

A History of Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church in Flint, Michigan

The overarching theme of our Church is a Deep and lasting devotion to God, our heavenly Father and his son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and a great love for the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Deemed an Eastern Rite Catholic Church, we have a Patriarch who is also a Cardinal to the Pope.

▪ When it all began

In 1928, a group of individuals comprised of Maronites, Melkites and Eastern Orthodox religious came together in Flint area, with a deep desire and dream to have a Maronite Church to worship in. They would become the founders and initial supporters of our Parish.

Hearing of the interest in a Maronite Church, The American Lebanese Morning Star Society of the Eparchy sent a delegation, (lead by Bishop Francis Zayek) to the Maronite Chancery to visit with the Ordinary of the Diocese. Armed with the Bishop's endorsement, we became a Mission and began our work. Over the years that followed, numerous fundraising events were held to purchase land and build our Church.

In the interim, three Flint locations served as temporary places for worship for our faithful: Luke M Powers Catholic High School; A leased storefront that initially served as our Chapel and Maronite Community Center and Dye Elementary School.

▪ Church timeline:

- In 1974, a group of our original founders and our 1st Priest met with a Banker to formalize the purchase Eight acres of land on Calkins Road in Flint Michigan. This would be where our Church would be built.



1974

(From left to Right)

Mary Faris Lena Okal Father Ron Beshara Banker Mike Rizik Doris Gazell

- In 1975, Bishop Francis Zayek and Father Ron Beshara presided over a ground breaking ceremony so construction for our new Church and Hall complex could begin.



- In **1975**, 3 acres of land adjacent to where our Church would be built. There was a small house on this property that served as our 1st Rectory.



1975:
Our 1st Rectory



1975: Looking out the back window of our
1st Rectory at Sunset

- In **1976**, a formal dedication Ceremony for Our Lady of Lebanon Church and Sharbel Center was conducted, followed by the Divine Liturgy. Our new Church was now open for faithful worship.



1976 Dedication Ceremony in New Church
(Altar: Bishop Zayek -Center, Father Ron Beshara to his
Right)



1976 The 1ST Liturgy in our New Church
250 families were in attendance.

- **1989** a Shrine was built for the Blessed Mother in the meditation garden/courtyard of our Church.



August 1990

1st Outdoor Liturgy in Shrine to the Blessed Mother/Meditation Garden
Sub Deacon Earl Left Father Anthony Spinosa Center Sub Deacon Charlie Ross Right

- In **1990**, Construction began to build a new Rectory for our Priest and visiting Clergy.
Construction was completed in the summer of 1991.



- In **2000**, a ground breaking ceremony was held for building an addition to our Church Hall for establishing a School for Religious Education and a formal Church library.



2000: Ground Breaking for Parish School and Library
Deacon Martin Rachid Left Father Anthony Spinosa Center and Altar Boys



Parish School: One of four classrooms for Children's Religious Education. When enrollment is high, the Formal Library serves as a 5th Classroom



Formal Library
Used for meetings and Religious Education



Our Parish has been truly blessed from the Beginning. The depth and breadth of religious devotion and dedication to God is truly amazing. The immense amount of hard work over 50 years from our original founders and Parish families through all of the generations that followed was unprecedented.

And by the grace of God, a number of our laity heard God's calling to pursue a spiritual vocation. For a Church of our size is likely of statistical significance. The respective ordination events for each are listed below.

- **Ordination Events**

- **Charlie Rossie** was ordained to Sub-Deacon in **1977** by Bishop Frances Zayek.
- **Gregory John Mansour** was ordained to the Priesthood in **1982** by Bishop John Chedid; Father Gregory was subsequently elevated to ChorBishop in **1996** by Bishop John Chedid; He was named the third Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn by Pope John Paul II in **2004** and ordained to Bishop in Lebanon by our Patriarch Nasrallah Peter Cardinal Sfeir.
- **Martin Rashid** was ordained to Sub-Deacon in **1995** by Bishop Robert Shaheen ; to Deacon in **1999** By Bishop Robert Shaheen.
- **Tony Aziz Massad** was ordained Sub-Deacon in Washington D.C in **2008**; ordained Deacon **2009**; ordained to the Priesthood in **2010**. Bishop Robert Shaheen presided.
- **Joseph Pavlovich** was ordained to Sub-Deacon in **2012** by ChorBishop Badawi; ordained to Deacon in **2017** Bishop A. Elias Zaidan in **2017**.



