



DIOCESE OF NEWTON
for the Melkite Catholic Church
in the United States of America

Office of the Bishop

October 23, 2023

Bishop François Beyrouti
Diocese of Newton for the Melkite Catholic Church in the United States of America
3 VFW Pkwy
West Roxbury, MA 02132

Dear friend,

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

– 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

As Melkite Catholics, you and I know what it’s like to feel a deep, familial connection with those far away—even with those whom we’ve never met.

That’s because we share the same tradition, the same heritage, and the same destiny. Every time we participate in the Divine Liturgy, we are connected with Our Lord and with one another across the miles and across the centuries.

As I write this letter, I am reflecting on the anniversary of my first year as your bishop—leader of the “local church” in America. I’m grateful for the leadership of Bishop Nicholas and the dedication of so many who have contributed to the growth of our diocese. In this first year, the more than fifty communities of Melkite Catholics across the United States have inspired me with their focus on living as disciples of Christ and sharing their faith in Our Lord, *“for in Him we live and move and have our being”* (Acts 17:28).

Many have also told me frankly of their concerns for the future health of our Church—everything from aging church buildings and struggling ministries in individual parishes to a wider vocations shortage in the diocese as a whole. It is tempting to downplay the struggles we’re facing, but we owe it to one another to look honestly at the reality—the good and the bad—and to deal with it in faith, hope, and charity.

And I write today to ask for your most generous help in addressing these challenges head-on. As shepherd of our local church and its more than fifty communities, I humbly ask for your most serious and prayerful consideration of this appeal.



You and I rightly care for our families, neighbors, and parish communities first and foremost. There is nothing abstract about this love—it is incarnational. It is a manifestation of the True Presence of Christ in the Sacrament of Charity and of unity—the Eucharist. Christ is the one who unites us, and if we do not make this fact the center of our lives, everything else will fray and fracture.

So, in prayer and in conversation with our clergy and laypeople — so many of whom serve our communities with a truly exceptional level of sacrificial love — we developed a plan to address our most pressing needs: vocations and parish health. We must respond with courage and generosity to the Holy Spirit if we are to preserve our sacred and distinctly Melkite Catholic liturgical and spiritual traditions and confront head on the new challenges and realities facing our Church.

Christ calls each of us to serve—in all sorts of capacities—to make us a true *ecclesia*, a living Church. Everyone's vocation is vital in this effort, including young people, married couples, nuns, monks, and the clergy who shepherd our communities and are devoted to the pastoral life of our parishes.

And because I'm asking for your help to make this effort as fruitful as possible, I want to share with you the basic vision.

First, we are reorganizing our efforts to foster and support vocations. We have put together a vocations team and a vocations plan to nourish the faith journey of young people, help them discern God's call, and encourage them to pursue active ministry in the Church as readers, subdeacons, deacons, priests, nun, or monks. You can read about this and other developments on our newly updated website: www.Melkite.org.

Second, we are improving the resources available for local parishes. **Put simply, we want our parishes to be healthy, we want young people active in our churches, and we want to see priests and parish leaders equipped with what they need to serve and thrive.** To make this possible, we are hiring additional staff, adopting new technology, and expanding our administrative infrastructure.

Third, we will dramatically improve communications with all Melkite Catholics and the many who love our Church across the United States. We will remain in an ongoing conversation with all of you about our Church's needs, struggles, and challenges. This dialogue will help keep us open to the many talents of laypeople and clergy within our Church who are eager to collaborate in building a bright future together. As part of this effort, we're updating our database, implementing new standards of transparency, and developing a communications and social media plan for us to remain in more regular contact.

Making this vision a reality will not be easy with all the challenges around us, but challenges are not new to the Church.

As I look around at America, I envision the great Saint Cyprian surveying Carthage—a city whose rapidly advancing erosion was overshadowed by wealth and power. This great saint of hope knew well that Christ was the answer to what ailed the people. This would require a Church on fire with love for souls, unafraid and united.

“God is one and Christ is one, and his Church is one, and the faith is one, and the Christian people is joined into a substantial unity of body by the cement of concord. Unity cannot be severed. And what is one by its nature cannot be separated.”

- On the Unity of the Church, 23.

Now, this is where your generosity and love for our Church can have a massive impact. Your prayers and contribution will make this vision a reality. God knows our hearts, and He knows our means. He simply asks us to give sacrificially—to offer Him in trust the gifts He has given us, so that He can multiply them.

You already do so with your parish, and for this I am deeply grateful. **Now I ask that you help us at an even greater level.** Our degraded culture does its best to hide the truth through its never-ending noise, distractions, and temptations. We need committed, courageous, and devoted servants of Our Lord like you to join us in fostering vocations and building healthy parishes so we can strengthen our Church now and for years to come.

By responding to this call together—supporting our seminarians and deacon candidates, forming our youth in our faith, providing for our retired priests, and publishing SOPHIA magazine—we assure the growth and strength of our Melkite Catholic Church in the United States of America.

In the spirit of unity, of fearlessness and complete trust in God, I ask in our annual appeal for you to give as generously as you can—a gift of \$100, \$250, or even \$500 or more, if you're able. We cannot forget that the same God who asks us to give sacrificially will not fail us when we call upon Him.

I thank you for your prayers, your consideration of this appeal, and for all you are already doing to serve God in your daily life and in the faith life of our communities. May God bless and reward you and your family for your generosity and dedication.

Your Shepherd in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "François". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Reverend Bishop François Beyrouti

Eparchial Bishop of Newton for the Melkite Catholic Church in the United States of America

P.S. Friend, let us work together to share our gifts that will strengthen our communities as we engage the challenges ahead of us with joy and excitement. Your most generous gift today will have an impact that lasts beyond our generation. Thank you for your prayers and your kind consideration of this appeal.