

# State of the EPARCHY

## THE STATE OF THE EPARCHY ADDRESS

at the

50<sup>th</sup> National Melkite Convention

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**Most Rev.  
Nicholas J. Samra**  
*Eparchial Bishop  
of Newton*

**BY THE MOST REV. NICHOLAS J. SAMRA**  
Eparchial Bishop of Newton

**B**efore I begin my journey through the Eparchy, permit me to welcome my two immediate predecessors who served this eparchy faithfully: **Bishop Emeritus John A. Elya** and **Archbishop Cyril Bustros**, presently Metropolitan of Beirut. I also welcome **Bishop George Gallaro**, former priest of our eparchy, now Bishop of Piana for the Byzantine Italo-Greek/Albanians in Sicily. I'll say a few more words about him later. A word of welcome also to **Bishop Robert Rabbat** of Australia, who is passing through Boston for a day or two. Welcome, brothers.

This evening we will be blessed with the visit of **Archbishop Christophe Pierre**, the new Apostolic Nuncio to the United States. As the representative of His Holiness Pope Francis, he will preside at tomorrow's Divine Liturgy.

Two years have passed since our last convention in Chicago and my full address on the life and growth of our Melkite Church in America, the Eparchy of Newton. Now completing my fifth year as Eparchial Bishop, I present to you a summary of our eparchy's life, most of which has already been reported in *SOPHIA* magazine.

I have visited all of our 43 communities, some several times for special events. Each visit was very exciting for me. As in all aspects of life, there are some problems here and there that require more study, but in general the Eparchy is sound and in good health.

### CHURCH CLOSINGS

We had the sad occasion of closing two small communities and selling the church properties.

**St Elias Church, Woonsocket, RI**, began in 1931 when a number of families lived a distance from the Central Falls parish. It was during the Great Depression: few people had cars and the highways were nothing like today, so the priest traveled there weekly to celebrate the Liturgy in a mill city in a

small church built by the Melkite community. The mills died and most of the families scattered out of Woonsocket. We were down to eight or ten people at Sunday Liturgy with no other parish life. With the move of St Basil Church from Central Falls to Lincoln, RI, the Woonsocket remnant have now become members of St Basil Church with a shrine to St Elias to keep alive the memory of the founders of the mission church.

**Holy Trinity Church in Zanesville, OH**, was always served by the clergy of Holy Resurrection Church in Columbus, and most young people moved from Zanesville to larger cities for school and work. Again, eight to ten people were present for Liturgy and now they drive to Columbus where most of the families have resettled.

The money gained from the sale of these two properties, although not much, will be used in our mission fund to help new Melkite outreaches and missions.

We were forced last year to sell the **Banquet Center in Akron, Ohio**, which was causing the parish of St Joseph major financial difficulties. It was never a successful venture from its beginning and has caused the parishioners and clergy much distress.

Also, after almost 50 years we had to demolish the **Parish Center in Lawrence, MA**, a financial burden to that St Joseph parish. It required major repairs and has not been used as a Youth Center for most of its years of existence. After much study, the parish council proposed to me the demolition of the center. The Eparchial Consultors gave their permission to complete these projects (Woonsocket, Zanesville, Akron, and Lawrence), based also on the input of the Eparchial Finance Council.

### NEW MELKITE OUTREACHES AND MISSIONS

However, although we closed two churches, we have opened two new communities. The Melkite outreach in **Houston**,

TX, proved to me that they would support a full-time priest, so the Consultors agreed with me and I named the outreach a **Mission under the patronage of the Great Martyr St Barbara**. We still celebrate services at the Ruthenian Byzantine Church in Houston but are now searching for our own church or land to purchase. Fr. Fadi Al-Mimass serves the mission.

**Allentown, PA**, has a large community of Melkites mainly from the Valley of the Christians—*Wadi Nasara*—in Syria. There are some from Damascus, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan. For some odd reason, the Syriac Catholic Eparchy had a mission there, although only fewer than 10 families were Syriac Catholic and the majority were Melkite. Several years ago I was alerted by Syriac Catholic Bishop Yusuf Habash to get a priest and then he would turn over the mission to us.

