

SAINT SHARBEL MISSION

WEEKLY BULLETIN #2019-49
[December 8, 2019]



PARISH SCHEDULE

SUNDAY LITURGY | at 11:00 AM

St. Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church

600 Mount Vernon Church Road
Raleigh, NC 27614

Tel: (919)917-7597

Email: abouna@saintsharbelchurch.org

website: www.saintsharbelchurch.org

Administrator: Rev. Robert Youssef Farah

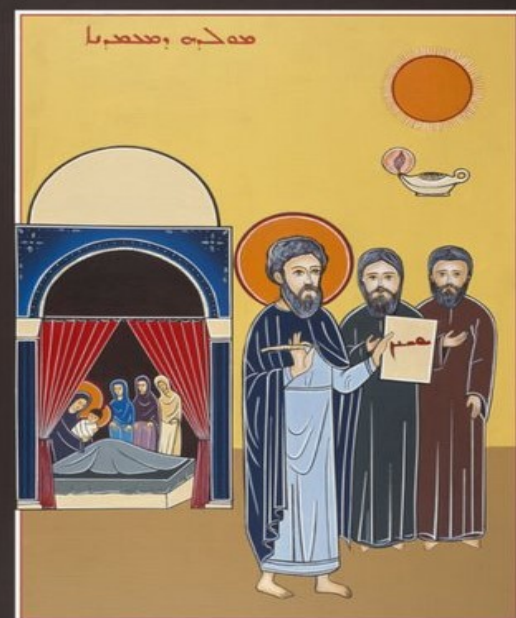
Subdeacon: Claude Shiver

Sunday Liturgy: 11:00 AM

Saturday Liturgy: 5:00 PM

Monday, Thursday & Friday: 6:30 PM

Holy Days of Obligation: 6:30 PM



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READINGS**November-December/ 2019****December 8****Birth of John the Baptist****Epistle****Gospel**

Gal 4:21 - 5:1

Lk 1:57-66

December 15**Revelation to Joseph****Epistle****Gospel**

Eph 3:1-13

Mt 1:18-25

**DATE****TIME***** L I T U R G Y I N T E N T I O N S *****FROM****Remember your loved ones with Mass Intentions**

Dec. 8

11:00 AM

Personal Intentions

Dec. 15

11:00 AM

Personal Intentions

Dec. 22

11:00 AM

Personal Intentions

HOSPITALITY - COFFEE HOUR / 2019

Dec. 8

Joelle Najm and Joumana Najm

Dec. 15

Available

Dec. 22

Available

*To sponsor a coffee hour pls. contact Mrs. Ana Franca Abi-Aad**Tel:(954) 806-9909 Or Email: abetriz@yahoo.com /Donation for coffee hour is appreciated***PARISH OFFERING****November 3, 2019***Weekly offering**\$807.00**Donation**\$340.00**Coffee Hour**\$46.00***Total Income****\$1,193.00***Thank You for your generosity and
your support***Important Messages****The Feast of the Immaculate Conception**

Its December 8 and it is a Holy Day of Obligation. It is a mortal sin if you miss a Holy Day of Obligation. To fulfill your obligation you must go to Mass and receive the Eucharist. Because it falls on a Sunday this year, your Sunday Mass fulfills the obligation



The dream has come true. Celebrating our First Divine Liturgy in the new Church on Hosanna Sunday was very moving, a real Home Coming. Now, our Bishop Gregory Mansour officially consecrated it with a beautiful and blessed ritual.

May God bless you all

Christmas Novena

All major feast days were preceded by a period of Fasting in order to prepare the faithful spiritually for the celebration of the feast. Through the years, fasting was reduced the great lent that precedes Easter. Since we are no longer obligated to the fast before Christmas, let us prepare ourselves spiritually for the Glorious Birth of Our Lord by going to confession, receiving the Eucharist and attending the Christmas Novena which runs from the 15th through the 23rd of December.

Please note that the Novena is always celebrated with and after the Masses: On weekdays at 6:30 PM, and on weekends after the Saturday & Sunday Masses.

Car raffle tickets are now on sale for the 2020 Honda CR-V. Tickets are \$100 each and only 500 will be sold. Odds of winning will be 1/500 minimum. Drawing will be 14-Dec-2019 at our Christmas Party.

Tickets can be purchased online on our website <http://saintsharbelchurch.org/>, or by contacting either Mounir Saleh or George Harb.

Our Annual Christmas Party will take place Saturday December 14, 2019. Seats are limited, so please reserve your tickets early and come join our family of St. Sharbel to celebrate the Spirit of the Glorious Birth of Our Lord.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS - 2019

December 14	6:00 - 12:00 PM	Christmas Party and Car Raffle
Dec. 15 - 23	6:30 PM	Christmas Novena at Church
December 25	12:00 AM	Midnight Liturgy

Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John (Luke 1:57-66)

The birth of John completes the family of Zachariah & Elizabeth. With the presence of relatives and neighbors, the parameter of the family broadens and happiness ensues. But with the presence of the Virgin Mary, the happiness of the family reaches a fever pitch, because the birth of John proclaims the birth of Jesus. Further, the birth of John brought happiness to the house of his elderly father, to his barren mother and to the neighbors and relatives, because God's love to his people is renewed. His name is "John" which means "the compassionate God." It points out to a new phase in God's salvific plan and to the fidelity of God's promise to his people. "And the hand of God was with him" is a scriptural expression explaining that God called John to a special prophetic mission, just like Elijah and the rest of the prophets, because he is going to "prepare a people fit for the Lord" (Luke 1:17).

Among the more fascinating figures in Scripture, the person of John stands out. Certainly he is a "Surprise Baby" since Zechariah and Elizabeth had been unable to conceive a child. The time had long passed for new life to emerge from their marriage. Yet the God of grace and surprise was not bound by human expectations. Grace builds on nature and brings new life out of the most barren circumstances. When human powers have been spent, the grace of God shines through our weaknesses and limitations. The conception of John is a foretasting of God's ultimate act of grace and life in Jesus. The new age of grace is dawning.

Scriptural Names are expressive. They are a reflection or a projection of someone's life which expresses the meaning of a particular action. For example: Hosea's children's names, Jezreel, Unloved, and not-my-people, are given by their father as a result of their mother's action. Mshee-ho (Aramaic), Massih (Arabic), Messiah with the English transliteration and means the Anointed one, the Savior. Yuhanon (Aramaic), Hanna or Hannan (Arabic), John (English) means compassion. The name "John" expresses God's action of love toward Elizabeth and Zechariah by answering their prayers. It further expresses the compassion that God has toward humanity at large.

There are spells of lifelessness in our life. We feel the reproach of the world, which is too much with us: Where is your God? Where is the sign of grace that brings forth new life? Even in the midst of so many lights we fail to see the One Who is Light. Yet it is in the absence of God that we may come to feel his presence. The wilderness speaks of the absence of God and the deep longing in the human heart for home. God is never indifferent to what happens to us, his children. He cares about the world which he created. The idea of wilderness is prominent in the Scripture. It is the place of void and emptiness, the place of demons and temptation. The wilderness is also a space for God's face. For it is in wanderings that we grow weary and turn to the God who is in search of us.

John is the one who will preach about the coming of the Messiah. John is about the business of preparing hearts for the coming of the One Who takes the crooked and makes it straight, the rough and turns it smooth. It is into the wilderness of our heart and everyday lives that the Word must become flesh. When our human efforts and powers are spent, when we have become aware of our lowliness, smallness and imperfection, then grace proclaims, "God lives...God lives in you." "A voice cries out in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God!" (Isaiah 40:3).