



Our Lady of Purgatory

Maronite Catholic Church



June 14 - 15, 2025

SUNDAY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY



LEBANESE CHURCH THRIVES AGAINST ALL ODDS MAINTAINING 1,600-YEAR LINK WITH ROME

When I recently visited Lebanon with Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), I expected to find a suffering Church. Instead, I encountered a vibrant Christian community full of faith, hope and love.

At the height of the latest war last autumn, one in four people in Lebanon was displaced. The Christian population has been caught in the crossfire of a conflict between Hezbollah and Israel in which they have nothing to gain, and everything to lose. Many of their homes have been turned to rubble, with churches damaged, agricultural land destroyed and livelihoods lost.

And yet, amid the material devastation and poverty, I found a Church that is alive – beating with a faith that refuses to be extinguished, despite decades of suffering, including a civil war. Again and again, I was reminded that God does not abandon those who trust in Him. As

Maronite Bishop Hanna Rahmé of Baalbek-Deir El-Ahmar put it, Lebanon's Christians have "a clear conscience" – and that, in itself, is a kind of victory.

Pope St John Paul II once wrote that "Lebanon is more than a country". I understood what he meant while walking on the land sanctified by Our Lord's footsteps. Lebanese Christians have a deep spiritual connection to their homeland, intertwined with a strong sense of heritage – as descendants of the Phoenician people – and of faith, creating a unique identity. Although more Lebanese now live abroad than in Lebanon itself, they never fail to preserve that identity.

Christians still comprise around a third of the population – more than of either the Sunni or Shia Muslim populations respectively – and retain significant political influence. According to the 1943 National Pact, the President and Army Commander must always be Maronite Christians. The Prime Minister is always Sunni Muslim, and the Speaker of Parliament a Shia Muslim.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"A great mystery, a mystery of love, an ineffable mystery, before which words must give way to the silence of wonder and worship. A divine mystery that challenges and involves us, because a share in the Trinitarian life was given to us through grace, through the redemptive Incarnation of the Word and the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Saint Pope John Paul II

The majority of Lebanese Christians belong to the Maronite Church, which has never broken communion with Rome in its 1,600-year history. Its liturgy preserves ancient Eucharistic prayers sung in Syro-Aramaic, enriching the universal Church by bridging East and West.

What struck me most was that even the poorest people gave thanks to God at every opportunity – often ending their sentences with a phrase of gratitude. One of them was Moussa, a Christian man whose home in South Lebanon was almost completely destroyed in an airstrike just months ago.

Moussa and his wife Michelin were not at home when the next-door house – reportedly used by Hezbollah to store weapons – was hit. They credited a 10-foot cross and St Charbel's intercession with keeping their family safe. When they returned to their burnt-down home, they found only two items intact: pictures of St George and the Virgin Mary.

After they had to use all their life savings to rebuild, ACN provided emergency food aid to their family and others in similar situations to ease the burden.

Fr. Vincent Farhat, Pastor | Rev. Mr. Jean Mattar, Deacon

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

Sister Maya El Beaino of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary had the choice to leave Ain Ebel in South Lebanon when airstrikes began last October. Locals were given just 40 minutes' notice before bombardments commenced. Most fled. Sister Maya chose to stay.

Her congregation's mission, she told me, is "to go to the peripheries and accompany those in need of help". Their school is one of the highest-performing in Lebanon – 79 per cent of pupils had excellent grades, and six ranked among the top 10 in the country last year.

Sister Maya said that the school switched to online teaching during the war. She emphasized that, "when there was an airstrike near the home of one of the pupils, all of them could hear it". Therefore, the children "had a sense that they were all in it together, even though they were physically apart".

She added: "Many people have not returned even after it was safe. Only old people remained in the village at some point. They would rather die at home than move." ACN helped her distribute essential medicines when local pharmacies were closed.

Nestled between mountain ranges north-east of Beirut, the Beqaa Valley – known as the breadbasket of Lebanon – was also heavily targeted in last autumn's airstrikes. Hezbollah strongholds are located in Shia-majority areas, so Christian villages in this region generally remained unharmed.

Naddaf, a widow in her seventies, was one of many Christians who offered shelter to Shia families fleeing the devastation. She welcomed 12 people into her home, feeding them, clothing them and giving them a place to sleep for two months. A pregnant woman gave birth during that time, bringing the number of guests to 13. Naddaf had no way of knowing who these people were – they could have been associated with Hezbollah, making her a target. When I asked if she had been afraid, she simply said: "I did what Christ asked me to do ... the courage came from the Virgin Mary." It is always a blessing to meet people living the Gospel in such tangible ways.

