

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

Maronite Catholic Church, South Africa, 2007 - 2008

“The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen His glory, the glory as of a Father’s only Son.” (John 1:14)



*O Christ Child, we bow down and worship You, and we open our hearts to You. We offer to You the gift of our lives and our souls. In such humility and poverty You, the Lord of the Universe, came into this world, accept ours gifts and grant us the grace to be humble and pure so that You may be born again in our hearts.
Amen.*

*Wishing you and your family a Blessed Christmas
& a Happy and Holy New Year*



*The Congregation of the Maronite Lebanese Missionaries
Rev. Fr. Badaoui Habib - Superior of the Maronite Catholic Mission, SA
and his brothers, the priests, Fr. Maurice Chidiac, Fr. Nadim Abou Zeid,
Fr. Georges Kairouz, Fr. Charbel Habchi & Fr. Abdo Skayem*

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MARONITE MEMO



December 2007

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LEBANESE FAMILY CLUB

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FAMILY CLUB

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Our Church and the whole world have just celebrated the feasts of Christmas and New Year.

We all celebrate our and our children's birthdays, remembering the day that we came into life. But we forget that the difference between our birthdays and the birthday of Christ is so vast since, for our birthdays we only invite a small number of close friends and family, but on God's birthday every human being is invited. What's more, when we are celebrating the birthday of Christ we should remember that we are living this event NOW and believe that Jesus is born in Bethlehem TODAY, giving to each and every generation the gift of His Incarnation since 2007 years ago.

The Christmas of Christ reveals to us who God is. But if we were to look around us and ask a Muslim, "Who is your God?" we will hear: "*The God of Islam is the biggest, the only and holy one. He is everlasting, strong and powerful. He did not come from a birth, he did not give any birth, and no one is equal to him. He is above everyone and every creature.*"

And if we were to ask the Jews about their God we would be told that their God is "*God the Creator of heaven and earth. He is also the strong, powerful one, and the everlasting that no one knows his beginning or ends. He also is the God of compassion and Mercy.*"

As Christians, we also believe that our God is **One God, but, in three persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)**. He is the **only and the Holy one**. He is the **Creator and the Redeemer** not only for our human race but also for the whole nature. He is **very big, strong and powerful** and can move mountains, because **He is love and only love**. He is the **everlasting Father and the Lord of all** but He entered our human history as a **little child when he was born of the Virgin Mary and became Man**.

For this reason, we celebrate the feast of Christmas, which is feast of the Birth of our Lord and God, Jesus Christ. It can also be called the feast of the Incarnation of the Word of God: "*The Word has become flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, the glory of the only Son coming from the Father*" (John 1:14).

God has become man to allow us become the children of God as St. Augustine taught. God became man to tell us how much He loved us, His children, and to realise how many sacrifices He has made to make us the children of the Father.

The Birth of Christ invites us: Firstly, **TO KNOW JESUS** and to be like those simple people who had recognised the Messiah when He was Incarnated in the grotto of Bethlehem from the Virgin Mary, unlike the official Jewry who remained absent. God said in the Old Testament: "*The ox knows its owner and the ass its master's crib but Israel does not know Me, does not understand My will.*"

Secondly, **NOT TO BE AFRAID ANYMORE** of God or of anything because God, Immanuel, is with us. He is our Saviour and He has decided to make His dwelling among us, in our hearts. He is no longer that God who is living faraway, beyond the sky, who punishes His people. He is that God, who loves His creatures, forgives their sins and who is ready to give them salvation and eternal life for we have seen him in our eyes and touched Him with our hands and we will consume Him in every Mass under the two species of bread and wine.

Thirdly, **TO PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS**, to tell stories that bring joy and happiness to the heart of people, for like the angel said: *“Today I proclaim to you good news with a great Joy, for a saviour has been born to you in the city of David who is Messiah and Lord.”*

Fourthly, **TO PRAISE GOD AND GLORIFY HIS NAME DAILY**, in our prayers and in our behaviours, in our singing and in our musical instruments. Saint Paul invited us to glorify God in our bodies.

Fifthly, **TO BE JESUS’ MISSIONARIES** like the shepherds who after they had seen the Child Jesus, returned glorifying and praising God. They didn’t cast aside what they had experienced and seen but rather they preached the good news.

The Church celebrates the 1st of January as the Feast of Christ’s Circumcision. The Jews used to circumcise their male newborns on the 8th day and by this circumcision they belonged to the people of God. Therefore, the Feast of Circumcision is a feast of belonging. When our Lord was circumcised He took the name, “Jesus” which means God is our Saviour and He belongs to the people of God. For us Christians, this act of circumcision is the same as the Sacrament of Baptism, where through our baptism we take Christian names and so belong to God’s Church. Past popes have also called New Year’s Day the Feast of Peace and invites us all to be responsible for the spreading of peace in our world by living it in our hearts, and giving it to our families, communities, workplaces and countries. In 2008 let us strive to become peacemakers through prayer, love of one’s neighbour and responding to the five invitations of God shared through the Incarnation of His Son.

