

God has No beginning, and God has  
No End.

## Historical Photos

## Religious Photos

## Social Photos

## Heritage Photos

## Our Pastors and Administrators

In 1902 Rev. Elias Ayoob encouraged the formation of a parish. He was a visiting priest from Lebanon and returned there.

- 1903-1907** Rev. Anthony Zogby -  
First Pastor  
**1907-1909** Rev. Mobarak Bellamah  
- Pastor  
**1909-1911** Rev. Jos. Yasbeck  
Jomaha - Pastor  
**1911-1913** Rev. Arsanious Hayeck  
- Pastor  
**1913-1918** Rev. George Aziz -  
Pastor  
**1918-1919** Rev. Joseph Kaddah -  
Pastor  
**1919-1921** Rev. George Sebalani -  
Pastor  
**1921-1929** Msgr. Stephen El-  
Douaihy - Pastor  
**1929-1932** Rev. Simon Aclé -  
Pastor  
**1932-1952** Rev. Joseph Solomon -  
Pastor  
**1952-1956** Rev. Joseph Barrett -  
Latin Rite Pastor  
**1953-1956** Rev. George Webby -  
Assistant Pastor  
**1956-1969** Rev. George Webby -  
Pastor  
**1970-1972** Rev. Assad Awad -  
Pastor  
**1973-1974** Rev. Nehmatallah El  
Hayek - Administrator  
**1975-1977** Rev. Joseph Shaheen -  
Pastor  
**1977** Rev. Paul Hage -  
Administrator  
**1977-1978** Rev. Elias Hoyek -  
Administrator  
**1978** Rev. Elias Njeim -  
Administrator  
**1978-1979** Rev. Paul Hage -  
Administrator  
**1980-1981** Rev. William Decker -  
Pastor

"You must Love God with all your heart. And Love your  
neighbor as yourself."

## History of Our Parish

Maronite settlers in the Scranton area arrived in 1884. They were Dr. John Rahmy and his mother Taarn. They were soon followed by others forming one of the earliest Lebanese communities in America, and attended various Catholic churches and later a Melkite Scranton. The earliest settlers were from North Lebanon and mainly from the town of Ehden. Despite not being versed in the English language, they at once become involved in business as is natural to the Lebanese. They started peddling produce and dry goods. Some were women who carried bundles on their heads from house to house. As they learned the language they also became owners of stores and produce establishments. At that time many called themselves Syrian rather than Lebanese since Syria contained Lebanon then. In fact, the Maronites later became part of a Syrian Civic Club with St. Joseph Melkite Church.

The first Maronite priest to arrive was Fr. Elias Ayoob in 1902 and started plans for a church. He had to return to Lebanon and was followed in 1903 by Fr. Anthony Zogby. The procedure of a priest serving the Maronites in America was somewhat complicated. The community would request the priest from the Patriarchate who then contacted the Holy See for permission to send him. The priest then must obtain permission from the Latin Bishop, in that community, to perform the religious duties. Fr. Zogby was accepted and the group of Maronites then became Saint Ann Maronite parish in 1903 celebrating Liturgy at St. Joseph Melkite Church. They later rented an empty store on Ninth Avenue for services, it had a plain table used as an altar, and sat on planks over produce boxes. After six months they purchased a building on North Ninth Avenue and the basement was made into the first Saint Ann Maronite Church. The first floor was the residence for the priest and the second floor rented out for needed income. There was a continued growth in their numbers.

Father Zogby died in 1907, he was followed by other priests sent from Lebanon. By 1911 it was obvious that they had outgrown their building and needed a larger church. With the help of Bishop Hoban of the Scranton Diocese they found a former Protestant church on the corner of Sumner Avenue and Price Street. It was purchased and remodeled in 1913 and dedicated on August 24, 1913. In 1921 Chorbishop Stephen El Douaihy came to Scranton and was appointed pastor by Bishop Hoban. He had recently returned from France where he had served as secretary to the Patriarch who was invited to be at the Versailles Treaty Signing after World War I. In 1929 the church was renovated by Chorbishop Douaihy who was transferred to Boston shortly after. At his request he was returned to Scranton after his death for burial.

