



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 9, 2018

The Birth of John the Baptist



Next Sunday

The Revelation to Joseph

Eph 3:1-13 (Commission to Preach God's Plan)

Mt 1:18-25 (The Birth of Jesus)

Liturgy Intentions

Sunday, December 9th, 10:30 am

+*Mary Pfaltzgraff*

Monday, December 10th

Available

Tuesday, December 11th

Available

Wednesday, December 12th

Available

Thursday, December 13th

Available

Friday, December 14th

Available

Saturday, December 15th

Available

Sunday, December 16th

+*Marie Germanos*

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 25th - December 1st

Online.....\$945.00

Collection.....\$364.00

Weekly Total.....\$1,309.00

YTD Total.....\$91,360.94

YTD Goal.....\$88,644.00

YTD Difference.....\$2,716.94

Altar Sponsorship

Sunday, December 9th

Available

Sunday, December 16th

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 Wadih

+Finance
Committee

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

For those interested we will have Immaculate Conception Mass

Saturday, December 8, 2018

at **10:30am**

Altar Sponsors:
The Allam Family

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



St. Sharbel Annual Christmas Breakfast

Sunday, December 16, 2018

Immediately following 10:30 Holy Mysteries

With Special Guest: **Papa Noel**

Ham and eggs, roasted potatoes, olives, labne,
cucumber and tomatoes

\$10/adult or \$7/child



Sponsored by
The Saint Sharbel Cedars
Youth Group

**ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE
MARONITE MONKS OF JESUS,
MARY, AND JOSEPH**



To donate ingredients please contact Gennifer
Karam or Maroun Maroun



Reflection

The Birth of John the Baptist

It is telling that we celebrate the birth of a man – St. John the Baptist – in the season leading up to the great celebration of the birth of our Lord and God, Jesus Christ. It reveals much about the divine plan of salvation, but I would like to identify in particular what it says of the relationship between God and man. It seems obvious to say that Christ's salvation of mankind was for the sake of mankind. But what is often taken for granted in speaking about the divine action in the world is that it is out of His benevolence and love of mankind that God acts. God does not act in the abstract, far from humanity, but salvation is wrought amongst men and using the free will of men. John the Baptist is an example of mankind's intimate involvement in our own salvation. Even Christ becoming man was His involvement of our very nature in His plan to sanctify us and elevate us to participate in His divinity.

We celebrate John the Baptist this Sunday because he is the saint sent ahead of Christ by Christ to prepare His way, "the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord'" (John 1:23). As we recall from the Announcement to Zechariah, not only is John's mother, Elizabeth, very old, she was also barren for her entire marriage to Zechariah. Yet, God has deemed it fitting in His love for mankind to make the barren fruitful, and so Elizabeth begets a child in her old age – but not just any child, but the prophet of the Most High. John goes before Christ to prepare the way to announce the Gospel. It is John who first baptizes, and, in fact, it is John who baptizes Jesus, which He humbles Himself to just as He humbled Himself to be born of the Virgin Mary. In God's greatness, He has come down to us that He might bring us up to Himself and He involves us only by our own free will. The miraculous birth of John is the answer to Elizabeth and Zechariah's prayers, and John's ministry is his response to the call of the Lord.

Knowing God is infinitely good and seeking to involve us in our own sanctification, how do we respond? The prayers of the Syriac Maronite tradition give us profound insight:

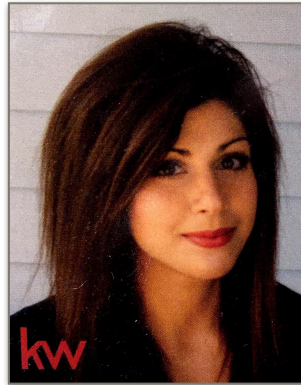
O God most high and incomprehensible, Who in His goodness established the worlds and brought them into being, in Whose wisdom created heaven and adorned it with stars, by Whose will a voice, which announced before Himself, was begotten from a barren and fruitless womb, now beget in us sweet voices of Your praises, noble exaltations of Your thanks and choice acclaim of Your wonders. Make us worthy all the days of our lives that with purity and holiness we may give thanks to You, worship You and glorify You, and Your Father, and Your living and Holy Spirit, now and at all times, forever. Amen. (From the Syriac Maronite Vespers for the Feast of the Birth of John the Baptist)

This prayer begins by acknowledging the God we address is He Who created all things, not out of obligation, by in His goodness. In the same goodness, He called John to go before Him from a barren womb. Just as God did before, we ask Him to now again beget in our, at times, barren selves His own praises. It is a deception of the devil to believe there is an insurmountable gap between God and man – for in God's goodness, He has bridged it by becoming man Himself. Therefore, even in all our limitedness and failings, by the power and grace of God, Who has created us in His image, we are lifted up to His glory if we only ask. We are each called by God to give glory to Him in our own way – just as Elizabeth was called to birth John, John was called to be the prophet of Christ, and the priest is called to offer sacrifice, each of us are to play our own role in purity and holiness.

**Gibran N Zogbi**

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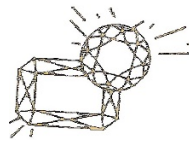
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