

People Are Born To Shine!

A newsletter rooted in the Christian faith created to inspire and support all people, irrespective of nationality, race, and religion.



LETTER FROM FATHER AGHAPIOS

Jesus is Born... He is Born... Hallelujah

The Story of Redemption

This is a symbolic story out of which we derive a Christmas lesson which might be beneficial for our salvation. It is said about a wood gatherer who collected wood from the forest and, on a very cold winter day, decided to light the fireplace with wood in order to warm up.

After a few minutes, the wise man started to cuddle this forgotten piece of wood which had been prepared for its death by fire. He put his mouth on its opening, blowing in beautiful melodies.

One piece of wood asked insistently not to be thrown into the fire, but he refused saying that it was not useful and had been prepared for this purpose. It begged him, saying that it was still in good condition, it has a good structure and does not like flames and fire.

He rebuked it and cursed it saying, "You are worth nothing and have no value."

At this point, a respectable old man interfered in the course of the conversation and asked the wood gatherer for this forgotten piece of wood, but refusal prevailed. All the old man could do was to offer to purchase the wood. The wood gatherer asked for a very large sum of money, and told the wise old man, "You have paid a great price for something that is not worth all this."

As soon as the old man received the piece of wood, he took his knife and started to carve, cutting its edges and cleaning it, making the piece of wood beg him to leave it alone, without all of this pain. The old man was telling it in a kind manner, "Just wait a little while..." continuing his work



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Basic Street Safety for Children

Ensuring that children have a good understanding of basic street safety when they start walking around without you.

Kids Can Help Save Trees

Trees provide food, fuel, medicine and oxygen. Can we return the favor?

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www.najicherfanfoundation.org

NCF CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

Christmas Mission 2014

For the 6th consecutive year, volunteers from **The Naji Cherfan Foundation** toured selective hospitals in Beirut and Jounieh on December 24th and 25th with one important mission—to celebrate the birth of Jesus with those unable to celebrate at home. Patients and their families, nurses and doctors and all the medical care teams working during Christmas had the chance to celebrate with cheers, prayers and joy!

The Naji Cherfan Foundation teamed up with Father Milad Soukayem from the Parish of the Cross and the Chapel of Saint Jean-Paul II, and the Vanguarders of the Virgin Mary, Bzoummar, and Father Joseph Soueid of St. Takla Church in Sed El Boucheriyei, and several hospitals were filled with Christmas caroling, prayers and hope!

“It was such a special moment for the young people that joined from my parish to live this unique experience when others of their peers were totally consumed with shopping and wrapping gifts!” said Father Soukayem.

During the visits, Bibles, prayers, and rosaries, along with chocolates and sweets were distributed to everybody, and spiritual games were played with the patients celebrating Jesus’ birth.

“Patients and nurses were so happy to see us and we took our time to stay and chat in each room and in each department, which made our visit even more wonderful and joyful.” said Father Soueid.

“It was one of the most beautiful days of this season, and I wish I could live this experience everyday!” said Houeida Gerges from **The Naji Cherfan Foundation** team.

Merry Christmas!

PICTURED RIGHT (TOP TO BOTTOM):

Father Milad Soukayem and the NCF group visiting the Intensive Care Unit (1) Father Milad Soukayem and the NCF group singing hallelujah in a patient’s room (2) Father Joseph Soueid giving blessings to a sick baby (3) Father Joseph Soueid and NCF group visiting a patient’s room (4)



NCF Christmas Theater

Every year **The Naji Cherfan Foundation (NCF)** brings Christmas to many orphans and vulnerable families by inviting charities and NGOs to a Christmas play. 2014 was no exception. 740 children were invited from several areas in Lebanon, and four plays were offered in order to achieve our mission. The NCF teamed up with Father Elias Maroun Gharios, Father Joseph Soueid, Father Samir Elias, The Christian Association of Hadath, The Orthodox Archdiocese of Tripoli and Koura and the Urban Renaissance Society Charity in Amyoun.

Charities and parishes invited were the parish of the Lady of Hadath (Hadath), and Mar Takla (Sid el Bouchrieh), along with the Vanguard of the Virgin Mary, the parish of the Annunciation Church (Jal el Dib), the House of the Divine Providence and Mission de Vie.

