



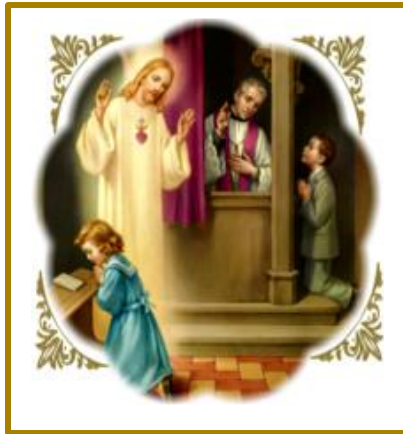
Our Lady of Purgatory



Maronite Catholic Church

July 11-12, 2026

EIGHTH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST



IF WE TRULY KNEW THE GIFT OF CONFESSION

If the Holy Mass is where Christ feeds us, then the Sacrament of Reconciliation is where Christ heals us.

Every one of us knows what it feels like to carry a burden. Sometimes it is guilt over words we wish we had never spoken. Sometimes it is a relationship we have broken, a habit we cannot seem to overcome, or a sin we keep hidden because we are ashamed. We have become very good at carrying burdens, but God never intended us to carry them alone.

Jesus did not simply preach about forgiveness. He established a sacrament through which His forgiveness could be personally received. On the evening of His Resurrection, He breathed the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and said:

"Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained" (John 20:22-23).

Those words were not symbolic. They were a mission. Christ entrusted His own authority to forgive sins to His Apostles and, through apostolic succession, to the bishops and priests of His Church.

The priest does not forgive by his own power. He lends his voice to Christ, who alone forgives.

This is why confession is so essential. Sin does more than break a rule; it wounds our relationship with God, with the Church, with others, and even with ourselves. We cannot always heal those wounds on our own. Christ, the Divine Physician, gave us the sacrament as the ordinary means of restoring us to grace after serious sin and strengthening us against future temptation.

Many people say, "I talk directly to God. Why should I confess to a priest?"

The answer is simple: **we absolutely should talk directly to God. Every day.** Personal prayer is the heartbeat of our relationship with Him.

But the question is not whether we can pray directly to God. The question is whether we are willing to receive forgiveness in the way Christ Himself chose to give it.

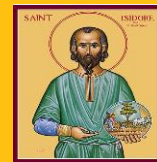
When Jesus healed people in the Gospels, He often used visible signs. He touched eyes with mud. He laid His hands on the sick. He spoke aloud. God certainly could have healed without these signs, but He chose to work through them.

The sacraments continue the same pattern. Christ works through visible instruments to communicate invisible grace. Just as He uses water in Baptism, bread and wine in the Eucharist, and oil in the Anointing of the Sick, He uses the voice of the priest in Confession.

The priest is not standing between us and God. He is standing there for Christ. One of the most beautiful moments in the sacrament is hearing the words: *"I absolve you from your sins..."* **Those are not words we can say to ourselves.** They are words

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Confession heals, confession grants pardon of sin, all hope consists in confession; there is a chance for mercy."
Saint Isidore of Seville



Christ wanted His Church to speak to His people.

Why, then, do so many people stay away from Confession? Sometimes it is fear. We are embarrassed. Sometimes it is

pride. We convince ourselves that our sins are not that serious.

Sometimes it is discouragement. We confess the same sins repeatedly and wonder if anything is changing. Sometimes it is simply because we have forgotten the beauty of God's mercy.

The devil has one great strategy: convince us that we are either too good to need Confession or too sinful to deserve it. Both are lies. The saints understood this.

St. John Vianney, the patron saint of parish priests, spent up to sixteen hours each day in the confessional because he knew that there was no greater work than reconciling souls to God. He said: "The good God knows everything. Even before you confess, He already knows that you will sin again, yet He still forgives you."

St. Padre Pio often reminded his spiritual children: "The soul is cleansed in the Sacrament of Confession."

Fr. Vincent Farhat, Pastor | Rev. Mr. Jean Mattar, Deacon

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Email: ourladyofpurgatory@gmail.com | **Facebook Page:** Our Lady of Purgatory Catholic Church - Maronite Rite |

Office Email: officeolop@gmail.com

OFFICE HOURS: The Church office will be open Monday through Thursday from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm.

St. John Paul II, who himself went to Confession frequently, wrote: "It would be an illusion to seek holiness while neglecting the Sacrament of Reconciliation."

The saints did not see Confession as a burden. They saw it as freedom. As clergy, we also have an important responsibility. People rarely return to a sacrament they never hear about. We cannot assume our faithful understand Confession or appreciate its importance. We must preach about God's mercy more often than people's failures. We must speak of the confessional not as a courtroom where people are condemned but as the Father's embrace where sinners are welcomed home.

Our confessionals must be available, our schedules generous, our preaching hopeful, and our demeanor compassionate. Sometimes the greatest invitation is simply seeing a priest joyfully waiting in the confessional before Mass, even if only one person comes.

The faithful should never wonder whether the priest has time to hear their confession. They should know they are always worth the time.

We can also encourage families to rediscover the sacrament together. Imagine the witness of parents bringing their children to Confession, not because they are perfect, but because they know they need God's mercy. Children who see their parents confessing learn one of life's greatest lessons: holiness is not pretending to be without sin; holiness is humbly allowing Christ to forgive us. One day, every one of us will stand before the Lord. On that day, none of us will regret having gone to Confession too often. But many may regret waiting too long.

May we never be afraid to open the door of our hearts to the mercy of Christ. The confessional is not a place where God humiliates us. It is where He lifts us up, restores our dignity, and reminds us that no sin is greater than His love.

Every confession is another beginning. Every absolution is another embrace. Every penitent who leaves the confessional walks away not carrying guilt but carrying grace.

This month, let us give ourself the gift of peace and go to Confession. Whether it has been six months, six years, or sixty years, **Christ is waiting, not to condemn us, but to welcome us home, for His mercy has never stopped searching for us.**



CONGRATULATIONS TO JACQUES BARBOUR

Congratulations to Jacques Barbour who now serves as Vice-President on the National Board of NAM. At the recent NAM Convention in San Diego, the newly formed Board members, with Bishop Mansour, Bishop Zaidan and NAM Spiritual Director Msgr. Constantine, Patty Boulous, NAM Director. Sami Shaia, President, Jacques Barbour, Vice President - President Elect and Eliana Francis, Secretary. Save the Date for NAM 2027 will be hosted by St. Rafka Church in Greer, South Carolina, July 15 -18, 2027.

FEAST OF SAINT SHARBEL PICNIC



The Feast of Saint Sharbel will be celebrated on Sunday, July 19. Weather permitting, we will celebrate Divine Liturgy at the shrine. Immediately following Divine Liturgy, we will have brunch. This year, we are asking people to bring a dish to pass as the following weekend we will celebrate Deacon Jean's Ordination to the Priesthood. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Church or you may contact the church office. Saint Sharbel, pray for us!

ORDINATION OF DEACON JEAN MATTAR

Deacon Jean will be ordained on July 25, 2026, at 5:00 PM, at Our Lady of Purgatory Church. We are asking that everyone **please RSVP by July 11**, so that we may be prepared accordingly. Thank you for your understanding. We are asking if anyone would like to donate the following drinks for the banquet, below is the needs list. Thank you for your help.

- 8 cases small bottled water**
- 2 cases Coke**
- 2 cases Coke Zero**
- 2 cases Sprite**
- 2 cases Orange Crush**
- 1 case Ginger Ale**

LUMINARIES FOR THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED MOTHER MARY

Our parish is pleased to continue the beautiful tradition of Luminaries for Mary for a second year. You are invited to purchase a luminary in honor of someone special or in memory of a loved one. The luminaries will be displayed near the St. Charbel Shrine during the **Vigil Liturgy** on **August 14**, serving as a beautiful tribute to Our Blessed Mother and to those who hold a special place in our hearts.

Cost: \$10.00 per luminary

To purchase a luminary or for more information, please contact:

Jacques Barbour – (508) 725-6705

Amal Barbour – (508) 801-9685

Parish Office – (508) 996-8934

Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to sharing this meaningful tradition with our parish family once again.

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY (EID ALSAYDEE)

We will celebrate the Feast of the **Assumption of the Virgin Mary on Friday, August 14, at 7:00 PM**. Weather permitting, we will celebrate this Divine Liturgy outside in the Saint Sharbel Shrine. There will be dinner immediately following Divine Liturgy. The Social Committee is organizing this dinner which will be "bring a dish to pass." Please see Deacon Jean or Hiba Chdid if you would like to bring a dish to pass. Drinks and Coffee will be provided.

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Saturday, July 11, 4:30 PM, (Feast of Saint Benedict, Abbot). Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Cara Pimentel requested by Norma Barbour and Family. May her soul rest in peace. Liturgy is being offered for the soul of Anthony Cabral requested by Lou and Smitty Cabral. May his soul rest in peace.

