

Saint Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church

Saint Sharbel, Pray for Us!

1804 SE 16th Ave., Portland, OR 97214

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www.stsharbel.org

December 2, 2018

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 2nd, 10:30 am

+*Dr. Tom Rask (40 Day Memorial)*

Monday, December 3rd

Available

Tuesday, December 4th

Available

Wednesday, December 5th

Mary Thu Do

Thursday, December 6th

Available

Friday, December 7th

Available

Saturday, December 8th

Berna Sheehan

Sunday, December 9th

+*Mary Pfaltzgraff*

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 18th - 24th

Online.....\$680.00

Collection.....\$1,466.00

Weekly Total.....\$2,146.00

YTD Total.....\$90,051.94

YTD Goal.....\$86,798.00

YTD Difference.....\$3,253.94

Altar Sponsorship

Sunday, December 2nd

Available

Sunday, December 9th

Available

Parish Events

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 Wadiah

+Finance
Committee

Mass Offering Update:

You might notice a difference in the year-to-date giving from the last two weeks until now. That is due to a misplaced donation that was meant for the Fall Dinner Fundraiser and was not actual parishioner giving. The correct year to date amount is reflected in the amounts above. As always this time of year, reflect and pray about gifts you have received and considering donating to the church. All gifts are tax deductible!

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

For those interested we will have Immaculate Conception Mass

Saturday, December 8, 2018

at **10:30am**

Children's Christmas Eve Pageant

You are invited to participate in this year's Christmas Eve pageant. Registration and first choir rehearsal is after the Divine Liturgy this Sunday, November 4th. You will be provided with songs to practice for the pageant and your parents will receive further information. All attendees of this first rehearsal will have the first choice for a role in the Christmas Eve Pageant!

All Children, ages 3-13

Parents: mark these dates in your calendar for pageant rehearsals:
Sundays, November 4th, and December 9th and 23rd.

Time: Immediately after the Liturgy (approximately noon to 1pm)

Place: Upstairs Classroom

Looking forward to a joyful season, Nadia Redmond, Edith Demers, and Katherine Moffitt
Your Christmas Eve Pageant Organizers

email: n.redmond@comcast.net

Parish Events



Attention all young men and women, come check out St. Sharbel's new youth group, The Cedars!

Who: Anyone ages 13 to 18 (ish) interested in building friendships, participating in important and relevant discussions, having fun, and most importantly, following Jesus!

Facilitated by Maroun Maroun and Gennifer Karam. Please contact Gennifer or Maroun directly to register.

What: Saint Sharbel's Cedars is a group of young people, inspired by our Lord's call to be His disciples, who will meet twice a month for sessions which teach us about our identity as followers of Christ, service to others, and social activities.

Where/When: All Cedars sessions are held at the St. Sharbel Church upstairs classroom immediately following the mass on the 2nd and 4th Sundays, 11:45 am – 1:30 pm, unless otherwise indicated. All meetings, social activities and service events are announced ahead of time through email announcements and church announcements.

Save the Dates! Here's our tentative Cedars Schedule for 2018-2019:

***Please make sure to give your email address and cell number to Gennifer Karam in order to be on the email list for up to date reminders and possible changes to this schedule.

December 16: Breakfast with Santa - Cedars Service Activity for the Church. More info to come.

January 13: Session 3: Real Friends

January 27: Session 4: Follow Me

February 10: Session 6: The Cost

February 23: Cedars Snow Day! Snow intertubing on Mt. Hood – Please note this is a SATURDAY. More information to come.

March 9: Session 7: Undecided Topic TBA

March 24: Session 8: Undecided Topic TBA

April 28: Session 9: City of Jerusalem Presentation

May 12: End of the Year Bowling Excursion.

Reflection

Lk 1:39-45

The Visitation of the Virgin to Elizabeth

The receiving of guests is a great honor, held in particular importance in Middle Eastern culture. Imagine one day you are going about your business when the President or a Supreme Court Justice decides to ring your doorbell and visit with you. The visit of such a person generally brings great joy. Today in the Syriac tradition, we celebrate the Visitation of our God, the Lord of All still in the womb of His Mother, to His cousins. Mary, the Mother of God, after receiving the revelation from the angel Gabriel that she will bear a child conceived by the Holy Spirit goes to her cousin Elizabeth's house. If one recalls, the second week of the Season of Announcements celebrates the Announcement to Zechariah – the husband of Elizabeth, and father of John the Baptist. To the surprise of many, Elizabeth was pregnant with John, though she was barren all her life and was in her eighties, and Mary, though being a virgin, was pregnant with our Lord. The Syriac Fathers emphasize the juxtaposition of the oldness of Elizabeth bearing the new life of John, and the youthfulness of Mary bearing the Ancient of Days, Jesus Christ Who is God Who preexists all things. In this we see God's greatness in making the old ever new yet never changing Himself.

The visit of Jesus gives such joy that Elizabeth says, "Why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy" (Luke 1:43-44). It is a joyous occasion, motivated by the love of God. If one thinks about the plan of salvation, God had no necessity in visiting Elizabeth and John – just like He had no obligation to restore mankind after Adam's fall. But in God's infinite love, He wishes to restore us to union with Him. Out of no motivation other than His own love for humanity, God became incarnate of the Virgin Mary so that He might be among us and unite His divinity to our humanity. Likewise, He had no obligation to visit His cousin John but did so because He loves His servants. We might even ask ourselves in our daily experience "Why am I so favored, that the Lord should come to me?" The answer is that God is so merciful and good that He wishes to extend His infinite and incomprehensible love to us.

In God's visitation to His servants, He draws us up from our lowly state to His divinity, making the barren fruitful and the dead living. In visiting Elizabeth and Zechariah, God makes Elizabeth a foreshadowing of the entire plan of salvation – what was fruitless and never bore anything now produces the Prophet of the Most High. Likewise, Christ takes the cross – a dead piece of wood and an instrument of torture – and makes it the tree of life, from which He grants life eternal and the forgiveness of all sin. God had no need to come among us, but in His love of us He is constantly endowing new life and making fruitful that which seems fruitless to human estimation if it is dedicated to His purpose. That is why both Isaiah and St. Matthew in his Gospel refers to Jesus as Emmanuel, meaning God is with us, because that very fact alone means life itself has visited us and elevates our lowliness.

In all things reserved for His purpose, God raises up fruit where it would seem there is none, and He makes useful that which seems useless. Even from our failures and lacking, God can use it for the sanctification of the world and His glorification, just as He allowed profound depth of God's goodness, let us implore Him in the words of our fathers of faith:

O God, Supreme, Hidden and Incomprehensible, You dwelt in the Virgin Mary for our salvation according to Your plan and in Your care visited Your herald in a barren and unfruitful womb. Likewise, now visit our souls and bodies fallen in sin with 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 worship and glorify You, Your Father, and Your Holy Spirit, now and at all times, forever. Amen. (Trans. from the Syriac Maronite Vespers for the Visitation)

— Article Credit: St Rafka Parish

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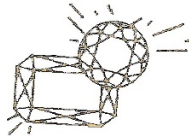
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