



“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”

(Jn 12:24)

Divine Liturgy
Sunday at 11:30 am
Our Lady of Victory
1559 Roxbury Rd.
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New Testament Reading: 2 Timothy 1:1-14

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

I am grateful to God — whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did — when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.

Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy.

I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.

For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace.

This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher.

And for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him.

Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

The Gospel: John 12:23-30

Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.

Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

“Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also.

Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

“Now my soul is troubled.

And what should I say — ‘Father, save me from this hour’?

No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.”

Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”

The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder.

Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.”

Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine.”

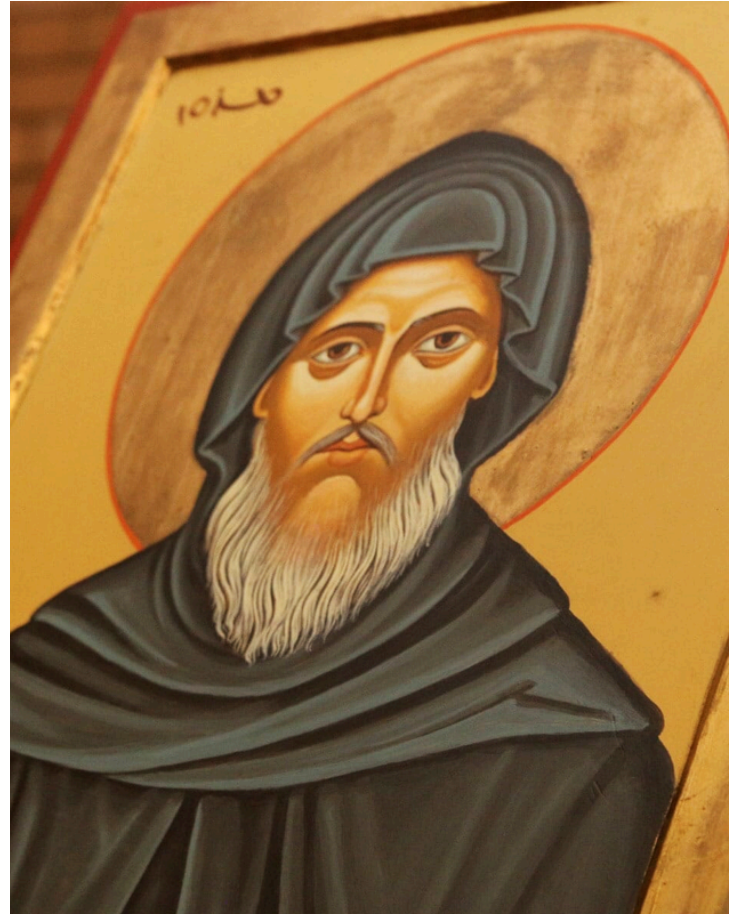
Saint Maron - Father of the Maronite Church

In the early fifth century, Maron, a Syriac-speaking hermit of Aramean descent, passed away in the region of Cyrrhus, located between Aleppo and Antioch in present-day northwestern Syria.

At the time, this area was administratively part of *Syria Prima* in the Roman-Byzantine Empire.

Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus, wrote about Maron in *A History of the Monks of Syria*, describing him as a priest and hermit who sought spiritual fulfillment beyond conventional practices.

He noted Maron's ability to heal ailments, drive out demons, and cure various diseases through his blessings, as he practiced a unique form of asceticism: life in the open air, exposed to all the natural elements.



Unlike other religious figures, Saint Maron did not establish a church, a monastic order, or leave behind theological writings. Instead, his devotion to Christ inspired many disciples—monks, worshipers, and nuns—forming a spiritual and monastic tradition that endures to this day.

The exact date of Maron's death remains unknown. While tradition suggests he died in 410, what is certain is that he passed away before Theodoret's appointment as Bishop of Cyrrhus in 423.

By 451, during the Council of Chalcedon, the Christian Church faced divisions due to theological, linguistic, and political disputes. The Syriac Church split into two branches: the anti-Chalcedonian Jacobites and the Chalcedonian faction, whose champions were the Monks of Saint Maron.

In 452, Maron's disciples established a monastery on the Orontes River, naming it "Bet Moroon," i.e. The House of Maron. A community of believers settled around the monastery and lived in communion with the monks: praying together and working in the fields surrounding the monastery together. Bet Moroon soon became a bastion of the Chalcedonian doctrine in the region, staunchly defending the decision of the Council that Christ has two distinct natures, one fully divine and the other fully human.

In 517, after an ambush that resulted in the deaths of around 350 Maronite monks, the monastery's superior and other leaders from *Syria Secunda* (Hama-Homs area) appealed to Pope Hormisdas (514–523) for assistance.

Despite such challenges, the monastery and the community around it flourished, serving as the foundation for what later became the Maronite Church and the Maronite nation.

This growing community spread throughout Roman Syria, advocating the Chalcedonian faith. Maronite influence also extended to Mount Lebanon, where Ibrahim of Cyrrhus, a disciple of Maron, ventured to the Lebanese mountains to convert the people from paganism, especially the worship of Baal, to faith in Jesus Christ. in the valley of the Adonis River—later renamed Nahr Ibrahim in his honor.

Later, with the Muslims’ conquest of Antioch, the patriarch fled to Constantinople, where he eventually passed away, leaving the patriarchal seat vacant. The Maronite community, led by the Monastery of Saint Maron, took the initiative to elect John Maron as Patriarch of Antioch in the late seventh or early eighth century (sources cite 685 A.D.), marking the official beginning of the Maronite Church as a *sui iuris* (self-governing) church.

It’s identity is defined by the Maronite Patriarchal Council (2006) as such:
“... It is first an Antiochian Syriac Church with a distinct liturgical heritage; second, a Chalcedonian Church; third, a patriarchal Church with an ascetic and monastic character; fourth, a Church in full communion with the Roman Apostolic See; and fifth, a Church deeply rooted in its Lebanese and Levantine environment, as well as in the countries of the diaspora.”

Happy Feast Day of Our Blessed Father Maroon!

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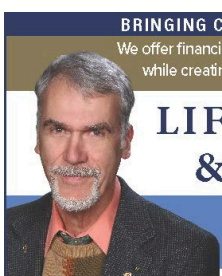
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