

CHURCH OF THE VIRGIN MARY

216 - 8TH AVENUE, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, 11215
TEL: (718) 788-5454, FAX: (718) 499-7702



“Christ, Our Passover!”

Dear friends and parishioners,

This past Christmas our beloved Archbishop Cyril Bustros appointed me pastor of our beautiful Church of the Virgin Mary. I am truly honored and humbled that the Grace of God has called me to serve the Lord in this wonderful community sharing among you the cup of Salvation until the Kingdom of God comes (Cf Luke 22:15-21).

Certainly, in following Christ, our God and Saviour, we commit ourselves to Christian life by embracing the will of God who “so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16) As a Church, a community of faithful, we celebrate the sacrifice of Christ, his death and his resurrection, his Self-Giving, especially in the Divine Liturgy; “the Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life.” . . . For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch.” (CCC 1324) Besides, we are renewed by the proclamation of His holy Word in the Scriptures. “the Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the Body of the Lord” (DV 21): both nourish and govern the whole Christian life.” (CCC 141) “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Ps 119:105; cf. Is 50:4). So when we celebrate the Divine Liturgy and we seek the Scriptures which “had foretold this divine plan of salvation through the putting to death of “the righteous one, my Servant” as a mystery of universal redemption, that is, as the ransom that would free men from the slavery of sin,” (CCC 601) we continually grow in our knowledge of God's goodness to us, and we are challenged to seek out the ways of loving service in imitation of Christ, for the sake of building up his kingdom in the world.

Jesus is our Passover. By developing a personal relationship with Jesus we enter in the spirit of Easter. This will bring us a self-awareness, lead us to improve our relationships, and build up a wel-

coming community open to serve. We will reach out to others with the spirit of love without looking for personal interest or expecting any reward other than following Christ.

Please join me by reciting this prayer:

We desire, O Lord, as community of the Church of the Virgin Mary in Brooklyn, NY, to create an environment where all feel welcomed and cared for. We seek to establish trust and credibility and to let your loving truth be spoken in our lives. We want to see You at the center of our communities, lives, and activities. We believe that You will reveal Yourself to us through worship and repentance. Our desire is to expose ourselves to You who are not just part of our lives, but are our lives. We want to foster in ourselves a passion to learn more about You and Your Word. We desire to nurture transformational growth in our spiritual journeys- from where we are to where You want to take us. We want to move spiritually to a place where we will live out our faith. We desire to see ourselves becoming more like You, O Christ our God, serving each other, the church, and the wider community- for we believe it's through service to others that our lives are changed. We want to create a supportive environment where we are able to bring others from outside of our community to hear the Gospel message. We also want to equip ourselves with the ability to share our own faith. Our desire is to foster a passion to share You, O Christ. Give us Your glory, that we may be one as You and the Father are one. Continue to make the Name of the Father known to us, so that the love with which the Father loved You may be in us, and You may be in us (Cf John 17: 22, 26). Amen.

Have a Blessed Lent and a Holy Resurrection!

Fr. Antoine Rizk, BSO

VIRGIN MARY NEWSLETTER - March 2009

LENTEN PRAYERS SCHEDULE

Monday – The Great Compline, 7:30 PM

Wednesday – The Pre-sanctified, 7:30 PM

Friday – The Akathist, 8:00 PM

LENTEN BLESSINGS: In this Holy Season of Lent, every Friday, following the supper and the Akathist prayer, we will have a guest speaker.

February 27:

Lenten Supper - Offered by John & Zaka Hechme-

Speaker - Msgr Guy Massie

March 6:

Lenten Supper—Ladies Society

**Speaker - Most Rev Nicholas DiMarzio,
Bishop of Brooklyn**

March 13:

Lenten Supper - Fraternity

Speaker - Msgr. Joseph Nagel

March 20:

Lenten Supper – NAMY

Speaker – Rt. Rev. Romanos Russo

March 27:

Lenten Supper - Religious Ed & Prayer Group

**Speaker – Most Rev Gregory Mansour
Bishop of the Eparchy of St Maron of Brooklyn**

The proceeds of the Lenten Suppers will be given to the Shepherds Care. May this season be a time of renewal.



