



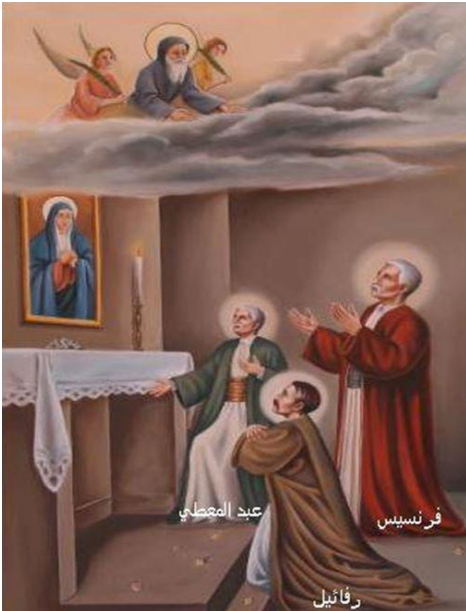
# Our Lady of Purgatory



## Maronite Catholic Church

July 16-17, 2022

### SEVENTH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST



#### RELIC OF THE BLESSED MASSABKI BROTHERS

We have been blessed to receive a First Class Relic of the Blessed Massabki Brothers from Bishop Samir Nassar of Damascus and from Mr. Louis Ragy. The relic is for the parish of Saint Maron Church, Philadelphia, to be kept in a worthy place for devotion and blessings. We thank Saydena Samir and Louis for their beautiful gift in the hope that we can in some way imitate the life of the Blessed Massabki Brothers.

#### Massabki Brothers

Towards the end of the XIII century, there lived in Damascus a married Maronite priest named Ya'qoub. This priest lived with his family in "Masback el barrani," a quarter of Damascus. The Damascans, who highly respected this "zealous and honorable" priest, gave his descendants the last name of "Massabki," for the name of the quarter in which he lived.

In 1293, Father Ya'qoub was ordained Bishop of Damascus, but persecution forced him to flee the city, along with other Maronite families, and to take refuge in Cyprus where the respected Prelate died, mourning the death of his son Francis, massacred at Zabadani (Syria). In the XV century, his sons and grandsons returned to Damascus where they were known by the name of "Massabki."

#### Ne'meh Massabki

A man of the faith, Ne'meh raised his children in the fear of the Lord. He had four boys: Francis, Abdul Mohti, Raphael-who shed their blood for their faith-and Father Abdallah; and two girls, Mary and Martha.

#### Francis Ne'meh Massabki

Francis married Elizabeth Chiha, who gave birth to three boys and five girls. Francis was a tall, handsome man with clear eyes, gentle and humble, but with a strong will in the face of difficulty. He wore the dress (gunbaz) that was in the style of his time and covered his head with a large black turban.

He was a generous man. His vast home was open to everybody, particularly foreigners and pilgrims. Francis possessed fabulous wealth, acquired through untiring toil and integrity in business: he was involved in the sale of natural silk. The Lebanese entrusted their products to him, which he then sold in Syria and elsewhere. He was charged with attending to the spiritual and material affairs of the Maronite Patriarch in Syria.

Before going about his business, Francis said his morning prayers with his family, attended Liturgy, and took

#### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

*"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."  
Tertullian*

communion. He was always at the disposal of the priests in his community, devoting his time and money to them. His magnanimity and his generosity were not limited to his family and fellow churchgoers. His popularity went beyond the Syrian borders, and in Lebanon, it was told, they announced his arrival from village to village by tolling bells.

#### Abdel Mohti Ne'meh Massabki

Thin and slender, Abdel Mohti preferred solitude. He lived with his wife and children in his brother Francis's house. Abdel Mohti spent his life raising and educating his children. His teachings were impregnated with a deep faith and true piety. One of his students testified that Abdel Mohti would often repeat to them: "The Christian must always be ready to spill his blood for the love of Christ, and that man's greatest joy is to receive the grace of martyrdom."