Finally, on behalf of the Congregation of the Lebanese Maronite Missionaries in South Africa, our Church staff and committees, and my brothers the priests, I would like to wish you and your families a very blessed Christmas and a successful year to come.

God bless you all.

FATHER BADAOUI HABIB

SUPERIOR OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN MARONITE MISSION

THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION



On 8 December, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Immaculate Conception - the gift of her birth without any stain or sin.

On this special occasion, Pope Benedict XVI said of her: “She is the SIGN OF SURE HOPE AND SOLACE TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD during its sojourn on earth. To reach Jesus, the true light... we need human persons near to us who reflect Christ’s light and thus illuminate the road to be taken. What person is more luminous than Mary? Who can be for us better than her the star of hope, the sunrise that proclaims the day of salvation? ...Gazing upon her, we recognize the height and beauty of God’s project for every man: becoming holy and immaculate in love (Eph 1:4), in the image of our Creator. What a great gift to have Mary Immaculate as mother! A mother shining with beauty, transparent to God’s love. “Mary Immaculate, star of the sea, shine upon us and guide us on our way!”

Source: Zenit News Agency

COMMENTS

Dear Maronite Friends

Thank you for the beautiful “Maronite Memo.” The church looks alive and vibrant! All the best to you! Merry Christmas.

+ GREGORY J. MANSOUR

BISHOP OF THE EPARCHY OF ST.. MARON OF BROOKLYN

We would love to hear from you. Send us your comments to info@lebanesefamilyclub.co.za



MERRY MARONITE CHRISTMAS

ON 9 DEC 2007, THE MARONITE CATHOLIC CHURCH CELEBRATED A SOLEMN MASS AND A BRING-AND-SHARE LUNCH FOR ALL MARONITE MEMBERS IN THANKS FOR YOUR TIME, TALENT AND TREASURES. THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT OF FAMILY WAS ALIVE AND VIBRANT WITH MANY MEMBERS ATTENDING TO SHOW THEIR SUPPORT. THERE WAS GOOD FOOD, GOOD LAUGHTER, HUGS AND KISSES, ANGELIC SINGING BY OUR CHOIR, GREAT FUN ON THE JUMPING CASTLE AND GREAT EXCITEMENT WHEN FATHER CHRISTMAS ARRIVED TO DISTRIBUTE PRESENTS TO ALL THE CHILDREN. EVERY DAY THIS NEW YEAR, MAY WE KEEP ALIVE THE SPECIAL MEANING OF CHRISTMAS - THAT OF GIVING LOVE, JOY & PEACE TO ALL.

CHRISTMAS FOR ST. RAFKA'S CHILDREN



Prayer to Saint Rafka

St. Rafka, during this momentous season in which we have celebrated the birth of our Lord, look kindly upon the Church's children who have mental and physical challenges and through your intercession grant them and their families healing and hearts filled with peace, joy and unlimited trust in the holy Child Jesus, and grant that society may be welcoming, patient and loving to these beloved children

AMEN.

**CHILDREN OF ST. RAFKA'S CHRISTMAS FUNCTION,
OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS' CHURCH ON 8TH DECEMBER**

**L TO R: LAURA SHAM, MAUREEN KARAM, SAMANTHA
SMITH, CATHY SAFI BRONDANI, TONY RAPOSA, FR
CHARBEL, PAT LOEWKE, DIANE KARAM & STEVEN KARAM.
ALSO PRESENT WERE: WALLY LOEWKE & DIANNE CRITICOS**

**CHILDREN OF SAINT RAFKA IS A MARONITE
RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR
THE DISABLED OF OUR COMMUNITY.**

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GET INVOLVED
CONTACT WALLY (082 903 1298)
OR MAUREEN (082 803 5003)**



Why Jesus is Better than Santa Claus



Santa lives at the North Pole... JESUS is everywhere; Santa rides in a sleigh... JESUS rides on the wind and walks on the water; Santa comes but once a year... JESUS is an ever present help; Santa fills your stockings with goodies... JESUS supplies all your needs; Santa comes down your chimney uninvited... JESUS stands at your door and knocks, and then enters your heart when invited; You have to wait in line to see Santa... JESUS is as close as the mention of His name; Santa lets you sit on his lap... JESUS lets you rest in His arms; Santa doesn't know your name, all he can say is "Hi little boy or girl, what's your name?"... JESUS knew our name before we did. Not only does He know our name, He knows our address too. He knows our history and future and He even knows how many hairs are on our heads; Santa has a belly like a bowl full of jelly... JESUS has a heart full of love; All Santa can offer is HO HO HO... JESUS offers health, help and hope; Santa says "You better not cry"... JESUS says, "Cast all your cares on me for I care for you"; Santa's little helpers make toys... JESUS makes new life, mends wounded hearts, repairs broken homes and builds mansions; Santa may make you chuckle but... JESUS gives you joy that is your strength; While Santa puts gifts under your tree... JESUS became our gift and died on a tree.

