

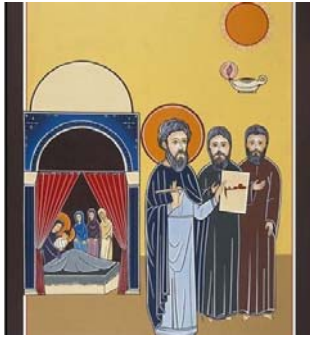


**St. Michael the Archangel
Maronite Catholic Church**
806 Arsenal Avenue
Fayetteville, NC 28305
Office: 910 - 484 - 1531



Email: stmikeoffice@gmail.com **website:** stmichaelsmaronite.net **December 10, 2023**

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, but 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.

CLERGY

Fr. Paul Damien, Pastor

**Fr. Jack Morrison
(retired)**

PARISH OFFICE

HOURS:

**Tuesday, Thursday,
Friday**

10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

LITURGY / MASS :

Tues - Fri: 9:00 am

Saturday: 5:00 PM

Sunday: 10:30 AM

Office Email:

stmikeoffice@gmail.com

Facebook:

**Saint Michael the
Archangel Maronite
Catholic Church**



PRAYER CHAIN

Please contact Lucy Zahran or call church office to **join the prayer chain** or with **prayer requests**

“BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST”

Saturday Dec. 9- 5:00 PM: for Thanh & Han Vo intentions

Sunday Dec 10- 10:30 AM: (RIP) Mikey Hicks by Margaret Grantonic & family

Tuesday	Dec 12	9:00 am	St. Spiridion the Wonderworker, C Our Lady of Guadalupe (USA)	For DON TRUONG by Dieu LY
Wednesday	Dec 13	9:00 am	St. Lucy, M (C)	For Kim Ngan Nguyen intentions by Thanh & Han Vo
Thursday	Dec 14	9:00 am	St. Nemtallah El-Hardini, C	(RIP) Gilbert Damien by Desiree & Fr. Paul Damien
Friday	Dec 15	9:00 am	St. Eleutherius and His Mother, M	For Tanh & Han Vo intentions by Thanh & Han Vo

“REVELATION TO JOSEPH”

Saturday Dec 16- 5:00 PM: for the VO Nguyen family by Thanh & Han Vo

Sunday Dec 17 - 10:30 AM: (RIP) MARY JABBOUR by Dee & Bob Ellwood & family

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION



Sign up today, at the church entrance for a Holy Hour!

Every Thursday
9:30 am - 2:00pm
Rosary for Peace @ 9:30 am

CATHOLIC SOCIAL MINISTRIES

Place your donation of Peanut butter & jelly in the basket next to the Confessional.

Oct. Donations :
103 lbs

READERS

12/9	Kathy Criminger	12/10	Stacie Ferry
12/16	Christian Lupo	12/17	Jason Byrne
12/23	MJ Hahn	12/24	Ace Acevedo
12/30	Lynn Vaughan	12/31	Betty Gurney

SCRIPTURE

The Birth of John The Baptist

Gal 4: 21-5: 1/ Lk 10: 57-66

Revelation to Joseph

Eph 3: 1-13/ Mt 1: 18-25

Genealogy Sunday

Rom 1: 1-12/ Mt 1: 1-17



To be listed as Reader, please text **Kim Phelan @ 352-317-8529** or email **consecrated2021@gmail.com** or the church office

GIFTS OF THANKSGIVING

Offer the Incense, Candles and Wine for one month in memory/honor of someone for a \$25 donation.

December

In Loving Remembrance
of Mrs. Lucy Zahran & Mr. James Reale
by Marie Catalana

Thank You



Collection : 11/26	\$ 1341.00
Collection : 12/3	\$ 1554.00
Christmas Poinsettias	\$ 510.00
Donations to MYO retreat	\$ 180.00
Candles (3 weeks)	\$ 176.00

2nd Collection Reminder

December 25, 2023 (Christmas)- Pastor's Collection
(This 2nd collection is a Christmas gift for the Pastor's personal use. (this year it will go to help needy people)



****2024 weekly envelopes box set are ready for pickup.** In case you do not have a box let us know please. (we have extras)**

CHRISTMAS FLOWER DONATIONS



The Christmas Flower Donation envelopes are now available. Flowers could be in memory of deceased loved ones, or in honor of a loved one, or even in thanksgiving for special graces.

Custom Handmade Rosaries



Handcrafted to

order by Ace Acevedo

Premade Rosaries, as well as a complete list of all available styles, are in the social hall by the Ladies Guild gift counter!

All proceeds benefit the Parish!



We need volunteers to clean the church on a weekly basis.

ONLINE GIVING



VOCATION CHALICE

12/9:
12/10:
12/16:
12/17:

Volunteer
Connie Reidlinger
Volunteer
Stacie Ferry



If your family would like to volunteer to pray for Vocations to Religious Life , please text or email Kimberly P. @ (352)317-8529 or consecrated2021@gmail.com



DEC 13: join us for hot chocolate and cookies from 5:30 to 7:00 pm as the children decorate the Christmas tree in the social hall. (classes to follow the event)

DEC 23: Christmas pageant REHEARSAL

DEC 24: Christmas Pageant play after Sunday Morning mass @ 10:30 am

ANGEL TREE GIFTS: please bring gifts for any age and drop them in the social hall before Dec. 13th if possible. We will make sure to deliver the gifts to the children that are in need for something special on Christmas.



FROM THE LADIES GUILD

- Our next meeting is 10 December at noon.
- If you would like to contribute to baking cookies for our cookie sale, please sign-up. Cookies are due to Mary Louise no later than 13 December. Please check the sign-up for the times she will be in the Social Hall to receive them.
- If you would like to PURCHASE trays of cookies, please see the sign-up after Liturgy. THIS SUNDAY (10 DECEMBER) is the deadline for orders.



- Please do not read the bulletin in the church.

-No walking back and forth during Scripture & Gospel Readings, during the Consecration & Invocation of the Holy Spirit. Wait at the entrance until done then go back to your seat.

- crossing of legs is not allowed . This is not a prayerful position. Seated, standing and kneeling are the prayer positions.

- the Sign of Peace is not a kiss on the mouth . It comes from the Altar and is shared by closed hands among people. The kiss of Peace given on the cheeks is not recommended in our tradition.

We need to set a good example for our children and our guests. Thank You.



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Congratulations to St. Michael Archangel
Ladies Guild, established in 2013,
celebrating 11 years of service. Committed
to "promoting the work of the Church &
building a spiritual community of faith
within the Parish." AD BY: MJ

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