

The Maronite Journey to Christmas

The Maronite journey to Christmas is one that is unique and beautiful. Although this reflection could probably fill the whole page of this paper, we'll focus on two of the very unique aspects of this journey.

Like all the Eastern Churches, as Maronites, our theology or beliefs can be found in the liturgical celebrations of the church. So the best place to start a reflection on the Maronite journey to Christmas, is in fact the liturgy.

Much like the season of Advent in the Roman Catholic Calendar, the Maronite journey to Christmas is a distinct season within our liturgical cycle that aims to prepare the faithful to welcome the birth of the Messiah. Officially known as the "Season of the Glorious Birth of our Lord" or the "Season of Announcements", the journey goes for six Sundays and focusses on the announcement to Zechariah, the Annunciation to Mary, Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, Birth of John the Baptist, Revelation to Joseph and the Genealogy of Jesus.

These six stops provide us with an opportunity to follow the Christmas narrative as it is told in the opening chapters St Luke's and St Matthew's Gospel. Focusing on "The Announcements of the Lord that will make the universe rejoice" (Entrance Hymn from the Annunciation Liturgy) and through the Epistle, Gospel, hymns and prayers of the liturgy, we journey as a community through the events which occurred leading up to Jesus' birth.

One thing that is really unique in our Maronite tradition is that Para-liturgical way in which pray the Christmas Novena from December 15th to 23rd. The novena is prayed with the Blessed Sacrament exposed and with all the incense you would expect from an Eastern Church celebration. Hymns and prayers are sung that really bring to life the Syriac Antiochene heritage of the Maronite Church.

Inspired by the poetry of the Syriac Fathers, each day of the novena draws us ever more deeply into the mystery of the Incarnation and how we participate in this great mystery through the mysteries (sacraments) of the Church. An example of this can be found in the novena prayer for 20 December:

"O Word of God, you have come from the mouth of God to be the life for all people. You became the living Bread and were born in Bethlehem, 'the House of Bread,' to satisfy our hunger. We implore you, through your pure Nativity and through the intercession of your Mother and Saint Joseph, your chosen one, to grant us an insatiable hunger for your pure Body and Blood. May we approach your altars, and with proper preparation receive your Sacred Mysteries for our salvation and eternal life. Amen."

In this year, where uncertainty, fear and separation were the order of the day, the coming Christmas celebrations remind us that the hope of Christ is always available. The birth of Our Lord gives us the chance to look at the Child Jesus and know, that the God of all creation, the King of Kings, took on flesh out of a great love for us. We can know that through this great mystery we can share in God's divine life and love. It is because of this hope that we are able to look forward with hope and sing:

We praise and give you thanks, God the Father, and the Son, And the Spirit, three in one.
O Strong and Holy God, undivided Trinity,
You are blest from age to age.
hal-lel. hal-lel. hal-lel-loo-noh! (Praise him! Praise him! Praise him, our Lord!)
(Verse 7 of Maronite Hymn God Sent His Only Son)

Fr. Charbel Dib



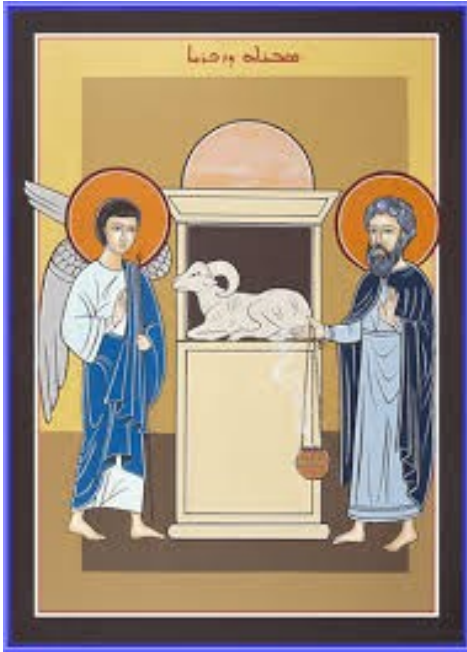
OUR LADY OF LEBANON
MARONITE CATHOLIC
CHURCH

55 South 4th Street
Easton, PA 18042
610-252-5275



Week 46 - Week 48 Email: ololchurch@yahoo.com Website: ololeaston.org Nov 16 - Dec 1, 2024

Announcement to Zechariah



The Gospel of Jesus Christ according to St. Luke 1:1-25

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years." The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur."

Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, "This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people."

OUR LADY OF LEBANON CHURCH

NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY



Pricing:
\$75 per person
\$40 12 & under

AT THE DOOR
\$100 PER PERSON.

TUESDAY
DECEMBER 31ST
55 S 4TH STREET EASTON, PA 18042
DOORS OPEN AT 8:00PM

Featuring:
ELI NAMEH & MONIR

FOR TICKET SALES:
DIANA 484-908-8083 FULL DINNER & CASH BAR!
RHONDA 610-905-0050

SANCTUARY CANDLE

The Sanctuary candle for November is donated in loving memory of **SFC, Jesse Dale** by his parents James & Lila Dale, and a birthday remembrance for **Josephine & John Symia** by their family.

PASTOR CONTACT

In case of any needed pastoral assistance, we ask that only the family contact Fr. Kamil on his cell phone at **610-739-8586**.