It's obvious there is really no comparison. JESUS IS STILL THE REASON FOR THE SEASON.





MONTHLY STATEMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE MARONITES BISHOPS, BKERKE

Source: The Official site of the Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and All the East - www.bkerke.org.

On Wednesday, 5 December 2007, Their Excellencies the Maronite Bishops met at Bkerkeh. The meeting was presided over by His Beatitude and Eminence Patriarch Nasrallah Butros Cardinal Sfeir. After having discussed the prevailing situation in the country they issued the following communiqué:

1. The presidential election, which first appointed date was over without electing a President for Lebanon, bears in it a big defect out of which we must come out to afford tranquility to the Lebanese, some of whom have renounced their homeland and went away looking for another one. In case they have the means to enable them to find a substitute. This matter should make politicians forget their dissensions to concentrate upon treating the national issue and make the citizens recover their confidence in their homeland.

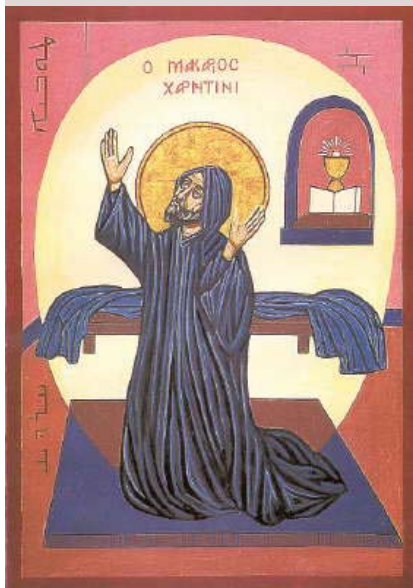
2. The objections brought forward by this or that party, attaching the presidential election to pre-set conditions until all the questions linked to this issue or will follow it up be agreed upon, will impede this issue for ever. Besides, not all the raised questions are, according to the constitution, of the competence of the President of the Republic alone. It is necessary to look seriously into the citizens' apprehensions about the period following the election of the new President and after that normal life comes back to the constitutional institutions which guarantee that.

3. The stagnation of the situation, limitation of the means of subsistence, tourists avoidance from coming to Lebanon and the hindering of economic life in the country, all that, beside the debts accumulating upon the small homeland, does not strengthen hope in a flourishing future. This requires that politicians forget their differences, or at least put them aside, to take care of the more important matters.

4. All Lebanese, specially politicians, must think about the blessings God has bestowed upon their homeland, at the head of which is this atmosphere of freedom which is rare in this region. That's why, it has become the most important duty for

MARONITE SAINT OF THE MONTH: ST. N'IMTALLAH HARDINI

FEAST DAY: 14 DECEMBER



During his life as a priest and monk, Saint N'imtallah (Grace of God) performed many miracles such as the provision of food, healing of sick people and animals and the salvation of crops from pestilence. After his death the graces continued. These are only some of the more astonishing miracles attributed to his intercession:

- Michael El-Kerfury from Al-Matn, a well-known paralytic in his hometown was healed instantly when he visited St. N'imtallah's tomb imploring his intercession.
- Dalila Bulos from Mar Mussa was unable to bear children for 28 years but after her visit to the Saint's tomb was blessed with a son.
- A Druze woman from Al Shouf brought to the tomb the lifeless body of her baby, praying and weeping. To the great joy of everyone, the baby was brought back to life.
- Moussa Al-Btegrini, a blind Orthodox man, had his sight completely restored after visiting the St. N'imtallah's tomb.

St. N'imtallah was the teacher of St. Charbel and canonised on 16 May 2004 by the Late Pope John Paul II who extolled his life of prayer and sacrifice.

**For more info see our Maronite Publication:
"Saint N'imtallah" available in the Repository.**





LEBANESE SAINTS TO BE



SERVANT OF GOD - JACOB OF GHAZIR

On 21 December 1992, Pope John Paul II promulgated the *Decree on the heroicity of virtues of the Servant of God Jacob of Ghazir*, born February 1, 1875, in the village of Ghazir (Lebanon). Khalil Haddad (his secular name), the third of 14 children, was brought up in an exemplary Christian environment. In his family he experienced a climate of solid faith and of active charity towards the poor, and he learned to value hard work. At the age of 17 he emigrated to Egypt and found a job teaching Arabic at St. Mark's College, run by the Lasalette Brothers. At the end of the academic year he returned to Lebanon and, after overcoming his father's objections, entered the Capuchin Order.

He received the habit and the name of Jacob on March 26, 1894. He was ordained in Beirut on November 1, 1901. He became famous for the numerous social works he undertook; construction of homes for the elderly, beggars and orphans, health centres for abandoned children, hospitals and nursing homes. He dedicated his life to doing good and was often referred to as the "Lebanese St. Vincent de Paul". In 1930, he founded the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of the Cross of Lebanon. He was always and everywhere an authentically holy person, conscious of both his priesthood and religious consecration. The long hours he spent in prayer were a sign of his profound interior life. He had a true sense of hope, doing everything for the glory of God. The love of God provided the meaning for his life and for all his activity. He literally gave himself to others, offering his life in order to experience the trials and sufferings of his people. He was a calm, poised, reflective, balanced and sensible person. He avoided extremism and knew how to make the necessary decisions. In his observance of the vows he was a religious who gave the best of himself and set an example for others. For this reason he was admired by all the Lebanese and became a point of reference for Catholics, Orthodox, Muslims and Druse. As such he was a splendid example of dialogue and ecumenism based on the love of Christ.

Jacob died on June 26, 1954, at the age of 80. The reputation for sanctity that followed him throughout his life grew even greater after his death. His Christian and religious witness is a message that is full of meaning today, not only for the Oriental Church and for the people of Lebanon, but for the whole Church since it invites everyone to be aware of the dignity of all people, especially the poor, without distinctions based on religious belief.

Source: Capuchin Communications Centre, Leichhardt, Australia (<http://www.capuchinfriars.org.au/saints/jacob.shtml>)



Send us your special family event pictures to info@lebanesefamilyclub.co.za

CHEMALY GATHERING IN HONOUR OF LATE EDNA CHEMAY

16.12.07



**CONGRATULATIONS TO JOE
& DIMDA MANAS ON THE
OCCASION OF THEIR 47TH
WEDDING ANNIVERSARY
17.12.07**



**CONGRATULATIONS TO CLAIRE CRITICOS & NICOLAS NAJJAR
ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR ENGAGEMENT, & TO THEIR FAMILIES.**

AT THE ENGAGEMENT BLESSING - 8 DEC 2007:

**BACK: FR BADOU HABIB, ANDREW CRITICOS, DIANNE CRITICOS, CLAIRE CRITICOS,
NICOLAS NAJJAR, ANTOINETTE NAJJAR, GABY NAJJAR & FR ABDO SKAYEM.
FRONT: FR CHARBEL HABCHI, MR MAURICE CHIDIAC & FR NADIM ABOU ZEID.**



**CONGRATULATIONS TO GIZELLE ANTHONY ON THE OCCASION
OF HER 21ST BIRTHDAY - 2 DEC 2007**

**LEFT TO RIGHT: FR ABDO SKAYEM, GIZELLE ANTHONY, GEORGES KAIRUZ
& FR CHARBEL HABCHI.**





For more Lebanese Family Gatherings go to www.lebanesefamilyclub.co.za



YOU KNOW YOU ARE LEBANESE WHEN:

- Your relatives alone could populate a small city.
- Everyone is a family friend.
- You fight over who pays the dinner bill.
- When you fly back home you find 20 people waiting for you at the airport.
- Every time you fly back home you meet relatives you never knew existed.
- Your aunt is always asking when she can dance at your wedding.
- When you are in the hospital your family takes up all the visitors seats until the hospital staff have to request some to leave.
- Lebanese coffee accompanies every meal.

THE CONSECRATION OF ALEXANDER FAMILY TO THE MOST HOLY TRINITY FAMILY AND THE BLESSING OF THEIR HOUSE ON 23.12.07 L TO R: DUNCAN, MARGE, GARY, JULIE, DANICA, STUART, MONIQUE, CELESTE, MELISSA, Fr.CHARBEL & KYLE

For all House Blessings and Masses, please contact the Superior, Fr Badaoui Habib, at the Church Office: (011) 804 1305



CONGRATULATIONS TO VICTORIA ANTOUN AND WADIH CHAMMAS AND THEIR PARENTS ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR ENGAGEMENT (21.12.07)







GIVE THE MARONITE GIFT




Have a look through your e-mail address book: perhaps there is a friend or loved one who would be happy to receive the Maronite Memo - please forward these details to us at info@lebanesefamilyclub.co.za

MY MARONITE FAMILY, YOU ARE HELPING ME BEAT CANCER

On the 1st November, 2007 I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I made a decision to share the news with my Maronite family. I believe that to share a problem is to halve a problem.

On the 20th November, 2007 I was admitted to the hospital and both breasts were removed. So, within 20 days, my life had been turned on its head! The reason I write this love letter is to try to express my gratitude to my family that helped me through every inch of the way. I have never felt so loved and so cared for - the kindness and concern shown toward me was more than I could ever have imagined. The Maronite Church has always reflected the love of family but this love and support I received was awesome. My concern was to “walk” to the best of my ability — I wanted to make sure that I would completely submit to the will of God and be prepared to “walk the walk” no matter what was ahead. I asked my Maronite family to “walk the walk” with me and everyone was more than willing to do so. Jesus was very merciful toward me and so compassionate because of all the prayers being offered during Mass. This period became an amazing spiritual experience for all of us.

A very special lady said that she would be prepared to fast for a month for me! My daughter was overseas and came home to help me. The wonderful Maronite family arranged a tea and introduced themselves to my daughter and assured her that she could call on any of them if she needed help — this gesture meant so much to me as my daughter is an only child. The visits and all the flowers and gifts were so warmly offered — my home looked like a shrine with all the beautiful flowers received.

