



EPARCHY
OF ST. MARON
CANADA

Bishop's Office

***Twelfth letter of His Excellency
Bishop Paul-Marwan Tabet
To the Maronite Community of Canada
Christmas 2018***

*To dear Monsignors, Priests, Brothers and Sisters,
To those Consecrated and involved in the life of the Church and Society,
To Parents, Children, Young Men and Young Women,
To Parish Communities,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, ...” (2 Corinthians 5,17)

From my cell with my health, which will pass, God willing, with the Lord of Salvation, our Virgin Mother, Saint Maron and Saint Charbel, I am addressing you.

The grace and joy of the embodied divine love fill your hearts, my beloved children, with overwhelming peace in your life.

"We have come to do him homage" (Matthew 2,2): Here are the Magi going to see "Christ" of all peoples. They had ***"seen his star"*** and left for him. They hurried in a long and difficult journey. They did not hesitate to give up everything ... ***"And suddenly the star they had seen rising went forward and halted over the place where the child was" (Matthew 2, 9)*** and ***"when they saw the star, they rejoiced with a great joy" (Matthew 2, 10).***

We as well, like the Magi, follow the same path when we want to do a job or a journey or when we take in our lives an important decision...

- We search,
- We question,
- We plan,
- We get ready,
- Then we go.

Christmas teaches us to examine the signs with which God calls us and guides us. When we realize that we are moving towards Him, our heart get filled with a deep joy, accompanied by a warm desire to meet him, and an ongoing effort to give in into His hands.

"They entered the house and saw the child and his mother Mary" (Matthew 2, 11). It seems normal, but this child is different from the others. He is the only begotten Son of God *who renounces His glory (Philippi 2, 7)* to be born in a manger, dies on the cross and then returns to the Father. It is *"that for your sake he became poor although he was rich, so that by his poverty you might become rich"* (2 Cor 8, 9) ... He come to be among us!

- How do we thank God for His mercy?
- How do we renew at Christmas?
- How to be with him a "new creature"?

Christ was born to be redeemed, and came to reconcile us with God and with ourselves and with each other.

At every Christmas time, we live the mystery of incarnation, we move with humanity, in mind and heart, towards Christ, the center of the universe and history, our Redeemer. The human dimension of this mystery is revealed: the discovery of the greatness and dignity of human. Let us meditate this richness "which is accessible to every human being and his fruit is good for everyone".

We join in this feast to re-examine our lives through our new spiritual birth with Christ, and in Him. **How?**

Through a sincere Christian life program, that we propose it as such:

- 1- Reading the Bible.
- 2 - Attend the Divine Liturgy (even once a week).
- 3 – Pray the rosary.
- 4 - Charity with the needy.
- 5 - Preserve the value of family, the love of the land and the pursuit of unity within our community.

In particular,

It is necessary to mention the Synod of Catholic Bishops held on October 2018 on *"Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment"* to focus on the role of our youth and the need to work, not only *for* them but *with* them to achieve the church which is the community that will remain young because God is always young, *"Who satisfies your years with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle"* (Psalm 103 / 5). **How?**

Through a directed program

- 1- Testimony by example,
- 2- Meet them where they are,
- 3- Assist them find a meaning for their life,
- 4- Spiritual guidance.
- 5- Raising awareness of their role in the church

"A new creation" ... an innovative love

If we look again at the sight of the Magi, we will see them "open their bags and give him gold, incense, and passions" (Matthew 2,11). The gifts given by the Magi to Christ symbolize true worship. The "gold" refers to his royal divinity, and by the "incense" they recognize Him the priest of the New Alliance, and by their "bitter" gift they proclaim the prophet who will shed his blood to reconcile humanity with his father.

Give to the Lord the gold of your existence, that is, your freedom to follow Him in love. Lift up the incense of your warm prayers. Give him the "bitter", that is, your tenderness, which is full of gratitude to human who loves you, and forgiveness for those who do not love you.

My beloved, the Church needs authentic witnesses of the Good News: men, women and young people whom their meeting with Christ change their lives; men, women and young people whom are worthy of carrying their experience to the other. The Church needs saints, and we are all called to sainthood.

We need to innovate, be creative by announcing the Good News and carrying this message.

We need a vision completely renewed by the light of the presence of "Emmanuel", God among us.

It is from our vision and our thoughts that our joys are born, not circumstances and situations. Then, let us seek to be always in Him a new creature!

The Savior is born... Halleluiah!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

+Paul-Marwan TABET
Bishop