

January 30, 2025

Re: Maronite Enrichment Days APRIL 29–May 02, 2025

Dear Brothers in the Priesthood:

Msgr. Peter and I invite you to attend the 2025 Maronite Enrichment Days. This event is a two-day seminar focusing on topics related to Syriac theology, spirituality, hagiography, history, and liturgy. Its goal is to enhance the knowledge of both clergy and laity in those areas. Annually, Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary hosts this event. Originally conceived as a one-day meeting for the alumni of the seminary, it is now open to all. The seminar takes place yearly, ten days after the Great Feast of our Lord's Resurrection. We are eager to host you from Tuesday, April 29, to Friday, May 2, 2025. The preparations for these days are underway.

Dr. Joseph P. Amar has agreed to be our speaker and will deliver four lectures on the theme *Ephrem the Syrian: The Man and the Myth: 1) The Stories We Tell, 2) Ephrem's World, 3) The Work of Your Helper, and 4) Why Ephrem Matters*. Dr. Amar is basing these lectures on his forthcoming book, "Dangerous Poet. The Life and Troubled Times of Ephrem the Syrian."

Following their successful performance last year, the *Maronite Seminary Chamber Choir* will again sing traditional Maronite hymns.

Please share this information with your deacons, subdeacons, and parishioners. We wish you a blessed Season of the Epiphany and look forward to seeing you at the end of April.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



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Joseph P. Amar, Ph.D.

Biography

Joseph Phillip Amar is a linguist and historian specializing in the languages and cultures of the Middle East. His main areas of focus are on literary interactions among Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and on Arabic and Syriac literary history. His publications appear in *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, *Patrologia Orientalis*, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, *Le Muséon*, *Studia Patristica*, *The Journal of Early Christian Studies*, and *Parole de L'Orient*. He is a regular contributor to *America Magazine*, *Commonweal*, and *Religion Dispatches*, where he writes on the intersection of religion and politics.

Dr. Amar is professor emeritus of Semitic Languages and Early Christian Studies at the University of Notre Dame, where he founded the Program in Semitic Languages and Literatures and co-founded the Program in Early Christian Studies. His contributions to Maronite Enrichment Days are drawn from his forthcoming book, "Dangerous Poet. The Life and Troubled Times of Ephrem the Syrian."

Ephrem the Syrian: The Man and the Myth

The Stories We Tell

1st Session on Wednesday, April 30, 2025

We do terrible things to the saints. Instead of modeling ourselves on them, we recreate them in our own image. This session opens with an overview of how the Ephrem of history has been systematically erased and replaced by a caricature of someone who never existed. The reasons for this are as troubling as they are destructive.

Ephrem's World

2nd Session on Wednesday, April 30, 2025

Recovering the Ephrem of history begins by letting him speak for himself, from his own time and place. How did the circumstances of Ephrem's life shape him? How did Ephrem become Ephrem?

The Work of Your Helper

3rd Session on Thursday, May 01, 2025

How did Ephrem understand himself? He informs us that he has the anointing of heaven, that he speaks for God, that the power that animates and enlivens scripture flows into him, and through him, into his own time. But there are skeletons in his closet: Ephrem carries a dark secret from his past.

Why Ephrem Matters

4th Session on Thursday, May 01, 2025

Ephrem's vision offers a path that is simple but hard. It is not the path of orthodoxy (right doctrine) or orthopraxy (right morality) but of orthopathy (authentic spirituality), which is nothing less than an embrace of ROZO.

Seminary Registration



For planning purposes, the organizers ask you kindly to [register online](#) ASAP but no later than Friday, April 22, 2025. There is no fee associated with registration.

Hotel Reservations

The organizers have secured the rate of \$169 (+13% tax per night for 27 April through 3/4 May) at the Courtyard by Marriott Silver Spring Downtown until April 1, 2025. You may book your hotel room [online at the Courtyard By Marriott](#) or by calling (301) 589-4899 (Rate Code: Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary). The hotel is a mile away from the seminary and provides a shuttle service to and from the seminary.



Vestments

The organizers ask each priest wishing to concelebrate at the Divine Mysteries to bring his *jibbeh* and stole.

Each deacon and subdeacon willing to serve at these celebrations should bring his alb and stole.