To say thank you is inadequate — I am so grateful to God for sending me to the Maronites! I have no breasts, but, through His Divine Mercy, I was spared chemotherapy. I will have to take anticancer drugs and be checked every three months. I have emerged from this with a deep love for our Saviour and a better understanding of suffering and an awareness of those who suffer and do not have a Maronite family to pray and fast for them. I offer myself to Jesus as a “victim soul” and will from this day forward always try to remember those cancer patients who suffer so terribly and who do not have loved ones to pray for them. I have emerged with an understanding that He is who He says He is. He truly is the Way, He truly is the Truth and He truly is the Light.

A special thank you to our wonderful priests who, themselves, have made such sacrifices for us. They, themselves, give up their families, their loved ones, their youth and any hope of families of their own. To these specially chosen ones who are prepared to “walk the walk” no matter what — accept my deepest gratitude. Thank you, my precious Maronite family — thank you for loving me!

RONA FABIAN - 4 DECEMBER 2007



Family Club - Durban Community

The Lebanese Community and Families of Durban celebrate Christmas and New Year Maronite-style...



DURBAN'S LEBANESE CELEBRATE NEW YEARS DAY AS ONE, BIG AND HAPPY FAMILY. - 31 DEC



CHRISTMAS & NEW YEARS MASS CELEBRATED BY FR CHARBEL HABCHI & FR ABDO SKAYEM, 31 DEC 07 AT THE STAR OF THE SEA CHURCH, UMLHLANGA FOR THE MARONITE COMMUNITY



SOMA & SHAM FAMILY (AT JOHNNY PETERS HOUSE)



SASSEEN FAMILY



TONY MAROUN'S FAMILY



A SPEECH TO MY DAD - BY LISA MAROUN



CONGRATULATIONS TO RAYMOND ABROSIE ON HIS 60TH BIRTHDAY

BACK: HANNAH ABROSIE (BACK TO CAMERA) PAUL ABROSIE, ALAN MAROUN, JEANETTE ABROSIE, JENNY (NEE ANTHONY) ABROSIE, PAVIA ABROSIE, CYNDI (NEE KHOURY) ABROSIE, LISA (NEE ABROSIE) MAROUN. FRONT: STEVE MICHAEL, FR. NADIM, RAQUEL MAROUN, RAYMOND ABROSIE, TYRA MAROUN (BEHIND) ZARA ABROSIE, MARK MAROUN

To my very dear and special dad (who is 60 years young today), Dad, I have lost count of the reasons why I am the luckiest girl in the world to have a dad like you!!!

Dad, I don't think you could ever fully realise the depth and breadth of how remarkable you are — your influence — or just how much I love and admire you!!!

Thanks for all the happiness, positiveness, energy, music, peace, balance, simplicity, tolerance and unconditional love! Dad, thanks for carrying me on your shoulders at the zoo; for the fluffy, big bunny you once bought me for Christmas; thank you for your strong hands that always held me so securely; thank you for letting me live in a world which seemed so perfect all because I was a daddy's little girl (who's dad, in my opinion, could and still can do anything)!

You have always been in the right place at the right time — you have taught me the value of love and laughter, tolerance and acceptance in all circumstances and of all people. You have advocated and tried to instill in me the ability to embrace diversity — thank you for your beautiful outlook and open-mind and heart!!!! You taught me to appreciate and learn from the poetry of meaningful songs and beautiful music. You often played the song 'Life keeps going in cycles' to illustrate that nothing every stays the same and that all moments are irreplaceable. You taught me to see and take notice of the wonder of a sunset, a rainstorm, a sunny day and to wait patiently for the winter to pass — you taught me to understand that life is seasonal and all things pass, good and bad. Fear and worry are two words you prefer our family not to use or to entertain, thanks for wisdom. You endorse this by gallantly living your life for us to witness your ways. I am so grateful for the beautiful unconditional love you have for our children — I am glad they get to know you like I do.

What a grace from God that I have this opportunity to tell you how spectacular I think you are; how proud I am to be your child; to express my appreciation for a lifetime of priceless life, lessons and great moments. In this one 'thank-you note' it is impossible to say all!!! But in short, from your biggest fan — to my greatest hero — to use the language of simplicity which you so wish to live by... "I Love You and thank you!!!"



Send us your special family event pictures to info@lebanesefamilyclub.co.za

OLDEST-LIVING LEBANESE AND HER BIG FAT LEBANESE FAMILY



The oldest-living Lebanese is Haloum Alkoumie Aldanowe who recently celebrated her 108th birthday with her large family (her eldest daughter is 85 and she has 300 grandchildren) in the village Deir Awze near her mother's village Al Hwich, Akar which is well known for people living a long age.

She has a strong personality, body and memory, and lives the Lebanese proverb, "Sleep early, wake early and see how good your health is."

She is a famous midwife and has delivered thousands of babies for the last 80 years and is well-known for her Arabic remedies and herbs from the mountains.

