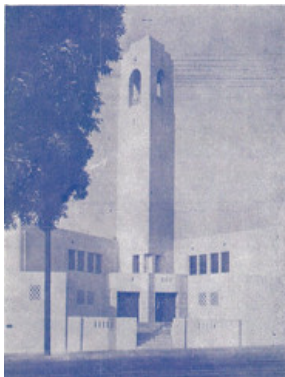


PARISH HISTORY



The Maronites are an ethnoreligious Christian group whose members adhere to the Syriac Maronite Church with the largest population around Mount Lebanon in Lebanon. The Maronites derive their name from the Syriac Christian saint Maron, some of whose followers migrated to the area of Mount Lebanon from their previous place of residence which was located around the area of Antioch, and established the nucleus of the Syriac Maronite Church.

The Maronites started migrating to the US in the late 1800 and early 1900, mostly due to the 1860 Mount Lebanon civil war and later during the Great Famine of Mount Lebanon.



Our Lady of Lebanon
on Brooklyn Ave.

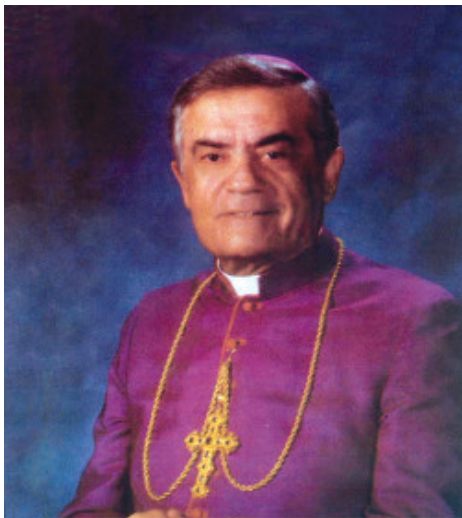
Wherever a Maronite settles, there he builds a church commented a well-known French writer. This is clearly evident in the Maronite community of Los Angeles, California. Historically, the Maronites had settled in California even before the turn of the century. It fell to Monsignor Joseph Daher in 1923 to bring them together in their first congregation of forty-five families, with Mass being celebrated in a house purchased on Warren and Brooklyn Avenues.

A new pastor came to Los Angeles in 1925. Father Paul Meouchi would spend eight full years in Los Angeles, then become Archbishop of Tyre (early 1934), then Patriarch of Antioch (May 1955), and Cardinal of the Universal Church in February 1965. The real founding of the parish is accredited to him. In 1926, there were over eighty families to care for. He supervised the building of a new church, a hall, and a rectory on the premises where the old house stood.



His Beatitude Paul Peter Meouchi

When Father Meouchi left to become Archbishop of Tyre, Lebanon, he was replaced in 1935 by Father Joseph Awad who spent seven years of service before he was followed in 1942 by Father Philip Najm who served until 1944. Father Boutros Daou arrived from Lebanon in 1947, took over as Pastor, and founded *The Maronite Review*, a monthly magazine which promoted the culture of our people and the richness of our Liturgy. It was in 1954 that the Ladies Guild was begun with Victoria Dib as its first president. Father Daou returned to Lebanon in 1955 and was succeeded for a short time by Msgr. Thomas Aiken who was replaced by Father John Chedid on September 1, 1956.



Bishop John Chedid

Father Chedid had completed ten years of higher studies at the universities in Rome when Patriarch Meouchi sent him to take care of the parish which he himself had served some thirty years before. Father Chedid was assigned at the request of His Eminence, Cardinal James Francis McIntyre, Archbishop of Los Angeles. St. Peter Church

Father Chedid then dedicated himself to finding a new location for the church. On August 2, 1966 after meeting and discussing the proposition with 35 men of the parish, a unanimous decision was made to accept the generous offer made by His Eminence, Cardinal James Francis McIntyre, of St. Peter's Church on the boundary line of Beverly Hills, Los Angeles and West Hollywood.

The new church lacked a social hall, a facility that is necessary for meetings, receptions, etc... and so a building fund was organized for that purpose. The hall was completed in June of 1969, heralding the beginning of a new era for the Maronites of Los Angeles.

In 1969, Father John Chedid was made Monsignor and named Honorary Chaplain to His Holiness. On November 12, 1978, he was ordained a Chorbishop of the Maronite Church. On October 28, 1980, he was appointed Auxiliary Bishop to Bishop Francis M. Zayek of the Diocese of St. Maron.

Since then, many priests came to assist Bishop Chedid in the ministry of the parish: Msgr. Ron Beshara, Msgr. Louis Baz (then Father), Fr. George El-Khalli, Fr. Kevin Beaton, Fr. John Morrison, Fr. Ghassan Mattar...All of them put their gifts and efforts to upbuild the Cathedral Community who was constantly growing.

