



**Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles**  
Office of the Bishop

**THURSDAY OF THE MYSTERIES**  
**APRIL 13, 2017 MESSAGE TO PRIESTS**  
**BISHOP A. ELIAS ZAIDAN**  
**EPARCHY OF OUR LADY OF LEBANON OF LOS ANGELES**

**“Do this in remembrance of Me.”**

My dear brother Priests,

In his first letter to the Corinthians (11:24), St. Paul repeats the words of Jesus at the Last Supper and concludes “Do this in remembrance of Me.” It has been entrusted to us, as priests, to indeed do just that. At his ordination the newly ordained priest is entrusted with the Eucharist and he carries the Lord on his head. The symbolism is overwhelming: The Eucharist is the summit of the priesthood! We are commanded to do what the Lord Himself did; we are to bring the Bread of Life to the People of God. This aspect of our ordained ministry is central.

As he pronounced the words “*Do this...*” Jesus' thoughts must have stretched out to the successors of the Apostles and their collaborators, the presbyters, as those who would continue the mission by distributing the food of life to the very ends of the earth. In this way, then, dear brother priests, we are called to personally do as Jesus did and feed the children of the Church with his precious Body and Blood. In our Maronite Church this year has been proclaimed the “Year of Witness and Martyrs”. We are Christ’s witnesses in the world; we are witnesses to His love and salvation. In his letter to the Romans, St. Ignatius of Antioch wrote: “Permit me to be an imitator of the Passion of my God!” St. Ignatius thus expresses in words that the longing for union with the Lord.

This week I blessed the Holy Oils of Baptism, the Sick and the Sacred Chrism. I thought about you and prayed for each one of you and for all God’s People especially those who will be anointed with these oils. On this Thursday of the Mysteries, we will commemorate our priesthood in a most solemn way. I extend my best wishes and my prayers for you. The Second Vatican Council tells us: “In the mystery of the Eucharistic sacrifice...the priests exercise their principal function...because the priests alone have received from Christ Himself the formidable power to render present, sacramentally, His Body and His Blood, to perpetuate through the centuries the sacrifice of the Cross.” (*Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, n. 13).

Quoting from the Ordination Ritual of the Priest: “May the Lord God bless you among the priests of the holy Church, of the altars of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles,

and among the holy fathers who protected what was entrusted to them, and were worthy of the heavenly gift: In the name of the Father ✠ and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” I give thanks to the Lord for your unselfish ministry and devoted dedication.

Please pray for me as I pray for you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*+ A.E. Zaidan*

+A. Elías Zaidan

Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles