

Heart of Jesus Catholic Church
Maronite Rite

Pastor: Reverend Rabih Aoun, M.L.M.

WEEKEND MASSES	Saturday at 4:00 pm (English) Sunday at 11:00 am (English + Arabic)
WEEKDAY MASSES	Monday through Thursday at 12:00 noon
CONFESSIONS	Saturday 3:00 pm - 3:45 pm
OFFICE HOURS	Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm *Closed on: Holy Days of Obligation and Federal Holidays*

1800 NE 6th Court
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33304

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WHO ARE THE MARONITES?

The Maronite Church is one of 22 Eastern Rites of the Catholic Church, under the authority of the Pope. It dates back to the early Christians of Antioch (Syria) where Jesus' followers "were called Christians for the first time" (Acts 11:26). The actual name "Maronite" is derived from the name of Saint Maron, who was a priest and hermit, and died around the year 410 AD.

As part of the Roman Catholic Church, the Maronites profess the same beliefs in the Dogmatic and Moral teachings of the Church and celebrate the same seven Sacraments. Their liturgical celebrations are more unique and reflect their early Apostolic beginnings. For example, in some prayers and hymns of the Mass, the Maronites still use Syriac, a dialect of the Aramaic language spoken by Jesus and his Apostles, and incense is regularly used.

During the civil and religious persecutions of the 7th century, the Maronites fled their churches and monasteries in the plains of Syria, and took refuge in the verdant mountains and caves of nearby Lebanon. Since then, Lebanon has been considered the homeland of the Maronite Church.

Millions of Maronites now live in various countries throughout the world, but their Mother Church remains in Lebanon. The current Maronite Patriarch, Bechara Peter Rai, was made a Cardinal by Pope Benedict XVI, in November of 2012. Cardinal Rai lives at the Maronite Patriarchal residence in Bkerke, Lebanon.

The United States is home to two Maronite Eparchies (Dioceses). The Most Reverend Gregory Mansour is our Bishop who resides in Brooklyn, New York. Bishop Mansour is a member of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), as is the Maronite Bishop of the Western Eparchy, the Most Reverend Elias Zaidan who resides in Los Angeles.

History of Heart of Jesus Church
2012-2025

By Chorbishop Michael G. Thomas, JCD

With the ever-growing population of South Florida, in 2010 the Most Reverend Gregory Mansour, the Bishop of our Eparchy (Diocese) of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, began to consider the establishment of a church for the Maronite faithful of Broward County to compliment the Maronite Parish of Our Lady of Lebanon in Miami, which had been established in 1973.

Having reviewed demographic studies, Bishop Gregory purchased the "Unity Church of Christ of Fort Lauderdale," on June 27, 2011, hoping to establish a new spiritual home for the Maronites of Broward County. The purchase price of the waterfront property, which included a church and parish hall (but no rectory), was $2,400,000.00. This purchase was made possible thanks to a grant from the Anthony R. Abraham Foundation, in the amount of $1,000,000.00, and through a loan from the Knights of Columbus. Bishop Gregory named the new church in honor of the Sacred Heart using a more direct translation of the Arabic: *Qalb Yasoo'*, "Heart of Jesus."

At the time of the closing, the Eparchy immediately took possession of the parish hall and slowly began to renovate the interior of the building which had previously been sub-divided into many small rooms. This included demolishing most of the make-shift interior walls to open the space to allow for a hall that could seat 150 people. Two offices, two classrooms, a kitchen, and restrooms were maintained. Porcelain tile floors were installed, new internet and phone services were established, the lighting and electricity were repaired (including a new electrical panel), and the entire space was freshly painted. The costliest part of the hall renovations was the installation of hurricane resistant exterior doors, which replaced all of the wooden doors which had been greatly damaged by termite infestation. In fact, pest control technicians were kept quite busy in the first few months eliminating termites and rodents. Finally, new tables and chairs were purchased for the hall as well as office furniture and equipment.