Education was very important and stressed by most early generations and continues today. Gradually all of the Maronites referred to themselves as Lebanese. Notable was the fact that Father Joseph Solomon served for twenty years from 1932 to his death in 1952. During this time he activated the Holy Rosary and Altar Society, the Blessed Virgin Sodality and the Holy Name Society. He served as Chaplain for the now active Joseph Bey Karam Society and the Syrian-Lebanese Civic Society of Lackawanna County. World War II began and Fr. Solomon gave each serviceman a missal to carry. Over 80 men and one woman went into active service and most served overseas in the various war zones. Prayers were answered and every one returned home, some injured but no deaths. In thanksgiving, Fr. Solomon and visiting priests held a procession with all of the returned soldiers, their families, the parishioners and many visitors. They processed around an entire block ending up in the spacious lot of Mr. and Mrs. David Soma where a beautiful Liturgy was held.

After Fr. Solomon's death, he was replaced by Latin Rite Fr. Joseph Barrett. Three months later the church was totally demolished by fire. The basement chapel of nearby St. Patrick church was used for liturgies. This began a period of turmoil for the parishioners. 1953 was to be the year for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, it was to be put off for 10 years.

Besides the loss of a beloved Maronite priest they suffered the loss of their church but still managed to raise \$100,000 for a new church. Also, to add to their grief was the plan of the Latin Bishop William Hafey not to rebuild the church at that site but in another neighborhood to serve St. Patrick and St Ann parishioners. It would be named

**1981-1990** Rev. Kenneth Michael - Pastor

**1990-1997** Rev. Fahed Azar - Pastor

**1997-1998** Rev. Kevin Beaton - Pastor

**1998-2003** Rev. Claude Franklin - Administrator

**2003-present** Rev. Francis J. Marini - Pastor

From 1969 to 1979 other Latin priests served when Maronite priests were unavailable but were not assigned to the church. The spellings of the Maronite priests' names were those found in our records.

## History of The Maronites

**Maronites:** (Arabic: الموارنة, transliteration: AlMawarinah), are members of one of the Eastern Catholic Churches, with a heritage reaching back to Maroun in the early 5th century. The first Maronite patriarch, John Maroun, was appointed in the late 7th century. Today, Maronites are one of the principal religious groups in Lebanon.

Like other Lebanese people, Maronites are overall very genetically similar to other Levantine populations, such as Syrians and Jordanians, with minor foreign genetic influence, though many claim Phoenician ancestry. Before the Muslim conquest, Maronites spoke a dialect of Aramaic, but have been an Arabic-speaking community since at least the 9th century. Syriac Aramaic however, still remains the liturgical language of the Maronite Church.

► Reading1... and Reading2...

## History of Lebanon

The history of Lebanon is almost as old as the earliest evidence of humankind. At different periods of its history, Lebanon has come under the domination of foreign rulers, including Assyrians, Babylonians, Armenians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Ottomans, French and Syrians.

► Further Reading...

The land of warmth and hospitality. Lebanon's 10,452 square Kilometers are packed with history, archeology, natural beauty and a population of fun, loving people whose hospitality and warmth extend the length of the

Immaculate Heart of Mary Mission Chapel and would be under the jurisdiction of St Patrick church. That church was completed December 20, 1953.

This was not acceptable to the Maronite parishioners and they began a period of appeals to Bishop Hafey without success. For several months appeals were made and letters sent to Lebanon, Washington DC and Rome where Eugene Cardinal Tisserant headed the Eastern Congregation. After a study of all facts, arguments etc. the Sacred Congregation of Eastern Churches in Rome which had originally ruled for Bishop Hafey, ultimately ruled in favor of the Maronite group. Bishop Hafey accepted the ruling and while hospitalized and near death he returned all money to the group and authorized the building of a new church at the previous site. The historian for the Diocese of Scranton was Father John Gallagher who referred to this episode as resulting from the "righteous indignation of the St. Ann Maronite Congregation". He further remarked on the fact that the Maronite group chose to be persistent but polite, without demonstrations or insults to the Bishop. The new church was built and was dedicated by Most Rev. Jerome Hannon, Bishop of Scranton on September 11, 1955. Father George Webby was Assistant to Fr. Barrett during the turmoil and became Pastor remaining until 1969.