It took almost two years to bring a priest from Damascus, but now the mission of **Our Lady of Mercy** is a Melkite mission with hundreds of families. Of course there was some disruption, dissension, and some angry feelings with the transfer among some people and the Syriac priest—but as the dust settles, peace will come too. I celebrated Palm Sunday Liturgy there with over 250 participants. Pray for peace in that community. A formal Decree of Transfer from the Syriac Eparchy to the Melkite Eparchy was given on 8 June 2016. Archimandrite Victor Hanna serves the community, residing at Immaculate Conception Church, the oldest church in Allentown, where our liturgies are also held.

Our small mission of **St John of Damascus in South Bend, IN**, was mainly just a few families and students from Notre Dame University. We are presently renting out our small church home, but with the presence of Fr Dr Khaled Anatolios as Professor of Theology and Patristics at Notre Dame, we now have liturgies in a University chapel. Only a few Melkites live there, so in a sense we have campus ministry now for Eastern Catholic and Orthodox students as well as any other lovers of our Melkite traditions—more than 50 gather at liturgical celebrations.

## **ST ANNE CATHEDRAL, LOS ANGELES**

We were blessed with the positive response of Pope Francis to my request that **St Anne Church in North Hollywood, CA, be named Co-Cathedral**. I am praying and working diligently so that within ten years this cathedral will be the seat of the second Melkite eparchy in the USA, something we had considered and studied in the late 1980's under Archbishop Joseph Tawil. His successors closed the door to that second eparchy, but now we renew the issue and hopefully with some more growth on the west coast we can bring it to fruition—possibly within 10 years.

The celebration of the naming of the new cathedral took place on 1 August 2015, with the Prefect of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches in Rome, Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, presiding at the Divine Liturgy and proclaiming it Cathedral in the name of Pope Francis. The celebration also included Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles, with five other bishops representing Los Angeles, Maronite, Syriac Orthodox, and Armenian Catholic Churches, and all the Melkite priests and deacons on the west coast and well over 600 faithful. The

Grand Banquet was a sellout with over 500 present at the Universal City Hilton Hotel. Having only one ballroom, we had to turn away almost another 200 from the banquet.

I took the opportunity then to spend three months at the new cathedral as my home base in order to make extended pastoral visits to our 11 west coast communities, 9 in California, and one each in Seattle, WA, and Phoenix, AZ. From mid-December to mid-March I was hopping (flying or driving) from church to church. I was blessed that a parishioner of St Anne's who owns a car rental agency gave me a new car free of charge for the whole time.

While there, we began looking for new Melkite outreaches in various places—Las Vegas, NV, California beach cities, Palm Springs, South Orange County, and Bakersfield, CA. The **South Orange County** outreach is up and running and will begin a monthly Liturgy and catechesis program in August at St Kilian Catholic Church, Mission Viejo. We need to look more also in Northern California, Portland, OR, Tucson, AZ, Albuquerque, NM, and other major cities in Texas. I will spend part of next winter again at St Anne Cathedral on the west coast for more visitations with focus on the possible new outreaches.

## **CLERGY DEATHS**

Our eparchy and the parish of St Joseph, Scranton, PA, were saddened with the sudden and untimely death of **Fr Michael Jolly**. Former priest from the Detroit area, **Fr Edmond Ghazal**, died in retirement at his Choueirite Monastery of St Elias in Zahle, Lebanon. **Fr John K. Nasser**, former Salvatorian priest who served for some time in Milwaukee, Manchester, and Birmingham, but who had left the priesthood, died this year in Indianapolis, IN. Finally, the first rector and founder of St Basil Seminary, Methuen, MA, **Fr John Jadaa**, who also served as vicar of our first bishop and administrator of the Church for two years after Bishop Najmy's death, lived a patriarchal life and died in May at the age of 94 at St Basil's in Methuen, MA, the complex he founded. He was also an important person in the initial organization and purchase of the Bishop's Residence for our Exarchate fifty years ago. May their memory be eternal!

## **ORDINATIONS**

Since taking over the administration of the Eparchy I have ordained 10 priests and eight deacons; ordination of priest number 11 will take place in two weeks in Chicago. Permit me to mention their names and hear your "*AXIOS*" at the conclusion. If they are here, they should stand and remain standing.

### *Celibate Priests:*

**Fr Musil Shihadeh**, now serving St Anne Cathedral, North Hollywood.

**Fr Marwan Ephrem Kardouh**, a Basilian Salvatorian sent by his General Superior to minister in our Melkite Eparchy in Canada.