Abdel Mohti attended the Holy Sacrament each day and fasted all of Lent, without tasting even oil. He observed all holy days and religious ceremonies and taught his children the psalms and religious chants. In church, Abdel Mohti kneeled directly on the ground, erect, without leaning, and stayed thus throughout each Liturgy. His knees, according to his student George, became hard and callous.

Fr. Vincent Farhat, Pastor | Rev. Mr. Jean Mattar, Deacon | Joseph Abraham, Sub-deacon

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OFFICE HOURS: The Church office will be open Monday through Thursday from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm.

Tired of his teaching career, he went into business; but his delicate conscience forced him to close shop for fear of "deceiving his customers." From that day forward, he dedicated his life to prayer and meditation.

### **Raphael Ne'meh Massabki**

Raphael was short, feeble-bodied, black-eyed, and simple-hearted. Devout, he prayed to the Virgin Mary with a pure and filial heart; he often turned to her in his business dealings. Raphael was humble. He lived a poor bachelor, but rich in the love of God, and received the grace of martyrdom with his brothers.

In 1860, Ahmed Pasha ruled Syria. A sectarian tyrant, nothing would prevent him from achieving his ends.

July 9 of that year, by a special and secret order, Ahmed Pasha's henchmen traced crosses in the streets of Damascus and made it known that the "Children of the Christians" were the authors. Spirits were troubled and reprisals were unleashed. Fear permeated the Christian quarters. The trouble was distasteful to honest Muslims, and with the Council of Powers, they demanded of Ahmed to put an end to the trouble for the peace of the inhabitants and the safety of peoples' lives. So Ahmed sent his emissaries to imprison some Christians charged with "disturbing the public peace," and then quickly released them.

At sundown, the governor gave the order to his agents, with the help of some hoodlums, to go into the streets and start fires. Having arrived in front of the Orthodox Church, they set it afire after a bloody massacre. The fire spread, and theft and plundering rampaged through house after house. On the morning of July 10, the Christians were massacred, their houses destroyed, and their goods stolen. The survivors took refuge in the citadel, aided by the great Emir Abdel-Kader of Algeria, and by several Muslims.

Around 8 o'clock in the evening, while fire took hold of the Orthodox Christian quarters, Francis, Abdel Mohti, and Raphael were at home. Fearing the furor and ferocity of the massacres, they left their wives and children and headed for the Franciscan convent. At 11 o'clock,

the Mission Superior closed and barricaded the doors, and invited the refugees into the church. After the litany, the Fathers heard confession and gave communion to all of the devoted present. From the church, they climbed to the convent terrace; only Francis remained kneeling before the altar of the Sorrowful Mother.

At one hour past midnight, the slaughterers infiltrated the house by a secret door shown to them by Hassan Allaf, the house manager. Some refugees took flight. Ahmed's agents seized the Superior who promised to show them the hiding place of a treasure. They followed him in delirious joy. The Father descended into the church, lighted two candelabras, opened the tabernacle, and swallowed the Blessed Hosts. He was killed upon the altar. Francis remained kneeling before the Virgin. Ahmed's agents recognized him. They advanced towards him and said: "Sheik Abdallah has sent us to save you from death; you, your brothers, your families, and all those who depend upon you for protection, on the condition that you deny your faith and convert to Islam." Francis responded calmly: "Sheik Abdallah can take the money I lent him, he can also take my life; but my faith, no one can make me deny. I am a Maronite Christian and on the faith of Christ, I will die."

"We will kill you," they cried. "I will be with my Lord." Francis then began a prayer, which he finished in heaven. The slaughterers massacred him with swords, hatchets, and daggers.

Abdel Mohti was on the church terrace, when the convent fell into the hands of the assassins. He ran to the church to take refuge near his brother, but at the chapel door, he was seized and asked to deny his faith in order to enter Islam. His life would be spared. In a clear voice, he proclaimed: "I am a Christian, kill me, I am ready." Daggers and hatchets severed his body and he fell at the church door.

