

Policies and Procedures

of the

Maronite Youth Organization

of the

Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles

and

the Eparchy of Saint Maron

June, 2013

FORWARD

The Maronite Youth Organization (MYO) originated in the 1970s. The mission of the MYO remains the same - to be a faith resource for the youth within the Maronite Church and to complement the understanding of their Maronite faith already provided within their parish and their homes.

In July, 2012 both Eparchial Bishops approved the formation of a National Youth Ministry Office and have appointed a priest as the National Director. The purpose of this National Office is; 1) To assist parish priests with the formation and growth of their respective MYO groups, 2) To build the program nationally, 3) To update and formulate all documentation, and 4) To evangelize youth programs in each parish through regional retreats.

A positive working relationship between the National MYO Office and local parish priests is imperative in order to be of greatest service to the Maronite youth. It is recommended that each parish adopt these Policies and Procedures as approved by the Bishops of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles and the Eparchy of Saint Maron.

MARONITE YOUTH ORGANIZATION STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Maronite Youth Organization (MYO) exists to serve as a resource for Maronite youth (ages 12 through 18). Through graces received from the Mysteries/Sacraments of the Church, they will realize as adults that their faith, love and understanding were "gifts" bestowed upon them from those who loved them in their lives. These "gifts" are to be treasured and passed down to their children as well. This is expressed through the Divine Liturgy in the words, *"from one generation to another, until the end of time."*

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

All Maronite youth between the ages of twelve and eighteen are eligible for membership in the MYO. As members of the MYO they will be required to do the following;

1. ***Be*** an active participant in the Maronite faith by attending Liturgy consistently
2. ***Assist*** in the local parish by providing at least 10 hours of service within a calendar year under the direction of the parish priest or those lay volunteers approved by the parish priest
3. ***Assist*** in parish functions that promote the Maronite faith and heritage including supporting the *"Faith from the Mountains"* series
4. ***Attend*** at least one national or regional MYO workshop or retreat every two calendar years.
5. ***Complete*** a membership application form with proper signatures and submit to the National Youth Office after obtaining signatures of consenting parents
6. ***Sign*** and return the Covenant of Behavior form and retain a copy for your records

MEMBERSHIP COVENANT OF BEHAVIOR

Appropriate conduct and behavior are important to maintain when working with a group because any disturbances are disruptive to others. The expectations of all members are;

Spiritual As a member I will maintain a consistent and strong prayerful relationship with God

Social As a member of the MYO , I will conduct myself appropriately in all social settings and realize my faith is part of who I am. If I find myself in a situation where my faith is at risk, I will seek guidance from appropriate individuals.

Signature of MYO Member

Date

MEMBERSHIP IN THE MARONITE YOUTH ORGANIZATION (MYO)

All Maronite youth between the ages of twelve and eighteen are eligible for membership in the MYO. As members of the MYO they will be required to do the following;

- Be an active participant in the Maronite faith by attending Liturgy consistently
- Assist in the local parish by providing at least 10 hours of service within a calendar year under the direction of the parish priest or those lay volunteers approved by the parish priest
- Assist in parish functions that promote the Maronite faith and heritage including supporting the "Faith from the Mountains" series
- Attend at least one national or regional MYO workshop or retreat every two calendar years
- Complete a membership application form with proper signatures and submit to the National Youth Office after obtaining signatures of consenting parents

MYO MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

In signing this form I am in agreement with the terms of membership in the Maronite Youth Organization (MYO).

- Be an active participant in the Maronite faith by attending Liturgy consistently
- Assist in the local parish by providing at least 10 hours of service within a calendar year under the direction of the parish priest or those lay volunteers approved by the parish priest
- Assist in parish functions that promote the Maronite faith and heritage including supporting the "Faith from the Mountains" series
- Attend at least one national or regional MYO workshop or retreat each calendar year
- Complete a membership application and Covenant of Behavior form with proper signatures and submit to the National Youth Office after obtaining signatures of consenting parents

NATIONAL DIRECTOR

The Director has overall responsibility for the National Maronite Youth Organization (MYO) including all operations, all actions of everyone associated with the MYO and all members of the MYO.

The National Director is a priest appointed by both Eparchial Bishops in the United States. He is under the jurisdiction of both Eparchial Bishops. He is responsible for ensuring that the Policies and Procedures of the MYO are implemented efficiently and effectively and he must keep both Eparchial Bishops informed of the organization's financial status, the outcome of each workshop or retreat and the advice of the Advisory Board.

He should focus his efforts on the overall mission of the MYO and, therefore; delegate specific administrative tasks to selected volunteers and ensure each volunteer is performing their tasks timely and efficiently.