**Fr Paul Adham al-Khoury Fallouh**, Virgin Mary Mission, Temecula, CA.

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## *Married Priests:*

**Fr Michael Jolly**, St Joseph, Scranton, PA, and now with God.

**Fr Choukri Anthony Sabbagh**, St Demetrius Mission, Cliffside Park, NJ.

**Fr Dr Khaled Anatolios**, Professor at Notre Dame University, IN.

**Fr Sebastian Carnazzo**, St Elias Mission, San Jose, CA.

**Fr Michael Copenhagen**, St Nicholas Church, Rochester, NY.

**Fr Theophan Paul Leonarczyk**, Eparchial Chancellor and New England supply priest

**Fr Hezekias Sabatino Carnazzo**, Director of the Eparchial Office of Evangelization and Catechesis and soon to also administer to St George Church, Sacramento, CA.

**Fr Sergio Ayala**, priest for St Michael Church, Hammond, IN, will be ordained in two weeks on 17 July at St John the Baptist, Northlake, IL.

## *Priests from Outside Eparchies:*

**Fr Francois Beyrouti** from Canada, Pastor, Holy Cross, Placentia, CA.

**Fr Fadi Al-Mimass** from Syria/Lebanon, Administrator, St Barbara Mission, Houston, TX.

**Fr Ezzat Bathouche** from Syria/Lebanon and Argentina, Pastor, St John the Baptist, Northlake, IL.

**Fr Gabriel Bashar Azar** from Syria/Lebanon, Associate, St Jude, Miami, FL.

**Archimandrite Victor Hanna** from Damascus, Administrator, Our Lady of Mercy Mission, Allentown, PA.

**Fr Rezkallah Samaan** from Syria/Lebanon/France, Administrator, St Jacob Mission, San Diego, CA.

**Fr Brendan McAnerny, OP**, from the Dominican Order, presently Pastor, St George, Sacramento, CA, and soon supply priest in Sacramento, CA.

**Fr Michael Hull** from the Antiochian Orthodox Church, Pastor, St Ignatios of Antioch, Augusta, GA.

**Fr Fares Al-Khlaifat, BSO**, Superior of St Basil Salvatorian Center, Methuen, MA, temporary Administrator, Christ the Savior Parish, Yonkers, NY.

## *Deacons:*

**Zyad Abyad**, St John of the Desert, Phoenix, AZ.

**Dr Gilbert Altongy**, St Basil, Lincoln, RI.

**Andrew Baroody**, St George, Birmingham, AL.

**Sami Jajeh**, St John Chrysostom, Atlanta, GA.

**Elie Hanna**, St John Chrysostom, Atlanta, GA.

**Ziad Layous**, St Joseph, Lawrence, MA.

**Dorotheos Marshal Rose**, St George, Sacramento, CA.

**Michael Macoul**, St Joseph, Lawrence, MA.

**AXIOS! AXIOS! AXIOS!**

**In addition, two priests are returning to active ministry in the Eparchy:**

**Fr James Koury**, from a leave of absence, active immediately as my priest secretary at the Chancery.

**Fr Shaun Brown**, retiring from the US Navy in early 2017.

Fathers, please remain standing. And I now ask *all* the priests and deacons also to stand and let us show them our support—they are my hands, arms and legs in the parishes! Thank you, brothers. Special thanks also to the wives of the priests and deacons for their share and acceptance of their husbands' ministry.

I cannot forget to mention how blessed our eparchy is with the nomination by Pope Francis of **Fr George Gallaro as Bishop** of the Byzantine Italo-Greek/Albanian Eparchy of Piana in Sicily. I was also blessed to be one of his three co-consecrators. We celebrate his first anniversary this week at our Convention. Bishop George served our eparchy since the 1970's as Secretary to Archbishop Tawil, Judicial Vicar of the Tribunal, Chancellor, Seminary Rector, and pastor of several churches. Another triple Axios!

## **CLERGY ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS**

We celebrated this year three anniversaries of dedication among our priests:

**Exarch Joseph Hagggar**, Pastor St Basil Church, RI, celebrated 50 years of priesthood, most of which were at his present parish. Fr Joe is one of just two USA-born clergy reaching 50 years of priesthood.

**Archimandrite Charles Aboody** celebrated 50 years in 2012. Although retired from active administrative duties for a number of years, he has continued serving pastorally and liturgically at Holy Transfiguration Church, McLean, VA, but now is ill and in fragile health.

