

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

Today: Repose of the Father of Georges Houaichane (died in Lebanon), by son George

15 February: Repose of Dany Fares, by Family

21 February: Repose of Jean D'Arc Nahas (Mother of Joseph), by the Nahas Family

28 February: Repose of Antoine Elias Yazbek (1st Cousin of Naji Adwan), MM Naji Adwan

FROM LAST WEEK

CAMECT (Christian Arab and Middle Eastern Churches Together), **Telelumiere-Noursat**, and the **Chaldean Catholic Church** are sponsoring an International Symposium under the theme *Christianity in the Middle East: Ancient Yet Ever New*. It will take place Saturday and Sunday, February 21-22, 2009 in Detroit, Michigan. The Symposium will highlight the contribution Christians make in their culture and society of the Middle East. Presenters include the Papal Representative to the United Nations, the Most Reverend Celestino Migliore, as well as several bishops and experts, among them, Bishop Roland Abou Jaoude, the Maronite Patriarchal Vicar. The Telelumiere Board USA, Canada and Lebanon will also be present. All are invited to this symposium. Please visit the website of CAMECT at www.camect.org for other information.

NEW

ST. MARON'S DAY CELEBRATION: Our celebration of the Feast Day of our spiritual father, St. Maron, will take place next Sunday. Please make every effort to be with the Community. As we pray together, we show our common bonds as his descendants in the Faith.

FATHER MITCH PACWA, S.J. will celebrate the Liturgy next Sunday, 15 February 2009. Fr. Mitch is an expert on the Bible and has a regular program on the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN). He also has permission to celebrate the Liturgy of our Maronite Church. He is coming to Tampa to speak at the Jesuit High School. Please pass this word on to all whom you know will be interested.

DEATH OF FR. JOSEPH DAVID: The Chancery Office informed us of the sad news that Father Joseph David, Pastor of Saint George Church in Uniontown, PA, passed away this week, ironically during this past Week of Deceased Priests. Father Anthony asks that you offer some prayers for Fr. Joseph's eternal rest. As we prayed this past week, may God reward him and all his faithful servants for a life of sacrifice faithfully lived.

2ND COLLECTION NEXT WEEK—UNITED STATES CATHOLIC BISHOPS' WORLDWIDE CHARITIES:

This collection combines the four USCCB collections: Central and Eastern Europe, the Church in Latin America, Catholic Relief Services, and Operation Rice Bowl (which is part of CRS). The total is divided accordingly. Here is another chance for you to share your good fortune with the less fortunate.



LENT BEGINS SOON: Since Easter is early this year, the Lenten fast begins early for Catholics as well—on Monday, 23 February (also known as “Ash Monday” for Maronites). Our Lenten Schedule will be published soon. However, you are asked from now to think about what activity you will do to observe the fasting. Parents, you can help to get your children ready for Lent. Some of you might want to read Pope Benedict’s Lenten message at <http://www.zenit.org/article-24990?l=english>.

LAST WEEK’S COLLECTION: \$917.00. This includes a regular and faithful monthly \$50.00 pledge. If you have made a pledge, please remember that this is a promise you made **OVER AND ABOVE YOUR WEEKLY SUPPORT**. How have you been doing to fulfill your pledge? Is it time to make up what you promised?

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 in time for Palm Sunday and Passion Week.

Next Week’s Scripture Commentary for the SUNDAY OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

After the memorial of the deceased bishops and priests, and the Righteous and Just, the Church remembers all her other faithful departed children. These have passed away from her to God, accompanied by the cross, baptism, and the Eucharist, in the hope of eternal life. The Church reminds us of the essential realities related to life and death in the light of her faith.

First Reading: 1 Thess 5:1-11

As the first of Saint Paul’s letters and the oldest book of the New Testament, this is the first written expression of the faith of the early Church and her vision of the reality of death. The Apostle has already encouraged the faithful of Thessalonica that the same Jesus who died and rose will come to judge the living and the dead and save all those who believe in him. Herein Paul continues to exhort them to remain vigilant until the coming of the Lord, because the Lord Jesus did not specify the time of his coming. He talked however about vigilance and being ready, so that they wouldn’t be surprised like the thief at night or like labor pains upon a pregnant woman. He also warns those expecting an imminent coming of the Lord, emphasizing the three divine virtues that summarize the Christian life and which specify the entire life of the believer. Thus, he/she lives life in a joyful expectation of the coming of the Lord, in order to live with the Lord forever. Our Christian life on earth is the nucleus and the beginning of eternal life and complete communion with Christ, who triumphs over evil, pain, and death forever.

Gospel: Luke 16:19-31

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is unique to Luke. In it is found the best explanation for what Jesus taught about the danger for people in having riches: It is a second lord and a door to eternal damnation! Jesus does not forbid wealth but warns about it. The sin of the rich man was that he didn’t let the poor participate in his wealth. In the parable there are two essential ideas:

- 1 The first is that the decision about the destiny of humans occurs right after their death.
- 2 The second is conversion, not through a miracle, such as a dead person who

comes back to warn us; rather through faith in what the prophets and apostles have taught in the holy books, the summary of the holy Church's teaching.

The theological lesson is that life in the other world becomes the opposite of life in our world, when we don't make our life today an image of the other world!

LITURGICAL AND SPIRITUAL NOTE:

For a number of years what is often heard at Catholic funerals is the clear statement that the souls of the deceased ones are "in heaven with God." This idea, carrying the HOPE that one day the soul will be with God, is wrongly proclaimed. What we know is that one who was faithful in life and did not deny God at death is saved. But there is a "state" of purification needed before final union with God. Our ancestors in the Maronite Church recognize this fact in the traditional proclamation at death: "May God have mercy on her/him."