Also, at the time of closing, the Eparchy became responsible for the up-keep of the grounds. The spacious gardens were horribly overgrown and infested with Norwegian rats and large land crabs. The parking lot was quite deteriorated, many of the parking cement bumpers were crushed, and the striping had practically disappeared. It took many months and several thousand dollars to clear out the jungle and make the parking lot and landscaping a healthy and presentable environment.

In accordance with the purchase agreement, the church building continued to be used by the Unity Church of Christ for 6 months from the closing date. They vacated the church on December 27, 2011. By then, the hall and the grounds were in good shape. With a scheduled opening date of January 6, 2012, that left only 11 days, including New Year's Day, to make the necessary changes to the interior of the church.

During those very few days, the sanctuary, which is the raised platform for the altar, the tabernacle, and the pulpits, was too narrow in depth for Catholic worship, so it had to be extended out about 6 feet, and steps needed to be added. That entire area was then covered in porcelain tile. The pews, which had been angled, were straightened out, mildewed carpeting was removed, the sound system

and lighting were updated, and the entire interior was painted. Thanks to donations from the Archdiocese of Miami[1], the Diocese of Fall River (Massachusetts)[2], and various churches[3] and priests, all of the sanctuary furnishings and appointments were put into place. Through the Grace of God, all of the work had been completed by January 6th.

On November 1, 2011, the Feast of All Saints, Chorbishop Michael G. Thomas, the Vicar General and Chancellor of the Eparchy, was assigned by Bishop Gregory as the founding pastor (administrator) of this new church (while maintaining his other assignments). Deacon John Jarvis was also assigned to assist Chorbishop Michael at the new church.

Chorbishop Michael had been supervising the work taking place since the purchase of the property, and now the time had come for him to begin preparing for the spiritual and pastoral needs for the formation of a new mission. (A church community is called a "mission" until it becomes very well established, then it becomes a "parish"). Thanks to the assistance of Father Elie Mikhael, the Pastor of Our Lady of Lebanon in Miami, a mailing list of Maronite families in Broward County had been drawn up, as best as possible, and Bishop Gregory and Chorbishop Michael began reaching out to those Maronites by letter. Father Elie also made several announcements at the Miami parish. We were further blessed to have been given good exposure in the newspapers of the Archdiocese of Miami: The Florida Catholic, and of Fort Lauderdale's *Sun Sentinel*. Thanks to word of mouth and again, the Grace of God, the news of the opening this new mission spread.

The inaugural Divine Liturgy took place on January 6, 2012, the Feast of the Epiphany. The church was packed as Chorbishop Michael celebrated the Mass, blessed the Epiphany Water, and used that water to bless the entire building. Exactly one year later, January 6, 2013, Bishop Gregory Consecrated the church and the altar in the presence of Archbishop John Clement Favalora (Emeritus of Miami), Bishop George Coleman (Fall River), Bishop Frank Caggiano (Bridgeport, CT), Chorbishop Michael, and several priests and deacons. The relic of Saint Sharbel (a piece of his bone) was then permanently placed in the altar.

Since the day of its inauguration, attendance at all religious services has been extraordinary. Parishioners and friends have been most supportive and have contributed toward the many renovations that have been made and continue to make the church a safer and more beautiful House of God. Over time, stained glass windows[4] were designed and installed, a confessional and a baptistery were added, and the sacristy (the vesting room for the clergy) was redone. Eventually, thanks to a parish Capital Campaign, the roofs of the church and hall were replaced with original

[1] The Main Altar, the Pulpit, and the celebrant's chair originally from the Saint Luke's Church in Coconut Creek, which had been closed.
[2] The Tabernacle, the statue of the Sacred Heart, the Processional Cross, and the Monstrance from their archived church goods of closed churches. The statue of the Virgin Mary was later donated to compliment the one of the Sacred Heart.
[3] The Baptismal Font was a gift from Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Cathedral in Brooklyn, NY; A large crucifix and some liturgical vessels from Saint Rafka Maronite Retreat Center in Shelbourne, VT, which had been closed.
[4] The first window to be installed was the Rose Window of the Heart of Jesus in the choir loft, then the other windows were added little by little: St. Jospeh, St. Jude, Our Lady of Lebanon, St. Rita, St. Maron, St. Sharbel, St. Therese, St. Anne, St. John Maron, St. Padre Pio, St. John the Baptist, and St. Michael. The large window behind the Tabernacle is the Crucifixion. The names of the donors of these windows and all of the church appointments are engraved on "Donors' Plaques" in the vestibule of the church.