As for Raphael, he was hiding in a corner of the convent. They found him and propositioned him: "become a Muslim, you will be saved." Raphael fell to his knees and appealed to the Holy Virgin. He was beheaded and trampled. Once the calm had returned,

witnesses assure, the three martyred brothers were buried with the Franciscan Priests, martyrs for their faith.

### **PRAYER OF THE BLESSED MASSABKI BROTHERS FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

O Christ our God, we remember the three Massabki Martyrs, Francis, Abdul-Mooti, and Raphael, who gave their lives because of their faith in you. Let us raise glory, honor, and praise to Christ the Martyr, who shed his blood and quenched the thirst of the holy martyrs; to the One, who strengthens the faithful, crowns those who persevere, and rejoices in their feast.

The martyrs endured great suffering and bitter persecution because of their love for you and their trust in your mercy. They won crowns of victory, making their relics sources of grace, healing, and blessings.

We remember the three Massabki Martyrs, known for their piety, goodness, and genuine concern for the poor.

O Lord, we ask you, through the prayers and intercession of your three beloved martyrs to strengthen us in our daily struggles, forgive our sins, and grant us your grace. Have mercy on those who have faith in you and lead all peoples to you. May we walk on your path in the light of your Gospel, keeping your commandments and following in the footsteps of our holy martyrs, that we may receive their crown in your eternal dwellings.

O Lord on high, hidden from all creation, you are peace reconciling those who are enemies and rescuing the persecuted and displaced of your flock. Lord, we raise our prayers and ask through the intercession of the Blessed Massabki brothers, for peace in the Middle East, especially Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, lands which continue to face oppression and bloodshed.

Three Massabki martyrs. Pray for us  
Amen

### **FESTIVAL 2022 FIGURES**

<b>Total Income and Sales:</b>	<b>\$47,451.39</b>
<b>Total Expenses:</b>	<b><u>\$18,858.55</u></b>
<b>Total Profit:</b>	<b>\$28,592.84</b>

## LITURGY INTENTIONS

**Saturday, July 16, @ 4:30 PM (The Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel).** Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Anthony Cabral requested by Lou and Smitty Cabral. May his soul rest in peace. Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Mary Ann Zeadey requested by Mariam David and Family.

**Sunday, July 17, @10:30 AM (Celebration of Saint Sharbel).** Liturgy is being offered for the soul of George F. Thomas requested by family. May his soul rest in peace.

**Monday, July 18, @ 9:00 AM, (Feast of Saint Symphorosa and Her Seven Sons).** Maronite Sisters of Christ the Light convent. **No Liturgy.**

**Tuesday, July 19, @ 9:00 AM, (Feast of Saint Margaret of Antioch).** **No Liturgy.**

**Wednesday, July 20, @ 6:00 PM, (Feast of Elias the Prophet).** **No Liturgy.**

**Thursday, July 21, @ 7:00 PM, (Feast of Saint Simeon Salus and His Friend Saint John).** **Arabic Liturgy. No Liturgy.**

**Friday, July 22, @ 7:00 PM.**

**Saturday, July 23, @ 4:30 PM, (Feast of Saint Sharbel).** Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Saba Ramia requested by Subdeacon Joe Abraham and Carol Ann Maslanka. May his soul rest in peace. Liturgy is being offered for the souls of George J. and Mary C. Saba requested by Family (FM). May their souls rest in peace.

**Sunday, July 24, @ 10:30 AM, (Feast of Saint Christina of Tyre).** Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Leo Farhat requested by Family. May his soul rest in peace. Liturgy is being offered for the souls of the Deceased Members of Victoria Lahood Family (FM). May their souls rest in peace.

## FEAST OF SAINT SHARBEL

There will be a special Divine Liturgy for the Feast of Saint Sharbel on Friday, July 22, at 7:00 PM. I would like to have a "Potluck" dinner after the service. If you would like to participate and bring a dish to pass, please contact the Church office via email at [ourladyofpurgatory@gmail.com](mailto:ourladyofpurgatory@gmail.com). I am hoping that many of you will join me on that special day.