**Archimandrite Frank Milienewicz**, Pastor, St George, Birmingham, AL—40 years of priesthood, and **Archpriest Lawrence Gosselin**, Chaplain to Romanian Nuns in Olympia, WA—40 years of priesthood.

Thank you, Fathers, for your dedicated service and may God grant you many more years to serve.

## Seminarians

We have three men studying for priesthood at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary, Pittsburgh, PA: **Subdeacon Thomas Moses, Reader Oliver Black, and Neven Pesa**. There are several other men making application to the seminary to serve the Eparchy. We will announce their names when appropriate. In the past several months I've met personally with four men who show much interest in priesthood; please pray for their vocations.

## EPARCHIAL OFFICES AND ORGANIZATIONS

The **Eparchial Office of Finance** meets four times a year with me and our CFO, **Deacon Robert Shalhoub**, and the members provide great advice on financial issues. We lost another member, **Charles Joseph**, who served 10 years in this Eparchial Office and more than 20 on the Finance Council of his home parish, St Ann in NJ. I presided at his funeral just several weeks ago. Memory Eternal!

The **Presbyteral Council** and **College of Consultors** are major assets in the Eparchy.

The **Clergy Conference** was held in New Orleans in 2014 and Phoenix in 2015. This year we go to Orlando and study medical moral issues. **Fr Christopher Manuele** coordinates this event. And of course we will especially pray for the 50 people killed there in Orlando several weeks ago—the largest mass murder in the US by one person. We pray also for those killed and hurt this week in Qaa, Lebanon, and today in Bangladesh.

Our **Vocation Office** Director **Archimandrite John Azar** keeps us and you aware of the need of future vocations. We are blessed with a young Melkite lady, **Rebecca Hallock**, entering consecrated life this month in Texas. Her parents are Edward Hallock and Carol Dikdan, originally from St Ann, NJ, now living in Tampa, FL. An article on her will appear in *SOPHIA* soon.

Yes, we need sisters or nuns in our Melkite Church in the USA! Let's pray for more and maybe even see the establishment of our own female monastery. We need to recognize that God calls women also to consecrated life.

*SOPHIA* Editor **Archimandrite James Babcock** does a superb job, and wherever I go I hear accolades about *SOPHIA*. Fr Jim is now also a supply priest on the west coast. We also applaud our layout designer of *SOPHIA*, eparchial brochures, and calendar—**Doreen Tahmoosh Pierson** from St Ann Church, NJ, along with **Fr James Graham**, Pastor of St Joseph Church in Lansing, MI, our outstanding copy editor.

The Office of Educational Services is now renamed **Evangelization and Catechesis** under the direction of **Fr Hezekias (Sabatino) Carnazzo**. Many of our resources will be added to our website for free download. Yes, we have a great amount of resources in our own eparchy and with the other Byzantine Churches in the USA—God With Us Publications.

Check the sites and grow in faith.

Our **Child Protection Program** is now in compliance with the guidelines of the USCCB. Our new book, *Raising Champions for Christ*, should be in every home, and all parents need to read it and teach your children about sexuality in a good Eastern Christian manner.

Our **Website [Melkite.org](http://Melkite.org)** continues to grow and develop with excellent news and resources, Arabic and English; our webmaster is **Deacon Dorotheos (Marshall) Rose**.

**Sophia Press** is very active thanks to my Executive Assistant and secretary, **Saideh Dagher**.

## EPARCHIAL ORGANIZATIONS

**NAMW**—The National Association of Melkite Women, with Spiritual Director **Fr Michel Cheble**, continues to assist our seminarians prayerfully and financially. Thank you, ladies of the executive board and all members throughout the eparchy. I make a call to all women in the various parishes to join this great organization.

**MAYA**—The Melkite Association of Young Adults gathered 30 young adults this week before the Convention at St Anselm College, Manchester, NH, for the annual retreat. The members also host regional gatherings. **Fr Justin Rose is Spiritual Advisor**.

**NAMY**—**Fr Tom Steinmetz** is the brave soul gathering our teens for a great pre-convention retreat. This year, also at St Anselm College, we had 100 teens. Thank you to all our young Melkites for their love and dedication to their Church.