Father Gharios, the founder of the House of the Divine Providence, praised the work of **The Naji Cherfan Foundation** and commended its president, George Cherfan, on the love and devotion to the cause of supporting the poorest of the poor while spreading the words of Jesus.

Our very own dedicated volunteer, Joyce Abou Jaoudei wrote and directed the play, and 19 teenagers from Sunday school performed on stage.

Joyce said, "My only wish is to be wholeheartedly available every year to work with **The Naji Cherfan Foundation** and spread the words of Jesus through my Christmas plays, as I wouldn't be able to imagine living Christmas in any other way! Thank you for **The Naji Cherfan Foundation** for allowing me to be part of this blessing!"

Merry Christmas!



*Scene from the play (above)
Father Gharios' closing speech (right)*



OUR DAILY BREAD

The Light of the World

In the Czech Republic and other places, the Christmas celebration includes “Christingles.” A Christingle is an orange, representing the world, with a candle placed in the top of it to symbolize Christ, the light of the world. A red ribbon encircles the orange, symbolizing the blood of Jesus. Four toothpicks with dried fruits are placed through the ribbon into the sides of the orange, representing the fruits of the earth.

This simple visual aid vividly represents the purpose behind Christ’s coming—to bring light into the darkness and to redeem a broken world by shedding His blood.

In John’s account of Christ’s life, the disciple describes Jesus as the Light of the world. He wrote of Christ: “That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world” (John 1:9). Not only did Christ the Light come to penetrate our world’s darkness, but He is also “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (v.29).

Think of it! The baby of Bethlehem became the living, risen Christ who has rescued us from our sin. And so John instructs us to “walk in the light as He is in the light” (1 John 1:7). May all who have experienced His rescue find in Jesus the peace of walking in His light.

The newborn Christ-child became the Light of the world and the Lamb of God.

Source: odb.org



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Will You Further NCF's Work?

The Naji Cherfan Foundation was founded after the passing of the beloved Naji Cherfan. Our main goal is to praise the Lord through community work.

The foundation works to improve the quality of life of the poorest of the poor of all ages, both those who are healthy and those with health problems, and those with brain injury of any kind, resulting from accident, stroke, etc, while promoting Christian values.

If you like the work NCF is doing and wish to participate, we invite you to become a member of our Board. The goal is to share our inspiration and activities in your country. Please contact us for more information at +961 (0)4 522221.

info@najicherfanfoundation.org

Quotable!

“Don’t ask God to guide your steps if you are not willing to move your feet.”

—Dale Partridge

How to Teach Children Basic Street Safety when Walking

Children don't have the same ability to judge distances, speed, noise direction of traffic and vehicles as teens and adults can. Therefore, it's really important to ensure that children have a good understanding of basic street safety when they start walking around the local and city streets without you accompanying them.

Explain to children why paying attention to certain things when walking is important. This doesn't just mean the obvious hazards like speeding cars, but also less evident ones such as cars coming around corners suddenly or vehicles not stopping at pedestrian crossings.

Teach your children the basic rules about being a pedestrian while you're still walking with them, so that much of this understanding feels like second nature to the child. In this way, by the time your child starts walking down and across streets without your help, none of the pedestrian road rules should come as a surprise to them.

Instill the need in children to always stop before stepping onto the road. Each time they stop, tell them that they must look both ways and listen for vehicles that they cannot see. Train them to use both their eyes and their hearing together when checking for traffic.

Have your children learn to make eye contact with drivers before they cross the road. This way they can be assured that the driver has noted their presence.

Request that your children learn and obey all traffic signals. Help them to learn the meanings of the traffic and road signs when you walk together; the younger they learn, the easier it will be for them later. Play games with



the signs, such as "I spy" or "Guess the meaning of the sign," etc. Praise them for getting it right.

Teach your children to be careful when walking past driveways, especially hidden and obstructed driveways. Remind them that people backing out cannot see very well and don't always think to look for children passing by and sometimes don't even slow down. The same goes for alleys and street corners. Always insist that your child stay alert and not expect drivers to be doing the same.