## FR. VINCENT OUT OF TOWN

Fr. Vincent will be out of town from Monday, July 10, until Wednesday, July 20, to attend the National Maronite Convention and then for a family visit. The office will be open Monday through Friday should you need any assistance. For any emergencies, please contact me on my cell of call Deacon Jean or the office. Thank you.

## WELCOME BACK FR. PATRICK

Our Lady of Purgatory welcomes Fr. Patrick Armano back to our community. Fr. Patrick is a bi-ritual priest from Methuen, Massachusetts. Thank you for coming to our parish to serve this weekend. You are always welcome to New Bedford. God bless you.

## FESTIVAL VOLUNTEER'S APPRECIATION DINNER

We will have an appreciation BBQ for the volunteers who worked so hard for the festival on Saturday, **August 20**, immediately following the 4:30 PM Divine Liturgy. I ask all those who helped prep food, set up, assisted during the two-day festival and breaking down on Sunday, to please email me at the office to RSVP for the BBQ. Please email me at:

[ourladyofpurgatory@gmail.com](mailto:ourladyofpurgatory@gmail.com)

Once again, thank you to all who helped make the festival a great event for OLOP. Blessings to all of you.

## WINE AND HOST OFFERINGS

The altar bread and wine for the month of July is offered in memory of the living and deceased members of the Daher and David families requested by Mariam David and family. May their souls rest in peace.

## LECTORS FOR JULY 2022

**Saturday, July 16,**

Rachel Higgins

Intercessions: Anna Higgins

**Sunday, July 17,**

John Barbour /Halim Choubah

**Saturday, July 23,**

Mae Dickinson

**Sunday, July 24,**

Joan Mello/Gaby baroody

**Saturday, July 30,**

Carol Ann Maslanka

**Sunday, July 31,**

Ann Dupre/Rana Choubah

(If you are not able to read on your given day, please contact Mae Dickinson)

## THE SANCTUARY CANDLE

### BURNS FOR....

This week the sanctuary candle burns for Subdeacon Crosby sparks and Ron Foster requested by Subdeacon Joe Abraham and Carol Ann Maslanka. Anyone who would like to offer the sanctuary candle for a loved one or special intention, this will be offered each week. An offering of a \$10.00 donation is appreciated.

## DAILY READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF 7/18-7/23/22

### Monday:

Acts of the Apostles 14:1-7

Luke 10:8-12

### Tuesday:

Acts of the Apostles 14:8-18

Luke 10:13-16

### Wednesday:

Acts of the Apostles 14:19-28

Luke 10:17-20

### Thursday:

Acts of the Apostles 15:1-12

Luke 10:25-28

### Friday:

Acts of the Apostles 15:13-21

Luke 10:29-37

### Saturday:

Romans 8:28-39

Matthew 13:36-43

## IN OUR PRAYERS

Angela Scorza-Anderson, Renee Helmer, Terry Amsden, Lisa Mello-Frost, Ziad Al-Ghoubry, Natalya Sarkis, Joe Reid, Octavia David, Jacob Rego, Amal Assaf, Peter Helmer, Denise Magaletta, Fernanda Thomas, Leo Rodrick, Theresa John, Laurette Bou Ramia, Annie Peter, Jeannie Francis, Mariam David, Norma Thomas, Zita Drouin, Lucienne Rodrigues, Ed Da Rocha, Edmond Salameh, and Alice Daher. If anyone is missing from this list, please contact the Church office.

## WEEK OF JULY 9-10, 2022

<b>Sunday Collection</b>	<b>\$ 1,397.00</b>
<b>Coffee Hour</b>	<b>\$ 35.00</b>
<b>Festival Desert</b>	<b>\$ 30.00</b>
<b>Sanctuary Candle</b>	<b>\$ 40.00</b>
<b>Candles</b>	<b>\$ 34.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1536.00</b>

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY BY SENDING IN YOUR WEEKLY COLLECTIONS VIA MAIL. THIS HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL FOR THE CHURCH. GOD BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.**

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