1982: Ordination of Gregory John Mansour to the Priesthood
Saint Michaels Catholic Church, Bishop John Chedid presiding



1995: Ordination of Martin Rachid to Sub-Deacon with Father Anthony Spinosa. Bishop Robert Shaheen presided.



**2010: Ordination of Tony Aziz Massad to the Priesthood
(Right Chorbishop Anthony Spinosa; Bishop Gregory Mansour Center next to Father Tony)**



2017: Ordination of Joseph Pavlovich to Deacon
(Left Father Tony Massad; Bishop A. Elias Zaidan Center; Father Pierre Bassil Right)

RECOGNITION/ AWARDS AND SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS GIVEN TO OUR PARISH MEMBERS

Silver and Gold Massabki Award Recipients The highest honors bestowed on NAM members are the Silver and Gold Massabki Awards, which are presented annually. These awards are named after three martyred Maronite Brothers of Damascus, Francis, Abdel Mohti and Raphael, who refused to renounce their faith.

The awards are bestowed on members of the apostolate who have contributed extraordinarily of their time, talent, and treasure on a parish, regional or national level. The silver Massabki Award is given on the parish level, while the prestigious Gold Massabki Award is given on national level (one per Eparchy) to one individual or a married couple and is always presented at the national convention.

- **Special Awards/Appointments of Parishioners**

- **Silver Massabki Award Recipients**
 - **1978** Paul Koscielniak
 - **1984** Norman Abdella
 - **1985** Don Paliani
 - **1986** Shirley Gazell
 - **1987** Sue Adado
 - **1989** Mary Ann Sheehan
 - **2006** Scott and Cindy Shaheen
 - **2011** Joe Faris

- **Gold Massabki Award** presented to Mary Ann Sheehan at the **1996** NAM National Convention.
- **Faith of the Mountain Award** given to Tony Aziz Massad **2006**.
- **Appointments**
 - Dr. John Abdella appointed to serve on the Pastoral Board for the Eparchy in Saint Louis by Bishop Robert Shaheen **2002**
 - Miss Theresia Zeydan been elected in **2022** and **2025** as a NAM Board Member and appointed NAM National Coordinator **2024**

- **Annual Parish Events:**

- 3 Day Mid East Festival in July. From 1976 through 2024 we have (totaling of 32 events).
- Saint Maron's Hafli.
- Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Mother Family Picnic



Major Events
1976: 1st Annual Mid East Festival (Entrance and Food Tent)



Major Events

1976: 1st Annual Mid East Festival (Entertainment)



Major Events

1976: 1st Annual Mid East Festival (Parishioners Making more Tabooli)

Major Events
2017: Annual Saint Maron's Hafli



GREAT FOOD!



SEEING FRIENDS!



LOTS OF DANCING!

- Annual Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Mother in August, followed by a Parish Picnic.



Annual Feast of the Assumption Parish Picnic (Indoor due to Weather)

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Below is a brief video by Father Tony Massad, a son of our Parish, that highlights the differences between the Maronite and Roman Catholic Church.

https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video;_ylt=AwrE_Bp7dtBnjAIAOPZXNy0A;_ylu=Y29sbwNiZjEEcG9zA2EEdnRpZAMEc2VjA3Nj?type=E210US714G0&p=what+is+the+connection+of+Maronite+Catholic+churches+to+the+Roman+Catholic+church&fr=mcafee&turl=https%3A%2F%2Ftse1.mm.bing.net%2Fth%3Fid%3DOVP.kNZJHxw-3ZCghhZaV-cflwEsDh%26pid%3DApi%26w%3D296%26h%3D156%26c%3D7%26p%3D0&rurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DV0N2MR6ofJI&tit=What+are+the+differences+between+the+Maronite+and+Roman+Catholic+Church%3F&pos=11&vid=57a0795f3c85a22c0942d938870c3f20&sigr=IR8xM4mMa1.&sigt=w4LLH_Vhzozu&sigi=RHTo7QVoqghb