**Annual Bishop's Appeal**—the 2014 and 2015 Appeals again were very successful. The 2015 Appeal passed all previous appeals. Our goal was \$307,000 and we reached \$375,000—\$68,000 over goal. This amount was given by 1443 donors based on our national mailing list of 12,000. As I announced at the last Convention, 10 percent goes to charity. The other 90 percent assists tremendously with *SOPHIA* magazine free to every home, and supports our Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, Deacon Formation Program, seminary tuitions, our Website, publications, and missions. We have witnessed a better participation in most parishes and I thank the clergy and all of you for your better cooperation on the appeal.

Since this is our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of having a bishop in the United States, **our goal for the 2016 Appeal is \$500,000**. With a little push from every parish, every priest, and every present giver to bring more givers to the Appeal, this can be reached. Each parish needs a coordinator besides the priest. If we reach our goal of \$500,000, each parish will receive back 100 percent of their over-goal; so the eparchy and the local parish both benefit. Let us all work on it together.

**Shepherd's Care**—Our Lenten fasting donations are being  
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distributed and a full report will be forthcoming in *SOPHIA*.

**Syrian Relief**—We still have an open account for assisting our families who have remained in Syria and for some refugees. We have also been receiving gifts from Latin churches and we channel the money to the bishops in the five Melkite dioceses in Syria.

**Regional Parish Life Conferences**—National Conventions are not happening every year. Hotel expenses and extensive planning hinder parishes from hosting conventions. I am not overly concerned about this, but would hope we can have a National Convention at least every two or three years. The alternative is to downsize the event and create Regional Parish Life Conferences with a stronger focus on building our laity's involvement in their local parishes by meeting with others from the parishes nearer to them than from across the country. We have five regions: New England, Mid-Atlantic, South, Great Lakes/Mid-West, and West Coast. Hopefully we can develop these two-or-three-day conferences in each region. The west coast clergy met twice and are making some plans. More study and work needs to be done.

**Renewal of Deacon Formation Program**—We took a year's break after 45 years of running our Deacon Formation Program. We presently have 60 deacons serving in our eparchy. I appointed **Protodeacon Bryan McNeil** as the new Director following **Archimandrite Paul Frechette**, who had this position for many years and is now assistant, passing on the baton, so to say. He did an excellent job. But to Deacon Formation we are now adding Lay Ministry and minor orders of Reader and Subdeacon. Some academic classes will be via internet and some live during our two-week program held at Anna Maria College near Worcester, MA. After a break this year to renew the program with a lot of study and planning, we will reopen in 2017. So remember, formation for the laity is now included: readers, cantors, minor orders, and active laity in leadership and catechetical roles in the parishes.

**Married Clergy**—The ordination of married men to the priesthood has finally been rectified by Pope Francis through the intervention of Cardinal Sean O'Malley after I ordained Fr Michael Jolly as a priest. This has been a great blessing for us to return to our proper tradition; however, as I noted two years ago in my address, we still require that married men must study theology and receive a Master's Degree and have pastoral formation. We still need to formulate financial guidelines for the married clergy, and presently our new married priests are maintaining their secular work and insurance, and receiving a stipend from the church they serve. This is certainly a commitment on their part and on the lives of their families.

**Order of St Nicholas**—Building upon the vision of Archbishop Tawil, who established the St Nicholas Guild, Bishop Ignatius Ghattas established the Order of St Nicholas in 1991.

The Guild was transformed into the Annual Bishop's Appeal and the Order welcomes those blessed by God to give more financially for the special needs of our eparchy. I thank **Raymond Kayal** of Miami and **Gregory Oussani** of Brooklyn, who chaired the Order in the past. With the restructuring of the Order of St Nicholas, I am considering Regional and Parish Chairpersons. Since its inception in 1991, the Order of St Nicholas has distributed over \$600,000 to *NAMY*, *MAYA*, *SOPHIA*, missions and parishes, seminarians, and charity.

Presently we will emphasize three goals: the Clergy Retirement Fund, Mission Growth and Development, and an endowment to assist the families of married priests in the event of an early death of the priest; other projects deemed worthy and necessary by the Order's Board of Directors and the Bishop can also be considered. The Constitution and By-laws are being revised and updated. To join the Order, fill out a simple application. Wonderworker membership is \$1000 annually, husband/wife membership is \$1500 annually, and lifetime membership is a one-time gift of \$5000. This is a gift over and above the Annual Bishop's Appeal.