Sunday, July 12, 10:30 AM, (Feast of Saints Rufina and Secunda, Feast of Saint Susanna of Rome). Liturgy is being offered for the souls of George F. Thomas requested by the Family. May his soul rest in peace. Liturgy is being for the soul of Charbel Baroody requested by Charles Baroody. May his soul rest in peace.

Tuesday, July 14, 9:00 AM, (Feast of Saint Bonaventure, Doctor of the Church, Feast of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha). Liturgy is being offered for the souls of the deceased members of Victoria Lahoud Family (FM). May their souls rest in peace.

From 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM, Eucharistic Adoration.

Wednesday, July 15, 9:00 AM, (Feast of Saints Cyriacus and Julitta, His Mother).

Thursday, July 16, 9:00 AM, (Feast of the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel).

Saturday, July 18, 4:30 PM, (Feast of Saint Symphorosa and Her Seven Sons). Liturgy is being offered for the souls of Wehbe Wehbe and Rfaa Abi Ramia requested by Rafic Abi Ramia and Family. May their souls rest in peace. Liturgy is being offered for the souls of George and Mary Saba requested by the Family (FM). May their souls rest in peace.

Sunday, July 19, 10:30 AM, (Celebration of Saint Sharbel Feast, Feast of Saint Margaret of Antioch).

WINE AND HOST OFFERING

The altar bread and wine for the month of July is offered for the living and deceased members of the Daher and David Families requested by Mariam David and Family.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION)

Please know that confession is available before liturgies. You may also call to set up an appointment.

THE SANCTUARY CANDLE BURNS FOR....

This week the sanctuary candle burns for a special intention by Mariam David and Family. Anyone who would like to offer the sanctuary candle for a loved one or special intention, this will be offered each week. An offering of a \$10.00 donation is appreciated.

LECTORS FOR JULY, 2026

Saturday, July 11,
Rachael Higgins

Intercessions: Anna & Helen Higgins

Sunday, July 12,

Ann Dupre / Elie Abou Kheir

Saturday, July 18,

Smitty Cabral

Intercessions: Eric Tavares

Sunday, July 19,

Rana Choubah / Halim Choubah

Saturday, July 25,

TBA

Sunday, July 26,

TBA

(If you are unable to read on your given day, please contact Mae Dickinson).

IN OUR PRAYERS

Denise Denault, Theresa Saab, Reggie Thomas, Beverly Landreth, Michael Morad, David Matos, Gayla Matos, Genevieve Tayeh, Nayeli Nassif, Maria Baptista, Sophie Correa, Stephen DaCosta, Kenneth Macedo, Muriel Moline, Patricia Farhat, Ghada Karam, Beverly Parlapiano, Michael Bruce, Debbie Freedenberg, Efrangieh Daou, Sharon Conti, David Techlin, Peter Helmer, Renee Helmer, Jacob Rego, Amal Assaf, Denise Magaletta, Fernanda Thomas, Theresa John, Angela Scorza-Anderson, Annie Peter, Mariam David, Zita Drouin, Lucienne Rodrigues and Edmond Salameh. If anyone is missing, please contact the office.

WEEK OF JULY 04 - 05, 2026

Sunday Collection	\$	718.00
Hall Donations	\$	500.00
Donations	\$	300.00
Total	\$	1,518.00

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY BY SENDING IN YOUR WEEKLY COLLECTIONS VIA MAIL. THIS HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL FOR THE CHURCH. GOD BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

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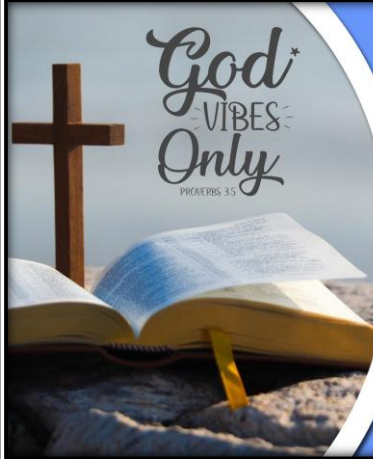


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Joseph & Marie Kenyon

Eternally in our hearts and in our thoughts. We miss seeing your face, hearing your voice, seeing your smile and hearing your laugh. We cherish the day we will join you in GOD's Heavenly Kingdom. We Love you and miss you even more with each passing day.

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