At this time organizations included a Saint Ann Maronite Guild, Our Lady Queen of Peace Sodality, Mount Lebanon Athletic Club, Blessed Virgin Sodality, Ehden Woman's Society, Holy Name Society, in addition to the previously mentioned Joseph Bey Karam Society and the Syrian Lebanese Civic Society. During this period important changes took place for Maronites, the National Association of Maronites was formed in 1964 and in 1966 the Eparchy of St. Maron with Bishop Francis Zayek became a reality. In 1966 the third NAM convention was held in Scranton sponsored by the Saint Ann Parish. Bishop Zayek made his first appearance, as our Bishop, at a NAM Convention. The designation of the National Association was changed to National Apostolate of Maronites.

In the 70's there was a period of difficulty causing a loss of many parishioners. There were ten different Maronite priests in eleven years with several different Latin priests between. Gradual return to normal parish life began in 1980, Fr. William Decker formed the MYO and restarted the yearly family picnics. In 1981 Fr. Kenneth Michael made major renovations, including a mural on the East wall, to make the church more Maronite. A booklet entitled "The Way to Paradise – Saint Ann Maronite Church" was written by a parishioner and described the entire church and improvements, including doors, windows, mural, etc. In 1983 St. Ann celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary with over 550 people attending.

At this time Mr. John Bedway of Pottsville, PA, some 70 miles from Scranton, asked his nephew at St. Ann to try to arrange a Maronite Liturgy for the Pottsville people who numbered about 250 people. This was done and for several months Fr. Ken Michael with the St. Ann Choir, altar boys and Lector went there monthly with a beautiful Liturgy in St. Patrick Church for a most receptive group of Maronites. In addition, after informing Bishop Zayek and NAM of those people without a parish, NAM By-Laws were changed to allow them to join NAM with St. Ann as their Parish but remaining with their Latin Church. Almost all adults there joined NAM! They still receive the Diocese and NAM newspaper, and the St. Ann Bulletin.

St. Ann participated in the formation of a unique Lenten Mission involving five Scranton Eastern churches. Each year a different church would be responsible for obtaining a speaker for the entire week. Each day the mission would be held at a different church where a Lenten service would take place and then followed by the speaker. Afterwards those attending would retire for food and a question and answer period with the speaker and all priests. This has been very popular and continues to the present.

In 1990 Fr. Fahed Azar started the annual Lebanese Heritage Day with Lebanese food, music, and dancing, this event continues and grows each year. Newly ordained Fr. Claude Franklin started children and adult religious classes, actively worked with the choir and participated in children and youth activities. Planning for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary began for the 2003 celebration in November. Before that date he was sent to Rome for studies.

Fr. Francis J. Marini arrived in 2003 as pastor and as Canon Lawyer for the Eparchial Tribunal with its office in Scranton. Renovations continued; kitchen modernized, major improvement to the rectory and hall, many of the items from the old church were discovered, restored then used as before. A nearby property was purchased giving badly needed storage space and the two homes rented. Walk-in refrigeration and freezers were installed in its garage. The annual Hafli was restarted, picnics begun again. The office and church record keeping modernized, financial and organizations records brought in line with Eparchial standards. A significant event will take place in July, 2009, a first for our church. Bobby Rade will be ordained as Sub-Deacon by Chor-Bishop Joseph Kaddo.

Thanks to the hard work of our parents and grandparents and their insistence on education our parish now supplies many professionals including; doctors, dentists, lawyers, teachers, engineers and other professionals. Many in our parish are in business and others are involved in political life, providing a Mayor for the city of Scranton. A parishioner is in charge of our Children's Advocacy Center which cares for abused children. Another owns a large banana and produce firm continuing the work started by our earliest immigrants. Others are involved in different city, state and federal divisions and are on the boards of banks, universities and other firms.

country.

▶ Further Reading...

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Website Designed, Developed, and Maintained by: **BOUTROS ABICHEDID**

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