fortunate and in need of help on a daily basis.

In view of this crisis, we have redoubled our efforts in support of our brothers and sisters in Lebanon. We work with different organizations to lobby the U.S. government in support of the sovereignty of Lebanon, and to provide much needed humanitarian aid. We also work closely with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops so that our voices will be stronger and more efficient.

We thus appeal for your help and support in these different areas:

- Let us increase our financial aid to our own families and relatives. They truly need this help now.
- We are in an election year. Bring the plight of Lebanon to all government leaders, and to all candidates for public office so that they can support the sovereignty and continued strength of Lebanon and help its people and Catholic institutions.

- Support Caritas Lebanon and other Church organizations. You can go directly to their website and Facebook pages make your donation online:

- Caritas Lebanon: www.caritaslebanon.org

You can also visit our respective Eparchy websites and Facebook to make an online donation with the memo: charity/support Lebanon:

- Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn: www.stmaron.org/donate-1 and @eparchyofstmaron
 - Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles: www.eparchy.org/donate and @OLOLEparchy.

You can also make your donations through your local Churches.

- Pray for peace in Lebanon and the region, asking our loving God to provide the necessary needs for the suffering and less fortunate.

We thank you for your heartfelt support and all your endeavors. We remember the words of Christ in Matthew 25:40 “Whatever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, you have done to me.”

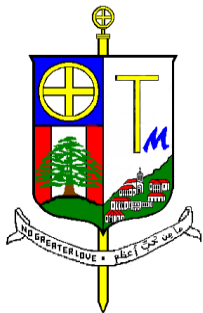
Yours in Christ,



+ Bishop Gregory J. Mansour
Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn



+ Bishop A. Elias Zaidan
Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles



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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Our hearts go out to our brothers and sisters in Lebanon who are enduring their greatest difficulties since the civil war. The economic situation has deteriorated over the past year, the banking system is straining, and the COVID-19 crisis has pushed Lebanon to the brink.

Caritas Lebanon. Founded in 1972, *Caritas Lebanon* is the official socio-pastoral arm of the Catholic Church and is under the authority of the Assembly of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops of Lebanon. Caritas Lebanon assists both individuals and communities through direct assistance to the poor, sick, refugees, victims of sex abuse and trafficking, and others in need. *Caritas Lebanon* is a member of *Caritas International*, one of the largest humanitarian networks in the world. www.Caritas.org.lb

Tele-Lumiere/Noursat. Tele-Lumiere/Noursat, the “Television of Light”, is the first established Christian Television network in Lebanon and the Middle East. It was founded in 1991 by a group of committed lay people. Tele-Lumiere/Noursat has become a daily bread and hope for the Christian minorities in the Middle East, as well as a source of peace for many viewers from different denominations. www.noursat.tv

Missionary Sisters of the Very Holy Sacrament. The Missionary Sisters of the Very Holy Sacrament, founded in 1966, is an order of religious Sisters that operated several ministries: schools for poor children, orphanages, free health clinics for the poor in rural villages, and a retirement home for the aged, among others. These people served by the Sisters would not receive help from anyone else. www.smssacrament.org

Oum El Nour. Oum el Nour is a Lebanese not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization that is committed to serving individuals suffering from drug addiction. Oum El Nour “Mother of the Light” provides a home for those who need shelter, help, understanding, and a place away to recover so that they can begin to live a full life, free of their past shackles. www.oumelnour.org/

SESOBEL. The name “SESOBEL” is an abbreviation from French – Service Social pour le Bienetre de L’Enfant au Liban – Social Service for the Well-Being of the Child in Lebanon. SESOBEL’s mission is to assist children suffering from mental and physical disabilities by improving their quality of life and supporting their families. SESOBEL cares for over 400 children annually and has helped thousands of families. With over 34 years of experience, SESOBEL has a shining reputation of service in the Middle East. sesobel.org

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. Founded in 1833 by a group of young laymen, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is a lay Catholic organization of women and men who put their faith into action. The Society is very close to the people. Most parishes and villages have a Society that is active. From the start, the Society has been under the patronage of Saint Vincent de Paul, a great saint, well-known for his works of charity. www.stvincent-lb.org/vincent/

Antonine Social Orientation School – Mrouj, Lebanon. The school educates and cares for orphans and poor children living in difficult circumstances. It also promotes intellectual, human, social and spiritual formation. Due to the bad socio-economic situations in Lebanon, we need financial support in order to keep operating. All donations must be sent to our Chancery to assist them.

Oraunion. Oraunion helps build communities and civil society in Lebanon through several initiatives: Labora, which provides job training and employment to young people in order to stem emigration from Lebanon; Groact, which supports civil society associations in cities, towns and villages; Ucipliban, which supports the free press; and Aulib, which supports Lebanese universities. <http://www.oraunion.org/>

Cénacle de La Lumière (“CDLL”). CDLL works in the field of rehabilitation for people suffering from drug and alcohol addiction. It was founded in 2006 as a volunteer initiative when a group of concerned friends came together to help individuals who were losing their lives to drugs. <https://www.cdll.org.lb/>

Our three Maronite Catholic Eparchies (Dioceses) in Syria:

- **Archeparchy of Aleppo.** The Maronite Catholic Archeparchy of Aleppo is an archeparchy of the Maronite Church currently governed by Archbishop Joseph Tobji. All donations must be sent to our Chancery to forward to him.
- **Archeparchy of Damascus.** The Maronite Catholic Archeparchy of Damascus is an archeparchy of the Maronite Church currently governed by Archbishop Samir Nassar. All donations must be sent to our Chancery to forward to him.
- **Eparchy of Latakia.** The Maronite Catholic Eparchy of Latakia is an eparchy of the Maronite Catholic Church governed by Bishop Antoine Chbeir. All donations must be sent to our Chancery to forward to him.

We pray that our effort will continue to bear good fruit for Lebanon and God’s people. Thank you.

Please consider joining with me in helping some Catholic and other institutions doing important work in helping the poor in Lebanon. I am personally familiar with each of these organizations, know their leadership and have observed their work in action over the last few years. Generally speaking, they help the “poorest of the poor”, and the people who most need help. The Eparchy can assist you if you wish to support one of these worthy causes. You can send us a check and designate which agency you want to help. We will be sure it gets there.

Thank you for considering their needs and responding generously.

May God bless you!

Sincerely yours in Christ,



+ Gregory John Mansour

GJM/rs