In the Beqaa Valley we also visited a new Maronite monastic community, the Brothers of Beit Maroun, which has been growing steadily since its founding a decade ago. The 23 monks – most in their

20s and 30s – built their monastery with their own hands, with limited help from the Australian Maronite community, along with ACN supporting their formation.

Two of the monks are from Australia. Born in Sydney to Lebanese parents, they chose to return to their ancestral homeland. At a time when many young Lebanese are leaving, their story is a beacon of hope.

We also visited the Sisters of Jesus Abandoned, who teach in Catholic schools in predominantly Shia areas. Their dedication to education fosters mutual understanding and interfaith harmony. Indeed, many Lebanese Muslims prefer to send their children to Catholic schools because of their reputation for academic excellence.

At the orphanage in Jabboulé in the north, the Sisters of Our Lady of Good Help also embody Christian charity. During the war, they opened their convent to 850 displaced people, including Muslim families. Mother Joselyne Joumaa told me: "The price of love is high ... but God is with us. Whom shall we fear?"

The Sisters' care saved the life of a three-day-old baby found abandoned in Tripoli, 60 miles away. No local orphanages were able to take her in – but the Sisters made space.

This radical hospitality, this unwavering faith, is the powerful witness of the Lebanese Church. It reminds us what it means to love without counting the cost, and to believe, not because circumstances are favourable, but because we know God is faithful.

The Church in Lebanon may be surrounded by adversity, but it is not defined by it. In a land scarred by war and uncertainty, faith has been purified by fire. Where I expected to find only hardship, I met men and women who have chosen love over fear, sacrifice over comfort, and hope over despair.

<https://thecatholiceraid.com/lebanese-church-thrives-against-all-odds-maintaining-1600-year-link-with-rome/>

WINE AND HOST OFFERING

The altar bread and wine for the month of June is offered for Abraham and Amelia Sarkes requested by the family.

CONFESSION

Please know that confession is available before liturgies. You may also call to set up an appointment.

MATCHING GRANT FROM ANTHONY ABRAHAM FOUNDATION

Many thanks to all who have contributed towards this matching grant. We are getting much closer towards our goal. God bless this community.

Total Grant: \$10,000.00

Total Matching: \$ 6,600.00

Match Needed: \$ 3,400.00

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

Every Sunday we gather in our Parish Center to enjoy coffee, food, and fellowship after Divine Liturgy. This is a special time and many of us enjoy the benefits of these gatherings. However, it is too much for one or two people to take care of every week. This is where I need your help.

I am looking for a couple of people to take charge of this task by asking each family every week to sponsor our coffee hour. There are several times when the families who are offering a mass for a loved one sponsor this which is a great help. Also, the Saint Joseph Sodality offers the coffee hour once a month, the first Sunday of each month, which is also a great help. Some have donated towards coffee hour, which is also appreciated, however, that also leaves the workload for one or two people who have taken this responsibility every week.

If you can assist me with this ministry, please let me know. This will be a great burden lifted off my shoulders. This aspect of community life is important, and I want to continue it. Thank you in advance for your help.

CHORBISHOP MICHAEL'S DINNER NEEDS LIST:

4 Cases of water

2 Cases of Coke

2 Cases of Coke Zero

2 Cases of Sprite

2 Cases of Orange Soda

3 Cases of Beer

1 Case of Red Win

1 Case White Wine

WITH GRATITUDE AND THANKS

Thank you Zeina Freiha and Randa Fren for the donation of the "Ourban" for Remember Me Into Kingdom monthly services in loving memory of Stephany Fren.

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Saturday, June 14, @ 4:30 PM, (Feast of Saint Elisha the Prophet). Liturgy is being offered for the souls of the deceased members of the Kenyon and Daher families requested by family. May their souls rest in peace. Liturgy is being offered for the souls of David and Louise Pimentel requested by Norma Barbour and family. May their souls rest in peace.

Sunday, June 15, @ 10:30 AM, (Feast of Saint Basil the Great, Doctor of the Church). Liturgy is being offered for all the fathers living and deceased. Liturgy is being offered for all our graduates. May God bless you all.

Tuesday, June 17, @ 12:00 PM, (Feast of Amos the Prophet). Liturgy is being offered for the souls of Charles and Anna Lizotte requested by the family (FM). May their souls rest in peace.

From 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM, Eucharistic Adoration.

Wednesday, June 18, @ 12:00 PM, (Feast of Saint Leontius of Tripoli). Liturgy is being offered for the souls of Tufek and Mary David and their Children requested by the family (FM). May their souls rest in peace.

Thursday, June 19, @ 12:00 PM, (Thursday of the Body of Christ).