*Source: Michelle Halak Akar, Lebanon
- Alnahar Newspaper 4.12.07*

Q: DO YOU KNOW WHO THE OLDEST LEBANESE IN SA IS?

A: MONSIGNOR SABA, BORN 1912, NOW RESIDING IN NAZARETH HOUSE, CT.

Q: DO YOU KNOW WHO THE SECOND-OLDEST LEBANESE IN SA IS?

A: MARTHA SAFFY (PICTURED RIGHT), SHE WILL TURN 94 THIS COMING MARCH.

BOTH THESE LEBANESE DESCEND FROM BECHARRE.



**BLESSING OF NEW WELL - 8 Dec 07
AT FRANKIE, BRIDGET & FRANCESCA ZACKEY'S HOME
WITH FR NADIM ABOU ZEID AND 150 VISITORS.**



**IT IS A WELL KNOWN FACT THAT SINCE FR ALAM'S TIME, COME 1 JAN, WE ALWAYS CELEBRATE QUEENIE SIMPSONS BIRTHDAY!!!
CONGRATULATIONS TO MISS QUEENIE SIMPSON ON
HER 82ND BIRTHDAY 1.01.2008**

**BACK: FR GEORGES KAIRUZ, FR BADAOUI HABIB, SR RAKA SIMPSON, FR NADIM ABOU ZEID & FR MAURICE CHIDIAC;
FRONT: MARTHA SAFFY & QUEENIE SIMPSON**





WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A MARONITE? PART TWO

BY KEN HANNA

Let us take a closer look at Maronite identity, from another angle. Father Jacques Najim Sacre, Maronite of Mexico has this to say, “Everytime the Maronites forget their identity and begin to lose their unity as a church, people and nation they are exposing their Motherland, Lebanon to absorption.”

Is this not true of our community in South Africa today?

“We have to search for our people lost in the new world” says our Bishop in America Francis Zayek. This is where the “Mission” pillar in the Maronite make-up comes into play. But before I explain this, let me broadly discuss the other side of the coin – namely “spirit.”

As Catholics, and professors of the faith (which incidentally, to many, is very difficult to obtain) spirit can only mean “Holy Spirit”. To delve into this subject is beyond the limits of this writer.

However the Penny Catechism tells me that faith is that which enables me to believe without doubting what God has revealed.

The long term mission of the Maronites remains a mystery. There is a destiny which shapes our end but who shapes the destiny itself? In the short term I know from Vatican Council II that I have a sacred duty to my clergy to help retain our spiritual heritage, ecclesiastical discipline and beautiful liturgy - not only for the Maronites but to the whole church. Was not Vatican Council II inspired by the Holy Spirit? I personally experienced the saintliness of Pope John XXII, initiator of Vatican Council II.

As Maronites are we not at the crossroads and are we not the link between East and West, with an entrée to both worlds through language, race and our brothers

in Lebanon?

The Christians of Lebanon and the Middle East are in touch with circles of thought and valuation, and even of influence, which on the whole are closed to others.

We are considered as the light for all our brothers in Christ in the Middle East. Hence the great pressure exerted by all on the Maronites. I personally witnessed a leader of the Coptic community of Egypt (who numbered some 6-8 million) publicly announce at World Maronite Congress II, the great reverence, esteem and hope that the persecuted Christians of the East place in the Maronites of Lebanon.

Their fight is not in vain; they are the guardians and custodians of the Cedars of the Lord and of democracy, fair play and justice.

And what of North and South?

I see our task to maintain a balance. Not to be carried away by the cult of technology of the Northern Europeans and their appendage, the Americans, yet to be aware of what is happening. And in the Southern Hemisphere – Southern Africa and Africa, South America, Australia (so close to the Far East), not to allow one's standards to drop below a certain level no matter what pressures are brought to bear on us: and on the other hand always to be on guard against the cults of materialism and paganism.

I have lastly to mention the most important pillar, namely - love of neighbour till last. We have the perfect message from the One we call Lord and Master. For love of country, we have the thoughts and wisdom of the great Lebanese philosopher who visited us here in South Africa just before the Lebanese war, Doctor Charles Malik, who says: "He who loves Lebanon most, will love and serve South Africa first."

**CONGRATULATIONS TO
PASCAL MICHAEL
& DANIEL AZAR**

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**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR
MATRICULANTS!**

**WE WISH YOU ALL A BLESSED
YEAR AHEAD!**

**DON'T FORGET YOUR
PATRON SAINTS!**

If you are continuing with
your studies, pray to the
Patron of Students,
Saint John Bosco.

If you are working, pray to the
Patron of Workers,
Saint Joseph.

If you are looking for a job,
pray to the Patron of Job Seekers,
Saint Cajetan.

If you are travelling overseas,
pray to the Patron of Travellers,
Saint Christopher.

If you are unsure what to do
with your life at this stage pray to
The Infant Jesus of Prague,
the Patron of Vocations.