Make sure that your children understand the dangers of crossing between parked cars or other vehicles. Tell them that they must never do this as they cannot see a car that might be passing swiftly past the gap they're trying to cross from, as well as not being able to clearly see what is happening on the other side of the road.

Teach children to always cross at pedestrian crossings and intersections, even where this means an extra walk. Explain to them that the exercise is good for them and that it is always better to be safe than sorry all for the sake of minor shortcut.

Source: <http://www.wikihow.com/>

JESUS IS BORN *continued from page 1*

in carving it and piercing it while it was screaming in pain. The answer remained. "Wait." The old man carved deeper, all the while asking the wood to be patient.

After a few minutes, the wise man started to cuddle this forgotten piece of wood which had been prepared for its death by fire. He put his mouth on its opening, blowing in beautiful melodies. It made the wood gatherer and all the passersby admire it because it became a great flute out of which came beautiful sounds and melodies to the point of making people shiver when hearing them.

The wood gatherer said: "What have you done to that piece of wood? It is extremely stunning and beautiful! May I have it back?" The old man answered, "No, and a thousand times, no. It is mine."

This is our story with Jesus Christ. This is the lesson of Christmas. We were all in sin, thrown to death and fire. But Christ refused to leave us, so He came to our earth as a splendid child, greater than all the wise and elderly of the world. He paid a great price for us. He sacrificed Himself, lowering Himself from his high glory and taking on a body like ours as a bitter cross, in order to raise our nature. "God became flesh to make man divine." He shed His blood as a price from the moment of His birth in flesh. He went up to Heaven after He reformed us, knowing that this world might sting and prune us a little, and might severely chop off our bulges, but in the end we shall become surmounting greater than all the flutes of the world. So we become Messianic in Christ where the Holy Spirit blows in us the melody

of His glory knowing "that the pains of the present cannot be measured by the future glory to be known in us." So we become Kingdom, Heavenly, Godly and magnificent melodies and songs praising God who lowered Himself in swaddling clothes like shrouds, buying us by His gracious blood through His Incarnation.

Jesus is born... He is born... so that we are born in Him to be transformed to godly melodies. And so as the procession of the Heavenly Kingdom begins in us as from now.

Amen.

*Father Aghapios Naous – Saint
Elias Church for the Greek Orthodox –
Rabieh – Mtayleb*

Prayer Corner

The day of joy returns, Father in Heaven, and crowns another year with peace and good will.

Help us rightly to remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the wise men.

—by Robert Louis Stevenson



7 Ways Kids Can Help Save Trees

If you're a fan of nature and the environment, you're probably already doing things to take care of the planet—on Earth Day and every day. As part of that effort, let's discuss ways kids can help save trees.

Forests cover almost a third of the earth's surface, including some 700+ million acres in the U.S. alone. They're home to a huge variety of plants and animals, and provide people all over the world with food, fuel, medicine and more.

But perhaps most importantly, forests provide us with oxygen and ensure that the earth's temperature is livable.

What can we do to return the favor? Here are a few simple ways kids can help save trees.

Use paper wisely

We can save trees from being cut down by using less paper. How can kids help?

- Make a space for reusable paper. Dedicate a spot in your home for paper that's blank on one side, then reuse it before you recycle it. Put the kids in charge!
- Use scrap paper (preferably recycled, too) for coloring, drawing, sketching, etc.
- Use both sides of paper (this one works great for homework.)
- Use cloth napkins.
- Choose a reusable lunch box instead of a paper bag, complete with reusable containers, metal utensils, a cloth napkin and a reusable water bottle.

Play and create with trash

Little explorers love playing with cardboard boxes, empty toilet paper and paper towel rolls—even shoeboxes. Boxes can become forts and superhero headquarters. Toilet paper rolls turn into binoculars and bird feeders, and paper towel rolls become spotting scopes and periscopes.

Borrow, share and donate books

We read a lot around here, which translates into tons of books—and therefore lots of paper. The library is a great alternative to buying new, as are friends who are willing to swap books. Instead of holding on to books when



your kids have outgrown them, donate them to a used bookstore, library or reading program.