Florida white cement tiles, and all of the 7 air-conditioning/heating units were replaced. Hurricane resistant doors and protective glass were installed.

Immediately upon the opening of the church, religious education classes for children, as well as a choir, altar servers, and an MYO (youth organization) were established. The Pastor's Advisory Board was formed and held its first meeting on June 25, 2012, and a Ladies Guild met for the first time on September 17 of the same year. The first meeting of the Men's Club took place in 2015.

We are thankful that in 2013, some parishioners took the initiative to form 2 groups to sustain our parish in prayer: The Family of the Sacred Heart and the Saint Sharbel Prayer Group. Both of these have grown steadily in number and have been faithful to their charism. Also, for several years the parish has been involved in providing monthly food supplies for the local Saint Vincent de Paul Society. The parish also sponsored the international study program: *Women of Grace* in 2024-2025. Several ladies of the parish participated and found it to be a wonderful tool for the understanding and deepening of their faith.

In July of 2014, a rectory (priest's house) was purchased in Oakland Park. It was bought for $145,000.00 in cash! Much of this amount was thanks to a generous gift from Deacon John and Faith Jarvis. In a short 9 months the rectory was extensively renovated and newly furnished, thanks to the hard work and contributions of parishioners and friends. Chorbishop Michael moved into this parish home in April of 2015. Since then, the roof has been replaced, and hurricane resistant windows and doors have been installed.

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the opening of the church in 2022, all of the pews were reupholstered and refinished, a porcelain tile floor was installed in the entire church, and the interior and exterior of the church and hall were repainted. Also on this occasion, our "mission" church was officially established as a "parish" by Bishop Gegory Mansour.

Thanks to an additional grant from the Anthony Abraham Foundation, the kindness of Bishop Gregory, and to the hard work and generosity of our parishioners, the mortgage was paid in full in November of 2024!

In May of 2025, thanks to a grant received from the Koch Foundation, the parish hall was fitted with hurricane resistant windows, thus securing all of our parish buildings as best as possible.

On June 1, 2025, upon the retirement of the parish's founding pastor, Chorbishop Michael G. Thomas, a new pastor (administrator) has been appointed to lead the parish, Reverend Father Rabih Aoun, MLM.

The Lord has greatly blessed this church with remarkable success thanks to his abundant graces and to the dedication and generosity of her parishioners, friends, and benefactors. May he continue to have us flourish and grow in the love of his Sacred Heart!



CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

November Memorial Offering
For Philip and Lorraine Shaia
By Joseph and John Shaia

Sat. 10/31
4:00 pm

Sun. 11/01 — **Consecration of the Church**

11:00 am — For the intentions of parishioners, friends, and benefactors, living and deceased.

Mon. 11/02 — **Commemoration of the Faithful Departed**

7:00 pm — For the intentions of parishioners, friends, and benefactors, living and deceased.

Tues. 11/03 — **Sts. Akepsimas, Joseph, and Aithalas, M**

12:00 noon — For the souls of the Chebat, Espat, and Bedran Families
By The Chebat Family

Wed. 11/04 — **Sts. Vitalis and Agricola, M**

12:00 noon — For the intentions of
Anne and Carl Obeck

Thurs. 11/05 — **St. Asya the Righteous, C**

12:00 noon — For the intentions of Marie-Lou Gayda
By The Chebat Family

Fri. 11/06 — **NO MASS**

Sat. 11/07
4:00 pm — For Carmine Giambrone
By Leonard Errico

Sun. 11/08 — **Renewal of the Church**

11:00 am — For Semaan Dib Youssef
(40 Days Memorial)
By Imad Youssef

🙏 Echoes of the Gospel 🙏

Brothers and Sisters,

The Church teaches that every Christian is called to holiness, not only a few extraordinary people. Holiness should not be understood only as great sacrifices, unusual experiences, or constant prayer, but as faithfully living our everyday Christian responsibilities.