Church activities flourished. The first Mahrajan was held in the early 1940s. The Fashion Show was started in the 1950s and the first Annual Sahra took place in 1957. In 1973, the first annual Christmas Boutique was organized by Maxine Shalhoub. In 1978, the first Cedars Club was convened by Joanne Kahwaji. Jim Tomey and Paula Mockary became the first teachers of the Catechism classes. In 1980, the Saint Sharbel Society began with Gwen Moussa as its first president. The Maronite League was formed in 1983 with Gene George as its first president. With Maxine Shalhoub as chairperson, the NAM convention in 1982 was a success and set a precedent for subsequent conventions. In 1994, the Maronite Youth Organization was created with George Alwan as president.

By 1988, our community had held the honor of receiving three patriarchal visits. His Beatitude Patriarch Paul Meouchi returned home to visit the parish of his youth in September of 1962, and he drew one of the largest gatherings of our community. His Beatitude Antonios Khoreiche visited our church in 1981. Also, His Beatitude Nasrallah Sfeir blessed our community by his visit in July of 1988. All three visits brought people together from near and far to welcome our shepherds.



St. Peter Church

On June 23, 1994, the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles was established, and Bishop John Chedid was appointed as its first Bishop. The establishment of the new Eparchy required a Cathedral Church for the Bishop. Thus, Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon – St. Peter was selected for this great honor. To assist Bishop Chedid at the Cathedral, Chorbishop Gregory Mansour was appointed as Protosyncellus/Chancellor of the new Eparchy, and Father Abdallah Zaidan from the Congregation of Maronite Lebanese Missionaries was assigned as Rector and took office on September 1, 1994.

Activities have since continued to flourish. Throughout the years, the Church has handled opportunities, challenges, and adversity with grace, courage and compassion. One hardship that was encountered and overcome took place on January 6, 1996. The Church was set on fire and suffered extensive damages. It was subsequently remodeled and refurbished and more beautiful than before. During that same year, the Chancery building was added. In 1997, the quarterly publication Outreach was inaugurated. The Church had a yearlong celebration of its Diamond Jubilee from February of 1998 until February of 1999. The Children's Summer Camp was established as an annual tradition in 1998. The first directory was also published in 1999.

When Bishop Chedid retired in December 2000, the community put together A Day of Appreciation in his honor on January 17, 2001. Parishioners, clergy and elected officials arrived to join in the Liturgy and Banquet to show their love and appreciation.

On December 5, 2000, Bishop Robert Shaheen was appointed as the second Bishop of the Eparchy. He was ordained and enthroned in St. Louis by His Beatitude Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir on February 15, 2000. From February 23 until February 25, 2001, Patriarch Sfeir graced our Church and community with his official visit, marking the fourth patriarchal visit that Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon has had the honor of receiving. Our Community drew a record crowd to receive him as well as to congratulate our Bishop Shaheen.

In June of 2001, Chorbishop Gregory Mansour left for St. Louis to serve as Vicar General of the Eparchy and Rector of St. Raymond's Cathedral. Father Abdallah Zaidan was reassigned as Rector for Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon, and on October 15, 2001, Father Elias Sleiman was officially assigned as Associate Rector.

On March 21st, 2012 Bishop John Chedid, our pastor and shepherd of the local community for so many years, passed away in Lebanon at the age of 88. He truly showed us how to be a "father of all", a leader. He became the man so many of us would turn to when choosing a role model or mentor. He never turned us away, and he never failed us. May he sleep in the peace of the Lord. Father Abdallah Zaidan represented the community and the Eparchy at the Funeral Service in

Lebanon. Also, on April 29, we gathered to commemorate his passing with a 40 Day Mass with Bishop Robert Shaheen and Cardinal Roger Mahony in attendance.

On July 10, 2013 Father Abdallah Zaidan was elected as the Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles. He was ordained bishop on September 28, 2013, by His Eminence and Beatitude Cardinal Bechara Boutros Rai, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East. He was enthroned on October 23, 2013 in St. Raymond Cathedral in St. Louis.

On October 23, 2013 Father Elias Sleiman was appointed as the Rector and Father Albert Constantine was appointed as associate Rector.

Events and activities continued to blossom. The Children's School Program expanded, with a continually increasing number of teachers and students joining. Annual events such as the Spring Fest and the American Lebanese Cultural Festival were successfully initiated in 2003. The Festival brought in over 7,000 attendees last August. These events were added to the various celebrations and activities such as St. Maron's Feast Day, Heritage Night & the Annual Sahra.

Our Lady of Mt. Lebanon now has over 900 registered families with Sunday attendance of over 300 families for Mass on Sundays. The Children's Program has continued to grow over the years and with about 115 children with Religious classes, Arabic Classes, dabke and the yearly summer Camp.

In the last ten years, two missions branched out of the Cathedral: St. Jude Mission, the mission that serves the San Gabriel Valley and Saints Peter and Paul Mission that serves the San Fernando Valley to attend to the needs of the Maronite communities living there.

The Cathedral is working harder to reach out to all of its people and is positioning itself for future growth. The Community places its full trust on God asking for His blessing and mercy.