Plant a tree

Although planting trees is a popular Earth Day activity, fall is the season to plant trees and shrubs. Do your homework to make sure you pick the right tree for your space.

Visit the forest

Our favorite way to pay homage to trees and forests is to spend time with them. Visit a local state or national park—many of which feature protected forest lands.

Stay on the trails

When you visit the forest, stay on marked trails. This will minimize your impact on wilderness areas, preserving them for future generations.

Get your Smokey on

Remember Smokey the Bear? He's still around, helping to prevent wildfires—which, by the way are one of the greatest threats to forests. Smokey's message is worth repeating:

- Only you can prevent wildfires
- Always be careful with fire
- Never play with matches or lighters
- Always watch your campfire
- Make sure your campfire is completely out before leaving it

Source: goexplorenature.com

How I Remember Naji...

The following is an email Naji wrote to his family in Athens.

"When I am away from people, I miss them more, and I realize how much I love them. If you keep on asking "why and why," you and only you will find the answer. The question you always ask is 'Who am I?' You find this answer by elimination.

'I'm not a body, so what am I? I'm not a soul, so what am I?' I had to stop taking things for granted, especially my family. If I use my illness to get something, especially from the ones who love me, at one point they will get fed up and just ignore me. I have to consider myself a normal person and not handicapped. I also

think that illusion is the ignorance of reality. It's the confusion of the mind that takes the illusion for reality. My illusion of perfection gave me the incentive for working harder. Illusion is what people take for life. The key word to life is consciousness or awareness. Awareness of who we are... who we *really* are.

I said that you had to watch your thoughts and observe them, and if you weren't able to observe your thoughts directly, observe in what you say or do. When you say you feel good and you do feel good, it means your thoughts are under control. I know I needed to relax and not be controlled by my thoughts. This is called self mastering. I have a



lot of frustration and nobody knows what I'm going through. People and doctors gave me no hope at one time, but I give myself a shorter period of time for full recovery. I know I'm not accepting the fact that I'm not the same old Naji."



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
to all of our readers... from NCF

People Are Born To Shine!

People are Born To Shine is a bi-monthly, electronic newsletter owned by The Naji Cherfan Foundation focusing on spirituality and health. The objective of *People are Born to Shine* is to raise awareness among our readers on health challenges and disease prevention, while inspiring them to live a fuller, more abundant life guided by Christian values. This newsletter is dedicated to people of all ages, those who are healthy and those with health problems and those with brain injury of any kind, resulting from accident, stroke, etc.

The content has been carefully selected from internet sources considered reliable and accurate to bring you good news of health and spiritual well being, however The Naji Cherfan Foundation assumes no responsibility for inaccurate information. The NCF would like to recognize the devoted work of its volunteers, mainly Marianne Debs, Me. Kamal Rahal, Me. Harold Alvarez, Zeina Costantine, Joyce Abou Jaoude, Rita Kassis, Marleine Nassrany, Diala Ghostine Nassrany, Dima Rbeiz, Father Joseph Abdel Sater, Father Joseph Soueid, Reine Kassis, Nabil Khoury, Roland Khoury, Father Elia Chalhoub, Valéria de Proença, Athena and Christina Georgotas, Violette Nakhle, and all the field volunteers who are supporting NCF in spreading the words of Jesus through their institutions, churches, hospitals, establishments, etc.

This issue is available in Arabic, English, Greek, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. The NCF management and staff are very grateful for the efforts of the Chief Editors who are volunteering to translate and edit the Newsletter into several languages namely Cristina Monfeli and Father Carlo Pioppi for the Italian Language, Isabelle Boghossian for the Greek language, Leopoldine Theophanopoulos for the German language, Maria Goreti for the Portuguese language, Myriam Salibi for the French language, Professor Lydia & Ambassador Alejandro Diaz for the Spanish language, Roly Lakeman for the Dutch language, Sawsan Bechara for the Arabic language.

For subscriptions, please sign up through our website: www.najicherfanfoundation.org or call us at +961 (0)4 522 221.

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