

INTENTION(S) FOR THE DIVINE LITURGY (MASS):

Today: Repose of Dany Fares, by Family

22 February: Repose of George Assiff, by Family

01 March: Repose of Jean D'Arc Nahas, By Nahas Family

08 March: Repose of Antoine Elias Yazbek (1st Cousin of Naji Adwan, died in Lebanon), Mr./Mrs. Naji Adwan

15 March: Repose of Adele Ferzli, Mother of our parish account, George Ferzli, by Son George and his wife Elham. Adele died in Lebanon.

RESCHEDULE: We have sadly, a number of deaths of relatives in or Community, with requests for Liturgies (Masses) to be said for their repose. By agreement with Joseph and Micha Nahas, the Liturgy of the repose for his mother, Jean D'Arc has been rescheduled for Sunday, 1 March, which in any case will be close to the 40th day. The Liturgies for the other deceased have also been scheduled as you see above.

CORRECTION: It was brought to my attention by a parishioner—who read the Bulletin via email—that the date for a Liturgy was incorrect: the Bulletin had read 21. The correct date is 22 February, as you can see from the listing above. Sorry for the inconvenience!

MAY OUR HOLY FATHER, ST. MARON, PRAY FOR US!

FROM LAST WEEK

FATHER ANTHONY IN EGYPT: Well before he arrived here, Aboona has had a trip planned to Egypt for a biblical study tour, led by Fr. Lawrence Boadt, one of the most famous experts on the Old Testament in the USA and author of *Reading the Old Testament*. Aboona will be gone from 16 to 30 March, returning shortly before Palm Sunday (*Sha'neenee*), Passion Week and Easter.

NEW

FOCUS on FOCA: Several weeks back I talked to you about the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), which will allow more freedom for abortions in this country, and allow the government to use our money for abortions. I inserted a flyer from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops telling you all that this includes. You will find in today's Bulletin three postcards—on each for our 2 senators and our representative. They are: **Representative Kathy Castor; Senator Mel Martinez and Senator Bill Nelson. Please consider filling in their names on the proper postcard and send them to their offices in Washington, DC. It couldn't be easier: just complete and send.**

LENT BEGINS NEXT WEEK, on Monday, 23 February. Rules for fasting as well as scheduled Lenten services will be announced next week.

DATES FOR FIRST PENANCE AND FIRST EUCHARIST: At a meeting on 1 February Father and the the parents of children receiving the two sacramental Mysteries was agreed upon: 26 April for Penance and 10 May (Mother's Day) for First Holy Communion.

INSTRUCTIONS IN THE FAITH: Two adult people interested in becoming Catholics have

approached Father for classes. We have set up weekly classes for this on Saturdays at 11 am. Anyone interested in attending such classes should contact the parish office (813-886-7413) for information and registration. HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHES FOR SALVATION, and HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE BIBLE?

ROSTER TASK CONCLUDED: With thanks to God, and thanks to some very good parishioners who gave generously of their time to assist Father, our parish roster update is nearly complete. Postal letters were sent out last week to those for whom we had no data other than their mailing address, with registration forms and a copy of our latest Bulletin. We hope their mail out response will help us conclude a serious 8-week project at updating.

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTION: \$1,467.00 (includes \$174.00 candle money). This nearly paid our monthly rent (\$1500.00). THANK YOU!

Next Week's Scripture Commentary for the CANA SUNDAY (The so-called "Entrance into Great Lent")

The first Sunday of Great Lent, in our current Maronite Tradition, presents to us the sign of the wedding at Cana in Galilee, where Jesus transformed water into wine. He did this as the first of his signs, or miracles, and so revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him. This Sunday points us also to the sign of the death and resurrection of Jesus on Golgotha in Jerusalem, which will be the greatest and the last of his signs, whereby he transformed death into life! Out of his blood and water, he built his new spouse, the Church, in the Mystery of Baptism and Eucharist.

First Reading: *Romans 14:14-23*

This selection focuses on fraternal conviviality among Christians, in their different perspectives about what is clean and unclean regarding eating meat and drinking wine, which is a concern stemming from their Jewish background. Those among them who interpret the Law of Moses liberally believe that they can eat anything in freedom of conscience. However, the conservatives believe that they should abstain from eating meat and drinking wine and just eat greens. The solution of the Apostle Paul suggests that the believers accept each other, and that everyone act according to his conscience, in mutual respect and love, without anyone imposing his opinion on others or arguing with them. For St. Paul belonging to Christ, the only Lord of all, and unity with him are more important than the multiplicity of practical and moral opinions. By doing this, Paul confirms the principle of Christian freedom. However, liberals could misuse freedom through selfish and irresponsible conduct that does not consider fraternal love and the building up of the Christian community, the mystical Body of the Lord. Fraternal love requires that the believer sometimes give up his opinion, in order to avoid being a stumbling block, and thus save his brother. The application to the Season of Lent is obvious and direct.

The Gospel: *John 2:1-11*

In the wedding at Cana, Jesus reveals his glory to his disciples, and they believe in him as the Christ (i.e., the Messiah, the Anointed One), whose hands abound in bounty and joy. He replaces the Jewish feasts, the manna and the water of purification for the Jews, and this is an evidence of the essence of his divine identity. In his presence, the Old Law loses its meaning and acquires a new one. Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is always in the company of her Son and his disciples and the Church. She is the New Eve, the new woman and mother of all believers. The new wine is the symbol of the great messianic joy (that is, the Age of the Messiah at the end of human history);

of the new teaching of Jesus, and of the cup of his Eucharistic Blood. The expression “the third day” had a special meaning in the early Church and related to resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead. Thus, the wedding at Cana in Galilee, on the first Sunday of Lent, will be the beginning of a journey of repentance, conversion, and joy; a journey that leads us to the Holy Week of Passion and the glory of the Resurrection.