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NEW LAW IN SA BANS KISSING FOR UNDER 16's

The new Sexual Offences Act, signed into law by President Thabo Mbeki on 13.12.07, has criminalised kissing and any sexual behaviour among people under the age of 16 - even if it is consensual.

In the secular world, which values the right of the body to satisfaction above the right of the soul, this law has been greeted with much disdain. However, Christian parents can view this law as government, for once, coming to the party, with regards to education about purity and chastity, which is the best weapon in the fight against AIDS, rape, premarital pregnancies and the array of sinful, harmful crimes that accompany promiscuity. Startling statistics show that there is an increase of depression and suicide in children and predominantly in those engaging in sexual acts. Therefore as parents, let us give our children the best gift - that of an innocent childhood, not through sexual education and permission to experiment, but through love, praise and encouragement of the virtues of purity and chastity.

The Bible gives us some very clear principles to guide us in making decisions about dating.

GUARD YOUR HEART: The Bible tells us to be very careful about giving our affections, because our heart influences everything else in our life - *Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life (Proverbs 4:23).*

YOU ARE KNOWN BY THE COMPANY YOU KEEP: We also tend to become like the company we keep. This principle is closely related to the first one and is just as important in friendships as in dating - *Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character (1 Corinthians 15:33).*

CHRISTIANS SHOULD DATE OTHER CHRISTIANS: Although it is fine for Christians to have non-Christian friends, those who are close to our heart should be mature believers who are seeking to follow Christ - *Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14).*

IS IT REALLY LOVE? 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 defines real love. Ask yourself these questions:

- Are you patient with each other?
- Are you kind to each other?
- Are you never envious of each other?
- Do you never boast to each other?
- Is your relationship one of humility?
- Are you never rude to each other?
- Are you never self-seeking?
- Are you never easily angered?
- Do you keep no record of wrongs?
- Are you truthful with each other?
- Do you protect each other?
- Do you trust each other?

If you answered 'no' to any of these questions, then you should pray to God for guidance, asking Him to give you a life-partner who will walk faithfully with you on the path to holiness.

Source: www.christiananswers.net





TOP 9 BEST GIFTS THE LEBANESE GAVE TO THE WORLD

1. THE MARONITE FAITH: founded by Saint Maroun in the mountains of Lebanon.

2. A MODEL OF PERSEVERANCE AND FAITH: throughout Lebanon's history of persecution and war, her people have always risen like the phoenix to triumph, stronger and humbler.

3. FAMILY VALUES: inherited from our ancestor's love of the community life in their villages, even today, we are close-knit, warm, loving and large families.

4. THE FIRST ALPHABET: created by Cadmus, the first teacher in Lebanon.

5. THE FIRST BOAT: Lebanese sailors reached America and Cape Town long before Christopher Columbus or Bartholomew Diaz.

6. THE OLDEST CITY: Byblos, said to be more than 10 000 years, is the oldest inhabited city.

7. MOUTH-WATERING CUISINE: from tabboule, kibbee, hummus and baba'gannouj it all started in the villages of Lebanon.

8. KHALIL GIBRAN: the world's most prolific artist - a much beloved poet, sculptor, artist and philosopher.

9. THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRLS: acknowledged by millions of people throughout the world.

10 BEST SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES 2007

1. STEM CELL STUNNER: ADULT SKIN CELLS CAN BE REPROGRAMMED TO ACT LIKE EMBRYONIC STEM CELLS

2. BRIGHTEST SUPERNOVA: STAR (APPROX. 100 - 200 TIMES LARGER THAN SUN) FOUND COLLAPSED INTO BLACK HOLE 240 MILLION LIGHT YEARS AWAY.

3. MAPPING A MAN: FIRST INDIVIDUAL'S DNA FULLY MAPPED.

4. HEARTY GROWTH: HUMAN BONE MARROW CELLS GROWN INTO A HEART VALVE FOR TRANSPLANT.

5. ANTARCTICA'S NEW SPECIES: 700 NEW SPECIES FOUND!

6. WORLD'S OLDEST ANIMAL: 405-YEAR-OLD CLAM DISCOVERED IN ICELAND.

7. MONDO PLANETS: THREE JUPITER-SIZE PLANETS OUTSIDE SOLAR SYSTEM POINTS TO DISCOVERY OF SMALLER, COOLER PLANETS.

8. OUT OF AFRICA: FIRST FOSSIL EVIDENCE THAT MAN ORIGINATED IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA 65,000 - 25,000 YEARS AGO.

9. BIG BIRDLIKE DINOSAUR: LARGE DINO IN CHINA WITH SLENDER LIMBS CHALLENGES THE NOTION THAT CARNIVORES GOT SMALLER AS THEY GOT MORE BIRDLIKE.

10. REAL-LIFE KRYPTONITE: NEW MINERAL MATCHES FICTIONAL KRYPTONITE - SODIUM LITHIUM BORON SILICATE HYDROXIDE, DUBBED JARADITE.