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

- 7:30 PM:** Holy Monday and Tuesday
7:30 PM: Holy Wednesday. Liturgy followed by the Bridegroom service and the oil benediction.
8:00 PM: Holy Thursday. The crucifixion.
3:00 PM: Holy Friday. The descent from the Cross.
8:00 PM: Holy Friday. The Burial of Christ.
10:00 AM: Holy Saturday. The blessing of the Light followed by the Liturgy of St. Basil.
9:30 PM: PASCHA LITURGY - Al-Hajmat, Easter Liturgy followed by Easter breakfast.
11:00 AM: EASTER SUNDAY. Divine Liturgy.
Christ is Risen! He is Truly Risen!

DECREE OF APPOINTMENT

In the Name of God, Amen.

Mindful of his demonstrated abilities, piety and zeal for souls, and with our utmost concern for the continued growth and spiritual nourishment of flock under our care, we hereby appoint

The Rev. Fr. Antoine Rizk, BSO

As Pastor of the Church of the Virgin Mary in Brooklyn, NY, with all the rights, prerogatives and duties attached thereto, and effective immediately.

We ask the faithful to give him their continued moral and spiritual support.

Given at our eparchial chancery in West Roxbury, MA, on this 18th day of December in the year of Our Lord the two thousand and eighth.

**Archbishop Cyril Bustros
Eparch of Newton**

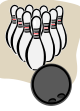


NEWBORN: Congratulations to Antoine and Iris Hechme on the birth of their son Jonathan; to Craig and Christina (Zaloum) Ungary on the birth of their son, Leyton Alexander.

BAPTIZED IN CHRIST: Congratulations to Andrew and Diana Turck on the baptism of their daughter Pheobe Katherine; to Daniel & Nadine Lahage on the baptism of their son Andrew.



ASLEEP IN THE LORD: We mourn the death of **Laurice Dabas** at the age of 76, in Haifa. She is survived by her husband Nayef, her children Joseph, Jamil, Jamal and their families; of **Nakhleh Matta Hayek** at the age of 71 in Lebanon. He is survived by his wife Lily Moussa, his children Fadi, Samer, and Roula, by his brothers Rev. Nazih, Maroun, Elias, Ibrahim, and George, by his sisters Marie Jabbour and Georgette Hayek, and their families; of **Marie Zaroura** at the age of 78 in Syria. She is survived by her children Joseph, Elias, Therese, and Maha, by her brothers George, Fouad, Hnien Abiad, and by her sister Sister Wadad Abiad, and their families; of **Victoria Kateb**, at the age of 100. She is survived by her children George Kateb, Elaine Kateb, and Judith Kateb Grace, her son-in-law Anthony Farage, and their families; of **Evelyn Gorayeb**, mother of Rev. Albert Gorayeb, at the age of 96. She is survived by her children Robert, Ronald, and their families; of **Jacqueline Daghim**, at the age of 80 in Syria. She is survived by her children Razak, Nabil, Samir, Ghassan, Maghda, Amal, Najwa, Roula and their families; of **Sleiman El-Ashkar** in Homos, Syria, at the age of 79. He is survived by his daughter Ferial El-Ashkar Zaroura. Please remember them all in your prayers!



YOUNG ADULTS BOWLING (18 and over):

Young adults of our parish joined Fr Antoine at Melody Lanes, 37th St, Brooklyn, for bowling and socializing, on **February 28th**, in coordination with MAYA and the Social Club. We are looking forward to planning many original and exciting activities for the young adults in the future!

ECUMENICAL PRAYER GROUP:



This group, comprised of orthodox and catholic members, visited us on **February 18th**. After a prayer service, Very Rev. Archimandrite Eugene Pappas of The Three Hierarchies Greek Orthodox Church gave a talk about the unity of the Church. Fr. Antoine gave a talk about the History of the Melkite Church and the Church of the Virgin Mary. Rev. Richard Terga, Pastoral Associate at Our Lady of Good Counsel, NYC and Rev. Fred Saato, Director of "God With Us Publications," were among the guests. The evening was prayerful and educational!