General Duties of the National Director

1. The National Director will initially draft Policies and Procedures for the MYO and obtain the input and approval of both Eparchial bishops.
2. The National Director is responsible for preparing, reviewing and presenting to both Eparchial Bishops a Balance Sheet, Income and Expense Report, and a budget that has been reviewed by a CPA. Preferably the reports will be prepared with Quick books. This report should be prepared and reviewed by the Bishops once per calendar year and supporting documentation should be maintained by the National Director.
3. Subsequent to the approval of both Bishops of all noted above (1-3), the National Director will contact all volunteers, laity on the National Youth Team and the Religious selected for the Advisory Board and hold an initial meeting. This meeting is intended to present the policies and procedures for discussion and to provide an initial calendar of events for the next twelve months.

4. The National Director will assign the details of the workshops/retreats to three individuals on the Advisory Board so that the National Director can remain focused on the overall event rather than the logistics. Each workshop should have a definitive plan or agenda prior to announcing the event.

5. The National Director is responsible for all delegation of tasks and personnel decisions as well as reviewing all applicants for membership. The Advisory Board is a resource for the National Director in terms of planning and following up on events.

THE NATIONAL YOUTH TEAM

The National Youth Team is comprised of volunteers approved by the National Director (ideally between 3 or 4 individuals). These individuals are directly involved in the planning, staging and logistics of each national and/or regional workshop or retreat for the youth. It is likely these same individuals will continue their work as a Team on several workshops/retreats.

The Team will work closely with the National Director in the planning stages but it is the Team that will carry out the plan so that the National Director may focus on the spiritual aspect of the workshop/retreat.

LOCAL VOLUNTEERS

Local volunteers are those individuals within a parish or already established volunteers or leaders with the parish MYO organization. These individuals are welcome to assist the National Team as they can when events take place in their parish or under special circumstances.

THE ADVISORY BOARD

The Advisory Board is organized to assist the National Director in meeting the MYO's overall mission. The Board works under the direction of the National Director and will meet as a group at least once annually. The Board members will be;

1. The National Director - who will serve as the Board President
2. Two priests and one religious - who will add a spiritual/theological perspective to the Board. These individuals will be recommended by the National Director with the approval of both Eparchial Bishops.
3. Bishops will select members of the National Youth Team with input from the National Director

The Advisory Board exists to assist the National Director by making recommendations and suggestions that will make a positive impact on the administration, operational procedures or direction of the MYO. The Board is also responsible for following up on the feedback obtained after retreats or workshops. This follow up can consist of feedback requests from the youth, parish priests, lay volunteers, etc. Board meetings must be documented and reported to the Eparchial Bishops by the National Director once per calendar year.

ADMINISTRATION

The Maronite Youth Organization (MYO) considers the welfare and protection of all youth a sacred responsibility and, therefore; subscribes to the Eparchial norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors. It is for this reason that a strict policy relative to proper documentation and verification of the background of all individuals associated with the MYO be of highest importance. It is understood that many individuals have been working with the MYO at a local level or have been volunteering for the national workshops. While these individuals may have a record of prior background checks in their file, the formation of the National Office will require all files on all volunteers be reviewed and brought up to date if not already updated.

All individuals involved at any level with the MYO are required to have signed and read the Code of Ethics and Integrity, the Volunteer Code of Conduct and the Background Authorization Form. If these forms have been submitted or updated within the past six months that is sufficient. All others must be updated in the next sixty days from the distribution of these policies. It is necessary that all files on all volunteers be maintained at the National Office either electronically and/or in paper format with a copy also maintained at the parish office. Auditors will be directed to the National Office if any audit is required.

The National Director will be responsible for ensuring all of the administrative documentation and procedures are followed which includes running a background check.

LOCAL PARISH MYO GUIDELINES

MYO groups exist at the parish level thanks to the tremendous work of all volunteers and the local parish priests. It is recommended that each parish adopt these guidelines for membership and administration as directed by both Eparchial Bishops.

Membership Guidelines

All Maronite youth between the ages of twelve and eighteen are eligible for membership in the MYO. As members of the MYO they will be required to do the following;

- Be an active participant in the Maronite faith by attending Liturgy consistently;
- Assist in the parish by providing at least 10 hours of service within a calendar year under the direction of the parish priest or those lay volunteers approved by the parish priest;
- Assist in parish functions that promote the Maronite faith and heritage including supporting the "Faith from the Mountains" series;
- Attend at least one national or regional MYO workshop or retreat every two calendar years;
- Complete a membership application form with proper signatures and submit to the parish priest after obtaining signatures of consenting parents.

The details of meetings, events at the parish level and leadership etc. are left to the discretion of the parish priest since the dynamics of each parish may vary. When the parish priest and the National Director of the MYO work together it benefits the youth and the future of the Maronite Church, and will solidify the growth and development of the Maronite Youth Organization.

