

## Birth of Our Lord

The Maronite Divine Liturgy often mentions the title *Mary, Mother of the Light*. This title is rich in theological and spiritual significance and is indeed one of the treasures of the Maronite Church.

The image of light conveys a sense of joy, festivity and life. Religion uses the image of light to express the notion of purity and the presence of God. Since light is the element which is proper to the divine being, from ancient times the pagans adored the sun. At the end of December, the pagans celebrated a feast dedicated to the *unconquerable Sun*. In fact, on December 21st the nights, which had been becoming longer and longer, begin to shorten. The ancient celebrated this conquest of the light over darkness.

When Constantine granted freedom for Christians to worship publicly, it was appropriate to replace the celebration of the *Unconquerable Sun*, with the feast of the New Sun of the world, to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Light of the World (John 3:19).

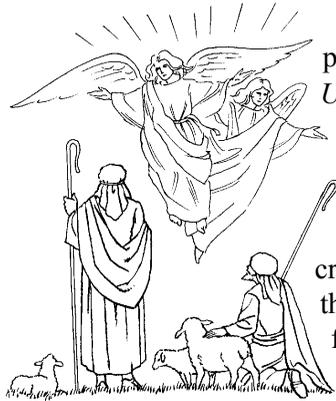
The image of light is found throughout salvation history. The Aramaic Fathers of the Antiochene tradition teach us that creation is a preparation for the incarnation of the Son of God. All was created by the Father through the Son. Scripture tells us that the first thing that was created is the sun. It is the heavenly body which gives forth light, warmth and life itself. The sun is the image of the Son of God because Christ Himself is that light which comes from heaven. As a ray of light coming through a cloud, He appeared from the Virgin Mary. When God created the world, He separated the light from the darkness. In the New Testament, there is a constant struggle between light and darkness.

The genealogy in the gospel of Matthew describes the human ancestry of Jesus in the flesh and, as such, lists the sinners whose sins Jesus had to bear. This is the side of darkness in the spiritual realm. St. John describes Jesus as coming from God, Light from Light.

The account of the birth of Jesus contains the image of light throughout. The shepherds saw a great light (Luke 2:9) and the Magi saw a brilliant star in the skies (Matt. 2:9-11). Throughout the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, we find the image of light used to express His divinity. His baptism was a true revelation, a great enlightenment. During the transfiguration, Jesus was surrounded by light. When Jesus died on the cross darkness came upon the earth. The Resurrection itself was a blinding light (Matt 28:2). The descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is described as *tongues of fire* (Acts 2:3). Upon seeing a great light and being thrown from his horse, Saul came to believe (Acts 9:3) While in prison, Peter saw a great light and was freed from his chains (Acts 12:6).

Just as the Magi and Shepherds saw and followed the light, we who have seen the Light must follow. This feast of the Birth of Our Lord should be an incentive for us to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:14).

The night shall be no more. They will need no light from lamps or the sun, for the Lord God shall give them light and they shall reign forever (Revelation 22:5).



## Saint Anthony's Maronite Catholic Church

Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

4611 Sadler Road

Glen Allen, VA 23060

Phone (804) 270-7234; Fax (804) 273-9914

E-Mail: [Stanthony@StAnthonyMaroniteChurch.org](mailto:Stanthony@StAnthonyMaroniteChurch.org)

[WWW.StAnthonyMaroniteChurch.org](http://WWW.StAnthonyMaroniteChurch.org)

Msgr. George M. Sebaali, Pastor (E-mail: [Gmsebaali@aol.com](mailto:Gmsebaali@aol.com))

---

---

Christmas 2006

---

---

☩ WONDERFUL  
COUNSELOR  
EVERLASTING  
FATHER  
Mighty  
God  
Prince of  
Peace