VALENTINE PARTY:

On Friday, **February 13th**, our Youth Group NAMY and Young Adult MAYA sponsored a Valentine's party. At this special time of love and friendship it was fun spending time with our peers!

CARD PARTY: On **February 7th**, the Fraternity held their card party. Everyone had a good time playing at the various games organized by the group and enjoyed the snack!



LADIES SOCIETY LUNCHEON:

On **January 17th**, the Ladies Society celebrated the Divine Liturgy together followed by a delicious lunch. Everyone had an enjoyable afternoon shared with good food and great friends!

FUTURE EVENTS/PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES:

NEW BOOKLET: We are going to print out a new booklet of the Divine Liturgy with the new **Common English Translation of the Divine and Holy Liturgy of our Father among the Saints John Chrysostom**, approved *ad experimentum* in Mexico City in October 08 by his Beatitude, Patriarch Gregorios III, his Grace, Archbishop Cyril, and the Bishops of the English-speaking Eparchies.



BIBLE STUDY: To discover the love of God and his salvation, join our meetings which are

held every other Tuesday of each month, at 8:00pm. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, **March 10th**, 8:15pm. **"Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ" (St. Jerome).**



PRE-NAMY CLUB:

The preteens (grades 5-8 and/or ages 10-13) are meeting every other Saturday of each month to continue their journey of faith through fun, educational, and social activities. The next meeting will be held on Saturday, **March 14th**, at 5:30pm. All preteens are welcome to join us!

ECUMENICAL PRAYER MEETING:

Our Parish is cordially invited on Wednesday, **March 18th**, at 6:00 pm, to Lenten Pre-sanctified Divine Liturgy and, at 7:15 pm, to the Ecumenical Prayer Meeting with Very Rev. Eugene Pappas at the Three Hierarchs Greek Orthodox Church, 1724 Ave P, at 17th St in Midwood, Brooklyn.

MOVIE NIGHT FOR YOUNG ADULTS (18 and over):



On Saturday, **March 21st**, at 8:00pm, we will be watching a wonderful movie called **"The Ultimate Gift."** Based on Jim Stovall's best-selling novel, *The Ultimate Gift* sends a young man of privilege on an improbably journey. Trust fund baby Jason Stevens (Drew Fuller) loves all of life's gifts, as long as they're bankable. But when his wealthy grandfather, Red (Garner), dies, Jason receives a most unusual inheritance: twelve tasks, which Red calls "gifts," to challenge Jason to grow as a man. If he succeeds, the experience will not only change Jason forever, but he will discover the real meaning of wealth. **Time: 1 hr 54 min | Production Year: 2007. Popcorn will be served!**



SUNDAY BOWLING:

On Sunday, **March 22nd**, the social club is bringing bowling back. Everyone is welcomed to join us from 3:00-5:00pm for an afternoon of bowling at Melody Lanes, 37th St, Brooklyn (between 4th and 5th Avenue).

SPIRITUAL RETREAT:



We did plan for you a one-day spiritual retreat on Saturday, **March 28**, at Mount Manresa Jesuit Retreat House, 239 Fingerboard Road, Staten Island. Their staff will lead our day of retreat, which would begin around 8:30 a.m. and conclude around 3:00 p.m. Coffee and cake would be served in our conference room upon our arrival, and lunch would be around noontime. Presentations, possibly a meditation, chance for reconciliation and the Liturgy will be conducted during the retreat day. The suggested donation is \$34.00 per person. If you would like to

join us please call the rectory at 718-788-5454 or Vincent Zaloom at 718-448-2008 before **March 20th**.