Saturday, June 21, @ 4:30 PM, (Feast of Saint Louis Gonzaga). Liturgy is being offered for Thanksgiving to Msgr. Michael Thomas, for your dedication, ministry, prayers and friendship. We offer our heartfelt. Congratulations and pray for your well-being in this new phase of your life requested by Lucienne Rodriguez and David Coury. Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Alfred Dallaire requested by Norma Barbour and family. May his soul rest in peace.

Sunday, June 22, @ 10:30 AM, (Feast of Saint Eusebius). Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Josephine Chedid requested by the family. May her soul rest in peace. Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Hiam Chiab requested by the family. May her soul rest in peace.

THE SANCTUARY CANDLE BURNS FOR....

This week the sanctuary candle burns for the deceased family members of Helena Tavares by Helena Tavares. 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.

HONORING OUR GRADUATES

Congratulations to all our graduates from OLOP. We are so proud of you and wish you all the blessings as you begin the next chapter in your life. We will celebrate your achievements on Sunday, June 15, at 10:30 Divine liturgy. The following are graduating from our Parish:

High School Graduates:

Joseph Chedid, the son of Wassim and Elizabeth Chedid graduated from Dartmouth High School and will be attending Bentley University to Major in accounting and minoring in Computer Information System.

Natalya Sarkis, the daughter of Faouzi and Manal Sarkis, graduated from Fairhaven High School and will be attending UMASS Dartmouth to major in Nursing.

Dominic Thomas, the son of Peter and Faten Thomas, graduated from Bishop Stang High School and he will be attending Endicott College to major in Biology.

Daniel Yazbeck, the son of Raed and Vivianne Yazbeck, graduated from Bishop Stang High school and will be attending University of Miami to major in Psychology and Pre- Dental.

College Graduate:

Christina Chedid, the daughter of Jean and Rola Chedid, graduated from UMASS Dartmouth with a bachelor's degree in MLS

Jamil Tavares, the grandson of Daniel and Helena Tavares, graduated from Bristol Community College.

LECTORS FOR JUNE, 2025

Saturday, June 14,

Rachael Higgins

Intercessions: Anna & Helen Higgins

Sunday, June 15,

Ann Dupre / Elie Abou Kheir

Saturday, June 21,

TBA

Sunday, June 22,

Cayla Barbour / Halim Choubah

Saturday, June 28,

Smitty Cabral

Intercessions: Eric Tavares

Sunday, June 29,

Mae Dickinson / Gaby Baroody

MYA GATHERINGS

The MYA are invited to Divine Liturgy followed by a BBQ and Social on Saturday, July 11, 2025, at OLOP. Please RSVP to Abouna Vince by July 6, at 508-996-8934. Look forward to seeing you there.



IN OUR PRAYERS

David Matos, Gayla Matos, Genevieve Tayeh, Nayeli Nassif, Maria Baptista, Ligia Baptista, Sophie Correa, Stephen DaCosta, Kenneth Macedo, Muriel Moline, Patricia Farhat, Ghada Karam, Beverly Parlapiano, Michael Bruce, Debbie Freedenberg, Efrangieh Daou, Sharon Conti, David Techlin, Peter Helmer, Renee Helmer, Octavia David, Jacob Rego, Amal Assaf, Denise Magaletta, Fernanda Thomas, Theresa John, Angela Scorza-Anderson, Annie Peter, Mariam David, Norma Thomas, Zita Drouin, Lucienne Rodrigues, Ed Da Rocha, and Edmond Salameh. If anyone is missing from this list, please contact the Church office.

WEEK OF JUNE 7-8, 2025

Sunday Collection	\$ 1,847.00
Matching Grant	\$ 500.00
Second Collection	\$ 186.00
Coffee Hour	\$ 47.00
Candles	\$ 111.00
Total	\$ 2,691.00

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.



CHRISTOPHE CHEDID
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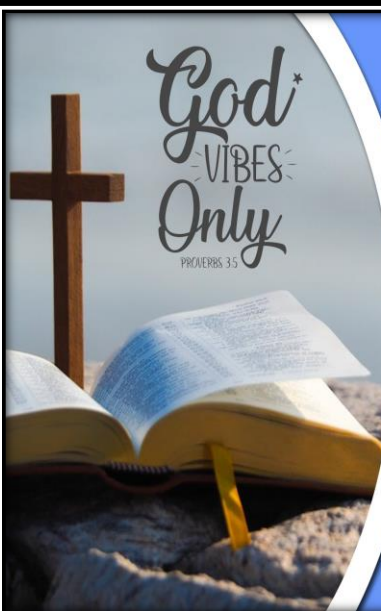
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