**Saturday, December 23, 2006 at 6:30 A.M.**

Harry and Zackia Shaia, Philip and Mary Gibrall

**Sunday, December 24, 2006 at 8:30 A.M.**

Abe and Julia Massad

**Christmas Eve Liturgy (6:30 P.M.)**

Members of St. Anthony, living & deceased

**Christmas Day (December 25, 2006 at 10:00 o'clock)**

Special Intention

**Daily Liturgy in the Chapel at 9:00 A.M.**

**Tuesday:** Renaldo Bibilani

**Wednesday:** No Morning Liturgy

**Thursday:** No Morning Liturgy

**Friday:** No Morning Liturgy.

**Saturday, December 30, 2006 at 6:30 A.M.**

Fred and Amelia Fodill

**Sunday, December 31, 2006 at 8:30 A.M.**

Robert Coleman

**New Year's Eve Liturgy (6:30 P.M.)**

Deceased members of the Azar family

**New Year's Day (January 1, 2007 at 11:00 o'clock)**

Mary Nadder

**Friday, January 5, 2007 (Epiphany Eve) at 6:30 P.M.:**

Special Intention

**Saturday, January 6, 2007 (Epiphany of the Lord)**

(at 9:00 A.M.): Fr. Anthony Gemayel

**Sunday, January 7, 2007 at 8:30 A.M.**

Jean Lyell

**Sunday, January 7, 2007 at 11:00 o'clock**

Harry and Zackia Shaia, Philip and Mary Gibrall

### *Feast of the Epiphany*

**Saturday, January 6, 2007** (Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord), is a Holy Day of Obligation. Divine Liturgy will be celebrated on Friday, January 5, 2007, at 6:30 P.M., and on Saturday, January 6, 2006 at 9:00 A.M. During both liturgies we will consecrate the Epiphany water. If you wish you may bring a small water bottle to have it blessed during the liturgy.

These two liturgies are only for the Feast Day. Please Mark your calendars from now.

### *New Year's Eve*

**NEW YEAR'S EVE** party will take place on December 31, 2006. Live American and Lebanese Music will be provided. For tickets or more information, please contact Gloria Nadder, Chairperson.

### *Sunday School*

In observation of the Christmas holiday, there will be no Sunday School on Sunday, December 24, 2006 and on Sunday December 31, 2006. Sunday School will resume again on **Sunday January 7, 2007** following the 8:30 A.M. Liturgy.

### *2007 Contribution Envelopes*

The **2007 Contribution envelopes** are available in the back of the church. If you have been using the envelope system in 2006, you will have the same number in 2007. Envelopes were issued to the **registered members**. While we welcome everyone to worship with us, we encourage you to contact the Church Office this week if you would like to register in the parish.



### **Choir Practice**

**Tuesday, January 9, 2007** at 7:00 P.M., there will be a choir practice for both Liturgies.

### **Readers**

**Saturday, December 30, 2006 at 6:30 P.M.**

Harry (Chip) Shaia

**Sunday, December 31, 2006 at 8:30 A.M.**

Subdeacon Kenneth Fodill

**Sunday, December 31, 2006 at 6:30 P.M.**

(*New Year's Eve*): John Aaron

### **Ushers**

**Christmas Eve at 6:30 P.M.**

John Aaron, Chester Wade, Steve Fahed, John Fadool, Michel Zajur, Elie Talej and Sam Kouri

**Christmas Day at 10:00 A.M.**

John Zeheb, Kenneth Sledd and Daniel Fadool

**Saturday December 30, 2006 at 6:30 P.M.**

John Sheffield, Jay Pettit, John Aaron and Joseph Shulleeta

**Sunday, December 31, 2006 at 8:30 A.M.**

Sam Dip, John Zeheb, Ed. Yesbeck and Ken Sledd

### *Liturgical Schedule For Next Weekend*

The Divine Liturgies for next weekend will be on **Saturday December 30, 2006 at 6:30 P.M.**, and on **Sunday, December 31, 2006 at 8:30 A.M.** Either liturgy would meet your Sunday's obligation

**Monday, January 1, 2007**, Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord, is a **Holy Day of Obligation**. Liturgies will be on Sunday, December 31, 2006 at 6:30 P.M., and on Monday, January 1, 2007 at 11:00 o'clock.



Thank you very much for your generosity and for your participation in our Christmas Tree Charitable Drive. Over 400 gifts were distributed to needy families in the Richmond area.

Again this year, the Breakfast with Santa was big success. The net proceeds of the Breakfast (\$500) were donated to Sgt. Santa's Charities. Again thank you and may the Infant Savior bless you, love you and protect and reward you.

### *Christmas Reflections*

The best gift you can offer not only this Christmas but throughout the new year:

To your enemy, forgiveness

To an opponent, tolerance

To a friend, your heart

To all, charity

To every child, a good example

To yourself, respect (*Oren Arnold*)



On this day when the Rich One was made poor for our sake, Let the rich man also make the poor man a sharer at his table.

On this day a Gift came to us without our asking for it, Let us then give alms to those who cry out and beg from us.

(*St. Ephrem, Hymn on the Nativity, 194-95*)

*Merry Christmas and a Blessed and Peaceful 2007.  
May the Star of Bethlehem guide you always to  
"where you find a Child wrapped in swaddling  
clothes."*