The path to holiness begins with **imitation**, where we try to follow Christ's example and live as He lived. However, imitation alone can eventually feel repetitive or burdensome if it remains only external.

A deeper stage is **appropriation**, in which Christ's mission, values, love, and family truly become our own. Through appropriation, holiness is no longer simply an obligation but becomes a privilege, a gift, and an expression of our identity as children of God. Therefore, true holiness means allowing our whole life to belong to Christ while faithfully living the responsibilities He has given us.

Amen.

SAINT CHARBEL PRAYER GROUP

Meets the 22nd of each month – Before Mass

The Saint Charbel Prayer Group gathers for the Saint Charbel Prayer Service before Mass on the 22nd of each month.

Save the dates
(No Noon Mass on these weekdays.)

Mass at 11:00 A.M. - Sunday, November 22
Mass at 7:00 P.M. - Tuesday, December 22
Mass at 7:00 P.M. - Friday, January 22
Mass at 7:00 P.M. - Monday, February 22
Mass at 7:00 P.M. - Thursday, April 22
Mass at 11:00 A.M. - Sunday, May 23
Mass at 7:00 P.M. - Tuesday, June 22

CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH

FAMILY OF THE SACRED HEART

This Sunday, November 1st – Before Mass

The Family of the Sacred Heart will be gathering for prayers to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"100 CLUB" RAFFLE

Congratulations!

The winner of the September "100 Club" is

Nabeel Youakim

SECOND COLLECTION

A Second collection will be taken next weekend, **Saturday & Sunday, November 07 & 08**, for the ***Maronite Patriarchal Charities.***

PARISH FINANCES

October 24 & 25

Collection Basket	$	970.00
Automated Bank Checks	$	320.00
Electronic Payments	$	639.58
Candles	$	182.65
Total	$	2,112.23

Thank You for your generosity and support.

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FOOD DRIVE FOR THE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

The food drive sponsored by the Knights of Columbus will be this **Saturday & Sunday, October 31 & November 01.**

LADIES GUILD

The next meeting of the Ladies Guild will be this **Wednesday, November 4th** in the parish hall.

Monthly Memorial





Would you like to memorialize a friend or loved one, living or deceased during a month of the year? Consider sponsoring the gifts used on the Altar and in the Sanctuary. These include the hosts, water, and wine used in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, and the sanctuary candle. Your donation of $150.00 will cover these gifts for the month.

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For more information, please contact the parish office at office@heartofjesus.org or 954-522-3939

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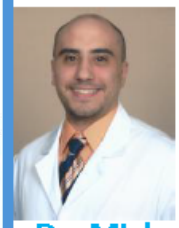
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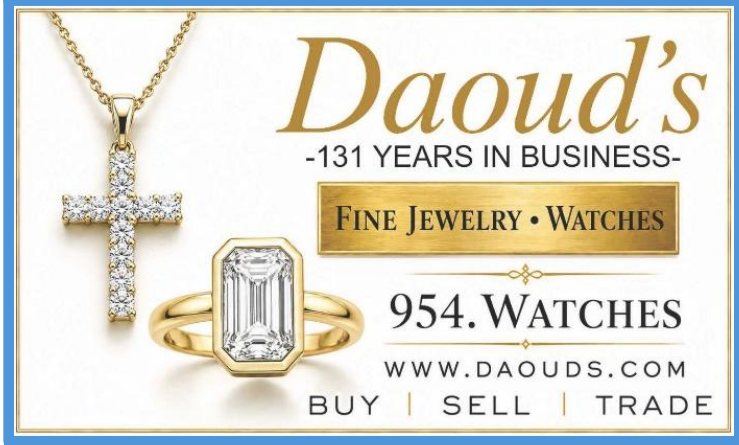
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