

The Dedication of St. George Maronite Catholic Church Cranston, RI

by Joseph P. Checallah, Jr.

On Sunday October 5th, 2014, his Excellency, The Most Reverend Gregory J. Mansour, Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, joined with over 300 friends, family, and parishioners to lead a Liturgy of Celebration followed by the Dedication of St. George's Maronite Catholic Church of Cranston, RI.

Joining His Excellency Bishop Gregory at Mass was Chorbishop Joseph Lahoud, Fr. Edward Pieroni, Pastor of St. Raymond, Roman Catholic in Providence, RI, Fr. William Ledoux, Pastor of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church of Cranston, RI, Deacons Enzo DiGiacomo and Charles Gebron, Sub-Deacon Joseph Abraham, and Fr. Edward Nedder, Pastor of St. George Maronite Catholic Church. The Holy Liturgy was followed by a celebration at the Venus DeMilo in Swansea, MA, officiated by Fred Simon, Master of Ceremonies. The Invocation was given by Fr. Edward Pieroni, and the Convocation by Chorbishop Joseph K. Kaddo.

The American National Anthem, sung by Darine Saker, was followed by the Lebanese National Anthem, sung by Darine Saker and Giselle Zaarour. Remarks were made by His Excellency Bishop Gregory, and Fr. Edward Pieroni.

This journey began in October of 2005, during the pastorship of Fr. Paul Mouawad, when St. George Maronite Catholic Church and hall located at 50 Main Street, in Pawtucket, RI, was completely destroyed



The Most Rev. Bishop Gregory J. Mansour, leading the celebration of the Dedication Liturgy

by a fire that raced quickly through the buildings. The entire facility was ruined beyond repair. The parish rebounded quickly and within a few weeks of the tragedy, created an Exploratory Committee to research the many possibilities for a future home of Saint George Church, and rented St. Raymond Church in Providence to use as a temporary house of worship.

In July 2006, Fr. Paul was transferred to Newtown Square, Pennsylvania to serve the Maronite parish of St. Sharbel Church. Father Edward T. Nedder was assigned to serve as Pastor of Saint George Church, his primary mission to restore the faith of his congregation, and to establish a new permanent home for the parishioners. In May 2007, a house residing on 8 plus acres of land at 171 Twin River Road, Lincoln, Rhode Island was purchased to be the site of the future church, hall, and rectory of Saint George.

Unfortunately, after several years of negotiations with the Town of Lincoln, the Department of Environmental Management, and many other associated agencies, the plans to build a new church were abandoned, and the decision was made to purchase a church that could be renovated to the Maronite tradition.

In April 2013, the Maronite Eparchy of St. Maron, of Brooklyn, NY entered into an agreement with the Roman Catholic Dioceses of Providence, RI, to purchase the Church and Rectory of St. Ann's Parish in Cranston, RI. On June 30, 2013, the purchase was completed and became the new home of St. George Maronite Catholic Church. The first Maronite Liturgy was celebrated on July 6, 2013. Fr. Ed continues to celebrate weekly Roman Catholic Masses for the Parishioners of St. Ann, many whom have joined St. George, and continues to extend a warm welcome to all.

Since his arrival in July of 2006, Fr. Ed has overseen 100th Anniversary Celebration of St. George, the purchase of a new Church, the hosting of the first Lebanese Food Festival at the new location, and currently, the complete restoration of the new permanent home of St. George Maronite Catholic Church and Rectory.