



Saint Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church

Saint Sharbel, Pray for Us!

1804 SE 16th Ave., Portland, OR 97214

503.231.3853

stsharbelpdx@gmail.com

www.stsharbel.org

December 3, 2017

Season of the Glorious Birth

The Visitation of the Virgin to Elizabeth



Next Sunday

The Birth of John the Baptist

Gal 4:21-5:1 (An Allegory on Christian Freedom)

Lk 1:57-66 (The Birth of John)

Liturgy Intentions

Sunday, December 3rd, 10:30 am

+ Yvonne Foulia

Monday, December 4th

Available

Tuesday, December 5th

Available

Wednesday, December 6th

Available

Thursday, December 7th

Available

Friday, December 8th

Robert, Marianka, Radka, Milos

Saturday, December 9th

Available

Sunday, December 10th

+ Antoine & Georgette Zogbi

Adoration/Exposition every Sunday at 9:30 am before the morning Liturgy.

Confession every Sunday at 9:45 am before the morning Liturgy.

Also join us to pray the Rosary on Sundays at 10:00 am before the Liturgy begins.

Your Gifts To God

Offering Report for November 19th - 26th

Online.....\$1457.00

Collection.....\$934.00

Weekly Total.....\$2,391.00

YTD Total.....\$88,362.00

YTD Goal.....\$88,608.00

YTD Difference.....-\$246.00

Altar Sponsorship

Sunday, November 3rd

Bowman Family

Sunday, December 10th

Fought Family

Parish Council

+Bruce Ashford
(Treasurer)
Charlie Ashou
Gus Bekahi
Nick El Hajj
Agopos Ghossein
Adib Karam
+Claude Karam
Anne Marentette
(Secretary)
Doug Raab
+Thaddeus Rask
Nadia Redmond
Mitch Siekmann
Laif Waldron

Ex Officio
+Deacon Tony
+Deacon Wadih

+Finance
Committee

Parish Events

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

For those interested we will have Immaculate
Conception Mass

Friday, December 8, 2017
at **10:30am.**

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM:

"To all parents who have children and youth in Sunday School, Music Ministry, and MYO: All Catholic parishes are required to provide annual training to all our children and youth that participate in our programs. I have been trained in the Call-to-Protect program and as before, I will be providing the training to our children and youth on the following dates:

MYO-*NEW DATE* Sunday, January 7, 2018 @9:15am

Music Ministry-Sunday, December 3, 2017 Immediately after the liturgy

Please contact me if you would like to see the Call-to-Protect curriculum for children and youth.

Appreciate your understanding and support,
Nadia Redmond [503-671-0440](tel:503-671-0440)"

End of Year Reminder

In order for us to reach financial goal for the year, we need to ensure we receive outstanding pledge towards the match, but also receive the giving that some of you have explained would be made by the end of the year.

In addition, parishes normally remind parishioners around this time that should God have given you a windfall this year and you were to donate some of that church it would help the church. This gift would be completely tax-deductible.

"For heights and depths no words can reach, music is the soul's own speech"

All of the children of the parish ages 3 and up are invited to participate in the singing ministry this fall. We will be learning beautiful music to be sung in annual Christmas Play on Christmas Eve. The scheduled rehearsal dates are the following Sunday immediately after Holy Mysteries:

December 3rd

December 10th

Please mark your calendars. We will have a short social activity and snacks to really make this fun and memorable for the kids.

Please contact Gladys at 503-747-8689 or
alunui3r@frontier.com.

Community Events

SEMINARY WEEKEND: April 13-April 15, 2018

Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary will be holding a discernment weekend from Friday April 13 to Sunday April 15 in Washington DC for men considering the celibate priesthood. Contact Fr. Gary George, Eparchial Vocations Director ([314-363-3300](tel:314-363-3300)) for more information.

PRAYER FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

O Lord, Heavenly Father, we call upon you to protect all Christians who are being persecuted for the sake of Your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ! Come to their aid in their desperation and deliver them from all evil which seeks to destroy them because of You.

Awaken our nation to their cries and help them in whatever ways! Awaken all Christians of the plight of their brothers and sisters that they might give them material help spiritual prayers, and affect a change in politics to their benefit!

Grant rest to all the souls of those who have died professing You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! Amen!



Reflection

The Visitation of the Virgin to Elizabeth

Lk 1:39-45

Today's Sunday follows the seasonal theme of announcements, but instead of a message from an angel this Sunday commemorates Mary, already pregnant with our Lord Jesus, visiting her cousin, Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John the Baptist. Though the Gospel passage is fairly short the imagination of Syriac Fathers drove them to write much on the encounter because it conceals many truths about our faith in Christ. Many of the Syriac Fathers write about Mary "going in haste" (Luke 1:39) to Elizabeth because, for the sake of her virginal birth by the Holy Spirit, other women already gossiped against her and accused her of adultery. The holiest, purest, and most ideal servant of God being slandered should not be surprising – as Christ will later say, "blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me" (Matt. 5:11) because even He Himself knew that He would later suffer death at the hands of jealous slanderers for the truth. So why does Elizabeth bless Mary upon greeting her, and why does John leap for joy in Elizabeth's womb if others slander them?

The Syriac Aramaic verb *s'ar* means both to visit and to cure/make whole, and this is exactly the way the predecessors of our tradition would have seen the Visitation. All things have been created by God, and God wishes that we be united to Him. However, since Adam's transgression in the Garden and the various failures of Israel against the commands of God down through the ages there was damage done to the relationship between God and man. Humanity had become sick, progressively poisoned by continually choosing to drink the very sin that was poisoning it! Humanity chose sin again and again, which brought death as St. Paul tells us (Rom. 5:12). But in spite of our choice of sin, God made it clear that He does not rejoice in the death of a sinner (Ez. 18:23), and would not give up on humanity. As He tells us, He is life (John 14:6) because all existence comes from Him, and He wishes to raise all to life eternal. So Elizabeth and John rejoice for Life Himself, Christ our God, has visited them. By His very visitation, while carried in the womb of His mother, He brought them happiness for anyone who receives the Lord's presence is made whole and healed from sin for God Himself is Being and the Giver of All Good Things.

John, Christ's Herald, could see as a fetus in his mother's womb what the grown men of Jesus's time were blind to – that Christ is the Lord of All. It does not change once Christ is born, nor a grown man. Christ multiplied food for 5000 people, made the blind see, made the paralyzed walk, and still certain people at His time accused Him of being a servant of Satan (Matt. 12:24). It was false reasoning that led those to denounce Christ, whereas even a child in the womb could plainly see that He is God. So we too must decide whether we will reject Christ and His servants, or acknowledge Him and welcome Life Himself into our lives. Who wishes to visit us and bring us to Himself in life eternal. If we choose the latter in sincerity, we can pray with confidence in Christ:

Transcendent, hidden and incomprehensible God, in Your dispensation You dwelt in the Virgin Mary for our salvation and visited in Your caring Your Herald in the barren and sterile womb of old Elizabeth; now visit/heal our souls and bodies, which have fallen into sin, by Your divine assistances, and sanctify our spirits by Your holiness that we may excellently and holily give thanks to You for Your graces towards us, and we may worship and glorify You, and Your Father, and Your living and Holy Spirit, now and at all times, forever. Amen. (Trans. from the Maronite Evening Prayer for the Visitation)

- Article Credit: St. Rafqa Parish

**Gibran N Zogbi**

Agent

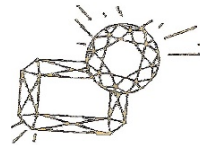
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