



# MARONITE EPARCHY OF AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND AND OCEANIA

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Maronite Eparchy of Australia ordains two new deacons**

**Sydney Australia, 17 April 2023** - The Maronite Eparchy of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania celebrated a new blessing for its Church on the eve of Hosanna Sunday (Palm Sunday); the ordination to the diaconate of Ghassan Nakhoul and Sayed Issac.

Ordained Subdeacons together on 1 December 2018, Ghassan and Sayed's vocation journeys are distinctive but marked by the blessings of the Lord all throughout. On Saturday 1 April, they were surrounded by their families, friends and the community, to mark and celebrate a new chapter in their vocation.

Referring first to the Gospel reading of the day, Bishop Antoine Charbel Tarabay, Eparch of the Maronite Eparchy of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania said, "This is a momentous occasion for these two men and for our entire community. Today, Ghassan and Sayed are responding to the call of discipleship and to 'come and see', just as Jesus' first disciples did (John 1:39). For as deacons, they will be the servants of the Word and of the Altar, proclaiming the Gospel and assisting in the celebration of the Eucharist. They are called to reflect the love of the Father in the midst of our community.

"And fatherhood is not a new notion to our deacons as they are both fathers to wonderful children and blessed with wives who support them in their mission and vocation."

Father of four Ghassan Nakhoul is an accomplished journalist and author, having gained recognition for his work and success in his career path. His role and service in the church are the closest to his heart. He has written or translated several spiritual articles, liturgies and rites, including a book about Patriarch Douaihy, who providentially became one step closer to beautification on the same weekend.

Sayed Issac's vocation journey began 10 years ago when he began discerning his vocation in 2013. After a long and successful career as a solicitor, the father of two has served as a Eucharistic Minister and Subdeacon at St Raymond's Parish in Auburn, St Joseph's Parish in Croydon and at Our Lady of Lebanon Co-Cathedral. He is also a valued member of the Chancery Team in his role as Business Manager and In-House counsel.

Addressing the two new Deacons, Bishop Tarabay said, "As you serve the Church and the people of God, I know you'll always remember that you are called to follow Jesus and to bring His love to all whom you encounter.

"May you be filled with the grace and strength of the Holy Spirit as you take on this sacred ministry. May your vocation lead others to deepen their own relationship with God, to understand the beauty and depth of our Maronite Catholic faith, and to share with them the richness of our liturgical tradition and the wisdom of our spiritual heritage."

Let us pray for our new Deacons and with them as one community, so that we can all exclaim like the Apostle Andrew: "we have found the Messiah!" (John 1:41).

ENDS

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