Source: Krista Mahr, "Time's Lists of the Year", Time Magazine

HAVE ANY MORE SUGGESTIONS ABOUT THE BEST GIFTS OF OUR LEBANON?
WE LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU! WRITE TO US AT INFO@LEBANESEFAMILYCLUB.CO.ZA



NEVER MIND THE WAR - LEBANESE FLOCK HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

Lebanon may seem an unlikely holiday spot: the government has collapsed, car bombs go off periodically and foreign envoys warn of an impending civil war. And yet, so many people have been streaming into this tiny, embattled country in recent days that the flights are all overbooked... Beirut's restaurants, bars and malls are all packed with revelers. Why? The answer is that the Lebanese diaspora reverses itself on holidays, as the migrants who sustain the war-shattered Lebanese economy all year return from jobs across the globe to spend time with their families. Nothing will deter them — not bad weather, not interminable flights and certainly not the Grinch-like mood of Lebanon's endlessly feuding politicians.

...“Look at all these people — there's a political crisis, but do they care?” said Ali Hashini, a burly 30-year-old sitting at a cafe table with three other young Lebanese overseas workers in the Verdun district. “Of course not. ” ...“Politics? Khalas, you're home,” he added, using the Arabic word for “enough.”

...But there is a corollary to this ritual of return: much of the middle class — including many of its best and brightest — no longer live in Lebanon. The pace of emigration appears to have picked up after the violence of the 2006 war with Israel and the political crisis that has followed, said Guita Hourani, a sociologist at Notre Dame University in Zouk Mosbeh, north of Beirut, who has studied migration patterns.

...But there is another way of looking at it. “Perhaps instead of talking about brain drain we should talk about brain globalization,” Mr. Nassib Ghobril said with a mischievous grin. “The globalisation of Lebanon.”

Source: “Home on Holiday, the Lebanese Say, What Turmoil?” *The New York Times*

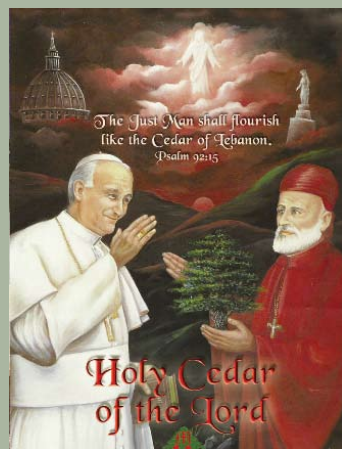
“And I remember too, the beautiful spot in North Lebanon. Every time I close my eyes I see those valleys full of magic and dignity and those mountains covered with glory and greatness trying to reach the sky.”

KHALIL GIBRAN



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BAPTISMS & WEDDINGS

CONGRATULATIONS and blessings to the following members who were baptised or married:

Baptised	Parents	Godparents
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Our Lady of the Cedars of Lebanon - Woodmead

JOSHUA MICHAEL MANGIAGALLI	Brian Mangiagalli & Kimberlie Richardson	Wayne Twigg & Belinda Rahme
CHLOE CAITLIN EBERSEY CORBETT	Derek & Dianne Corbett	Fylen Corbett & Sharon Taddei
THULANI DLAMINI	Michael & Baleseng Dlamini	Churchill Rankoko & Zandi Dlamini
DAVID WILLIAM KALIL	Mark & Natalie Kafil	Russel Kafil & Diane Procommenos
KEISHA LEBOGANG CHARNLEY	David & Jacqueline Charnley	George Agu & Jasmine Agbesi

Our Lady of Lebanon - Mulbarton

ISABELLA HARPER	Michael & Guiseppina Harper	Thomas & Michelle Harper
AURORA AFONSO	Nuno & Ramona Afonso	Gabriel Fortuna & Gorgia Alexiou
JEDD MICHAEL	Anthony & Cherise Michael	Michael Julian & Candice Germanus
NATHAN VAN HEERDEN	Pieter Van Heerden & Catherine Khoury	Brandon Nassif & Melissa Kafil
ALONSO AMARAL	Danny & Charmaine Amaral	Fernando & Melissa Lopes
HANNAH YIANNAKIS	Andrea & Michael Yiannakis	

Weddings

Our Lady of the Cedars of Lebanon - Woodmead

 RYAN EBEDES & GLENICE FRANK
- 8 DECEMBER 2007

Our Lady of Lebanon - Mulbarton

 FABION HABIB & MADONNA NASSIF
- 1 DECEMBER 2007

 TREVOR SMYTHE & TANIA VIDAL
- 16 DECEMBER 2007

 WILLIAM & JACQUELINE COOK
- 29 DECEMBER 2007

OBITUARIES

MAY our merciful Lord grant pardon and peace to these, our faithful departed:

OUR LADY OF CEDARS

† WILLIAM RUNDLE
04/12/37 - 19/12/07

† SHIRLEY KAIRUZ
24/11/47 - 22/12/07

† HAZEL PETERS

Share your special times, stories and photos with us from the happy times of baptisms and weddings to the sad times we mourn the departing of our beloved ones, and all the times in between. [011 804 7566](tel:0118047566) or info@lebanesefamilyclub.co.za





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