CODE OF ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

- Church personnel * will exhibit the highest Christian ethical standards and personal integrity.
- Church personnel will conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the discipline and teaching of the Catholic Church.
- Church personnel will not physically, sexually or emotionally abuse a minor or an adult.
- Church personnel will not engage in physical, psychological, written or verbal harassment of employees, volunteers, or parishioners and will not tolerate such harassment by other Church personnel.
- Church personnel shall provide a professional work environment that is free from physical, psychological, written, or verbal intimidation or harassment.
- Church personnel shall not engage in sexual intimacies with the persons they counsel. This includes consensual contact, forced physical contact and sexually explicit conversations not related to counseling issues.
- Church personnel assume the full burden for setting and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all counseling and counseling-related relationships.
- No counseling sessions should be conducted in private living quarters.
- Church personnel will share concerns about suspicious or inappropriate behavior with their pastor, the Vicar-General of the Eparchy, or the Eparchial Bishop.
- Church personnel will report any suspected abuse to the proper civil authorities.
- Church personnel will accept their personal responsibility to protect minors and adults from all forms of abuse.
- Houses used for residences of priests and religious are exclusively for the use of the religious. With the exception of occasional visits from immediate family members, minors are not permitted to be overnight guests in the residence of a priest or a religious.

** Church personnel includes priests, religious permanent and transitional deacons, seminarians, all paid and volunteer personnel who are employed by or work in eparchial parishes or institutions.*

Signature of Personnel _____ Date _____

VOLUNTEER'S CODE OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT

In signing this document I am in agreement that our youth are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us. As a volunteer, I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Volunteer's Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the Maronite Youth Organization (MYO). As a volunteer with the Maronite Youth Organization (MYO) *I promise to:*

1. Treat all with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity and consideration
2. Avoid situations where I am alone with children and/or youth at any activity or event
3. Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children and/or youth
4. Refuse to accept gifts from children and/or youth or their parents without prior written approval from the National Youth Director and I will also refrain from bestowing gifts to same
5. Report suspected abuse to the National Director or appropriate supervisor (and the Local Child Protection Services Agency). I understand failure to report suspected abuse to civil authorities immediately, according to the law, is a misdemeanor.
6. Cooperate fully and honestly in any investigation of abuse of any youth.

I further agree that *I will NOT* while working with the youth:

7. Use profanity, tobacco products, alcohol, illegal drugs or pose any health risk to anyone
8. Strike, spank, shake, slap or touch any youth in a sexual or inappropriate manner
9. Use discipline or exhibit any behavior that frightens or humiliates the youth

I understand that as a volunteer I am subject to a thorough annual background check including criminal history. I understand any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in my removal as a volunteer with the youth

Volunteer (Printed) Name

Volunteer Signature

Date

National Director

Date

VOLUNTEER BACKGROUND CHECK AUTHORIZATION

I understand that, in connection with my volunteer application, a background investigation may be done that may include information regarding my driving records and court records. This is consistent with Church teaching which promotes the dignity and sanctity of all human life and asks that we all protect the vulnerable among us from harm and injury. This information may come from either public or private sources and may contain information regarding character, experience, work habits, and/or other information relevant to volunteer service.

I understand that, if I am approved for volunteer service by the Maronite Youth Office (MYO) this background check authorization will be kept on file and may be used at any time during my service to procure information when, in the judgment of the ministry office such may be necessary.

I hereby release and discharge to the extent permitted by law, the Maronite Youth Office and any personal or professional reference, from any and all claims, damages, losses, liabilities, cost, or other expenses arising from retrieving, reporting and/or disclosure of information in connection with this background investigation. I have read, understand and consent to the above. I further authorize that a photographic or a telephonic facsimile of this document shall be valid for all purposes present and future. My signature below certifies that all information I have provided in connection with this background check is true, accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. *Volunteer Information: (Print clearly)*

First Name M.I. Last Name

Address including City/State/Zip

Parish Name / City /State where volunteering

Signature of Volunteer

Date of Signature

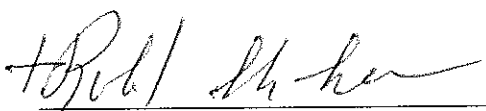
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SIGNATURE OF EPARCHIAL BISHOPS

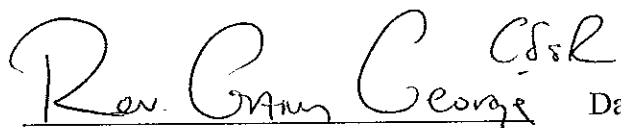
These policies and procedures have been reviewed and approved by the following individuals

and shall be effective as of July 1, 2013.

Periodically these procedures will be reviewed again to determine if any modifications are necessary.

Bishop Robert J. Shaheen  Date: 7/5/13
Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon

Bishop Gregory J. Mansour  Date: 7/5/13
Eparchy of Saint Maron

Fr. Gary George, C.S.s.R.  Date: 7/5/13
National Youth Director