We will have an investiture ceremony at the final Convention Divine Liturgy for anyone present and willing to make that commitment now. Each good steward who commits will be given the Cross of the Order of St Nicholas and have the right to add OSN (Order of St Nicholas) after their name. More information will be forthcoming and we need your support. May I envision 100 members soon and a building up to 500 members or more on an annual basis?

## ODDS AND ENDS

Besides the eparchial duties I have as your shepherd, as bishop I have other commitments as well. I meet annually, sometimes twice a year, with the **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)**, as well as with the **Eastern Catholic Bishops (ECA)**. Our **Melkite Synod of Bishops** meets annually in Lebanon, although I did not attend this last week because of the proximity of the Convention, Youth Pre-convention, Deacons' Retreat, and other convention-related meetings.

I am the **Bishop Liaison from the Eastern Catholic Bishops to the meetings of ECED**—Eastern Catholic Eparchial Directors of Education in the USA that provides our religious educational materials.

Within the US Bishops' Conference I am a member of the **Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis** with three meetings each year, a member of the **Orthodox/Catholic Bishops Dialogue** (one meeting a year), and a representative to **CCT—Christian Churches Together**, the largest ecumenical body in the USA.

In January 2015 I was appointed by Pope Francis as the **Apostolic Administrator of our Melkite Eparchy in Mexico**—*Nuestra Senora del Paraiso* in Mexico. I visited and celebrated the Divine Liturgy in Spanish with the community

along with official visits to the Cardinal of Mexico City, the Papal Nuncio, and the Conference of Catholic Bishops. I will return there on 22 July until 29 July 2016 (in just a few weeks) with Archimandrite Damon Geiger as my translator. Most Melkites there no longer speak Arabic.

I offer my sincere thanks to **Archimandrite Philip Raczka**, Rector of Our Lady of Annunciation Cathedral, host parish of this convention, and the deacons and parishioners who worked to make this convention a success in all ways. We are grateful that **Fr Hezekias (Sabatino) Carnazzo**, Director of our Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, handled all the educational aspects of the convention—speakers, homilists, book display, etc.

Very special thanks to **Joseph Shabouk**, General Chair and our eparchial liaison relating to conventions, who was a great leader to bring this convention to fruition. Joe and his wife Rosemary worked hand in hand with Fr Philip from day one and handled much of the coordination with the hotel and all other aspects of the convention. We need to strengthen this eparchial convention committee to make it easier for parishes to host a convention in smooth ways without reinventing the wheel. Thank you, Joe!

There are some items I have not yet conquered due to many issues within the eparchy that need solving. I speak about translations and books for liturgical worship published by the eparchy for Divine Liturgy, other church offices, and sacraments; renewal and expansion of the out-of-print *Melkite Hymnal*; Pastoral Letters on Catechesis, Marriage, Eucharist, and the importance of Sunday worship. We need more interaction among parishes, development of regional involvement, updated guidelines for pastoral councils, and the development of regional councils similar to the now-defunct DPC—Diocesan Pastoral Council—with the involvement of laity.

Be patient with me, I haven't forgotten my vision for the eparchy, but with some major issues, other items get put on the back burner. I did write and publish a **Pastoral on Death and Funeral Services** which appeared in *SOPHIA*. I ask all clergy and laity to read it and follow its instructions.

We opened our Jubilee year with this convention and we continue to celebrate it throughout the year with a grand finale next year at this same time with a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. More news on this up and coming from Fr Hezekias and the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis.

I give thanks to God for all of you, my priests, deacons, and laity. You are truly a blessing to my ministry as your shepherd. I pray for you daily, asking God to keep you all in good health, to bless your families, and to keep you active in the evangelical life of our eparchy. We are blessed with the Mother of God as patroness of our Boston Cathedral; St Anne, her mother and grandmother of Jesus Christ, as patroness of our Los Angeles Cathedral; and St Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra, my personal patron and Patron of our Eparchy. He is called the "Wonderworker," and may he work wonders through all of you as we work hand in hand—all Melkites in the USA—for the glory of God and the building up of his body—the Body of Christ—the Eparchy of Newton.

**The vision for the future is to continue building spirituality, particularly among adults and young adults, and the call to all Melkites to be a stronger Body of Jesus Christ.**

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