Fr. Kamil's email is clergy95@gmail.com

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

God the Father, hear our prayers for the sick members of our community and those in need. We ask this through the intercession of our patroness, Our Lady of Lebanon and her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

WEEKLY COLLECTION

Saturday, Nov 9 -	\$605.00
Sunday, Nov 10 -	\$859.00
Total -	\$1,464.00

CLERGY:

Fr. Kamil Al-Chouefati, Pastor

PARISH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday through Thursday
10:00 AM to 2:00 PM
Closed on Fridays

RECTORY & MAILING ADDRESS:

54 South 4th Street
Easton, PA 18042

LITURGIES:

Saturday: 5:00 PM
Sunday: 10:00 AM
Weekdays: 9:00 AM Tues - Fri
Weekday Holy Days of Obligation: 7:00 PM

The Rosary will be said 30 minutes before each Mass. Confession will be available one hour before each Mass or by appointment.

Season of the Glorious Birth of Our Lord

Announcement to Zechariah

Saturday, Nov 16 - 5:00 PM - NICK CIAMBRONE (Anniversary) by the Family

Sunday, Nov 17 - 10:00 AM - VICTOR KARAM (20th Anniversary) by the Family

Tuesday	Nov 19	9:00 AM	KAMIL & SALLY RIZK by Rafih Hayek & Family
Wednesday	Nov 20	9:00 AM	RIMAH MELHEM by Patty Mosellie
Thursday	Nov 21	9:00 AM	LILA RIZK HAYEK (Birthday Remembrance) by the Family
Friday	Nov 22	9:00 AM	MILO ELIAS by Donald & Cheryl Solomon

Announcement to the Virgin Mary

Saturday, Nov 23 - 5:00 PM - MARY SHUMAR & HABOUK SHUMAR (Anniversary) by the Family

Sunday, Nov 24 - 10:00 AM - DEACON ANTHONY KOURY by Caroline & George Navas

Tuesday	Nov 26	9:00 AM	GEORGE BAURKOT by Suzanne & Brad Superka
Wednesday	Nov 27	9:00 AM	MARION ESTEPHAN by Rita Gollatz Strobe
Thursday	Nov 28	9:00 AM	HAPPY THANKSGIVING! With gratitude & blessings to all our parishioners.
Friday	Nov 29	9:00 AM	FRANCES KOURY by Charlotte Assise

Visitation of the Virgin to Elizabeth

Saturday, Nov 30 - 5:00 PM - ROSE SYMIA (11th Anniversary) by her children and grandchildren.

Sunday, Dec 1 - 10:00 AM - BARBARA MELHEM by Mr. & Mrs. William Bader Jr.

THANKSGIVING DINNERS - There will be envelopes in each pew this weekend for anyone who would like to make a donation to help with the cost of 20 Thanksgiving dinners for families in need. You may place the envelopes in the collection basket. Please keep them in your prayers this Thanksgiving, as well as throughout the year.

SCRIPTURE
READINGS

Announcement to Zechariah

Rom 4:13-25 / Lk 1:1-25

Announcement to the Virgin Mary

Gal 3:15-22 / Lk 1:26-38

Visitation of the Virgin to Elizabeth

Eph 1:1-14 / Lk 1:39-45

PRAYERS FOR LEBANON

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will be held every Thursday from 7:00 to 8:00 PM.



RECITATION OF THE ROSARY

Join us in praying the Rosary 30 minutes before each Liturgy

HELP A FAMILY IN NEED FOR
THANKSGIVING

The Holy Name Society and the St. Theresa Sodality are now accepting monetary donations to provide complete Thanksgiving dinners for approximately 15 to 20 families.

You can donate \$30 to cover the cost for one family or contribute any amount you are able.

Please give your contribution to Labebe Buesing, Lila Melan, or any other sodality member by Sunday, November 17th. There will also be envelopes in the pews for your convenience. You may place them in the collection basket!



Thank you for your generosity!



Volunteers
Needed!

The Project Hope Christmas dinner is set for Sunday, December 15th in our church hall. Project Hope is seeking volunteers aged 16 and older to lend a hand. There will be four shifts to choose from, and you are welcome to volunteer for more than one shift. This is an excellent opportunity for students to earn community service hours.

Please email Judy Walker at judithwlkr@gmail.com to sign up!

SATURDAY, DEC 14 - 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

SUNDAY DECEMBER 15

9:00 AM - 11:00 PM

11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

2:00 PM - 5:00 PM

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Sts Joachim and Anne Mission, Allentown

Christmas Party

Tickets \$85

Saturday
Dec 14
2024

Ukrainian Club
803 N Front St
Allentown, PA 18102

VIP \$100

Yousef Shamoun

Doors open at 9:00 PM

BYOB

Includes: Full Maza
Soft Drinks and Door Prizes

Food is provided by courtesy of
Soumaya and sons Bakery

Arguile available

For Reservation Call:
Rony Khoury 484 - 547 - 8067

SAVE THE DATES

Christmas Novena -

December 15th thru December 23rd.
Liturgy to begin at 7:00 PM with Novena to follow.

Bishop Gregory's Visit -

Wednesday, December 18th at 7:00 PM.
Coffee reception to follow in church hall.

Maronite Servants of Light Visit

December 20th, 21st & 22nd.
Details to follow in future bulletins.

Christmas Pageant &
Children's Christmas Party

To be announced in future bulletins.