BABY CLOTHING DRIVE: On Sunday, **March 29th**, the Fraternity is hosting a “baby clothing” drive. All items collected will be brought to *Sisters of Life*. **Thank you all for your generous spirits!**

MOVIE NIGHT ABOUT EASTER: On Saturday, **April 4th**, at 7:00pm, the Fraternity is organizing a Movie Night about Easter. **All are welcome to attend!**



LADIES SOCIETY: On Sunday, **April 26th**, 2009, Feast of the Myrrh-Bearing Women, the Annual Family Luncheon will be hosted following the Divine Liturgy in honor of living and deceased members of the Ladies Society. Plan your table of family and friends. For more information, please contact Wendy Dabagh.



SOLEMN COMMUNION: At their baptism we give our children their first communion. As they grow in life they receive communion with more understanding of the sacrament of the Eucharist. On **April 26**, we will be celebrating their Solemn Communion. We pray that the children keep their souls pure and always have Christ in their heart. We would like to thank Saturday School team for preparing them for this wonderful event.

EASTER SHOW: A trip to see the show “BEHOLD THE LAMB” (Lancaster, PA) is organized by the Fraternity and open to everybody. We will be leaving on Saturday, **April 18th**, at 9:00am (Bay Ridge), each one by his/her own car. Prices: \$75 per adult; \$55 per teen; and \$35 per child. Hotels are available. For more information, please contact George Sayad or Adel Baghdadi.



SATURDAY SCHOOL’S TRIP: On Saturday, **May 2nd**, we are organizing a trip to Hershey Park, PA. For reservation or for more information, please contact Salwa Awad!

HEALTH FAIR AND BLOOD DRIVE: On Sunday, **May 3rd**, the Church will hold our Annual Health Fair sponsored by the New York Methodist Hospital. You are invited to come and receive important health information and donate blood. Thanks to Dr. Emile Baccash and Josephine Lian for continuing to organize this very important event.



ROUND TRIP CRUISE: Join Fr. Antoine, **July 13-18**, 2009 for a round trip cruise from New York with family and friends. Visit Canada’s beautiful ports at Saint John and Halifax. Enjoy the luxury and pampering of the Carnival experience. Your days at sea will be restful and exciting and the ports will be fun for all. The rate per person is: \$617 inside cabin; \$737 Oceanview; \$837 Balcony. Quad cabins and insurance are available. Early booking recommended for best choice of cabins. Deposit is refundable until 5/10/09. For more information please contact Joan Paradiso (Paradise Travel) at (718) 745-0556!

200 CLUB: Congratulations to the \$1000 prize winners of the 200 Club, Dr. Fouad Surur, Issam El-Achkar, and Henry Deeb. Dr. Fouad Surur graciously donated the winnings back to the Church. If you want to buy a number, please call Al Corhan at 718-238-7054.



FUTURE LITURGIES: On March 8, for Evelyn Gorayeb (40 day); on March 15 for Hanan Dagher Ghoson, Ajib Shabouk, and Linda Wilson; on March 22, for Joseph Seikali; on March 29, for Sleiman El-Ashkar (40 day).

PARISH ORGANIZATIONS CONTACT NUMBERS:

- PARISH COUNCIL:** Adel Baghdady (718) 748-7294
- FRATORITY:** George Sayad (718) 836-1030
- LADIES SOCIETY:** Wendy Dabagh (718) 238-1781
- NAMY:** Ronnie Bache (718) 948-8106
- SATURDAY SCHOOL:** Salwa Awad (718) 238-6355
- CHOIR:** Barbara Giancola (718) 836-3653
- SOCIAL CLUB:** Elizabeth Grace (718) 857-6632
- 200 CLUB:** Al Corhan (718) 238-7045
- COFFEE HOUR:** Julie Behette (718)745-7363

DONATIONS: Thank you to all who continue to support the church by one, your presence at the Liturgy and various parish functions and two, by your generous contributions. It is these important things that help to make the Church of the Virgin Mary such a thriving community of faith. **Happy Easter!**



Because of the abundance of the content of this Newsletter, we couldn't include the adds and publish them on this page. Please accept our apologies!