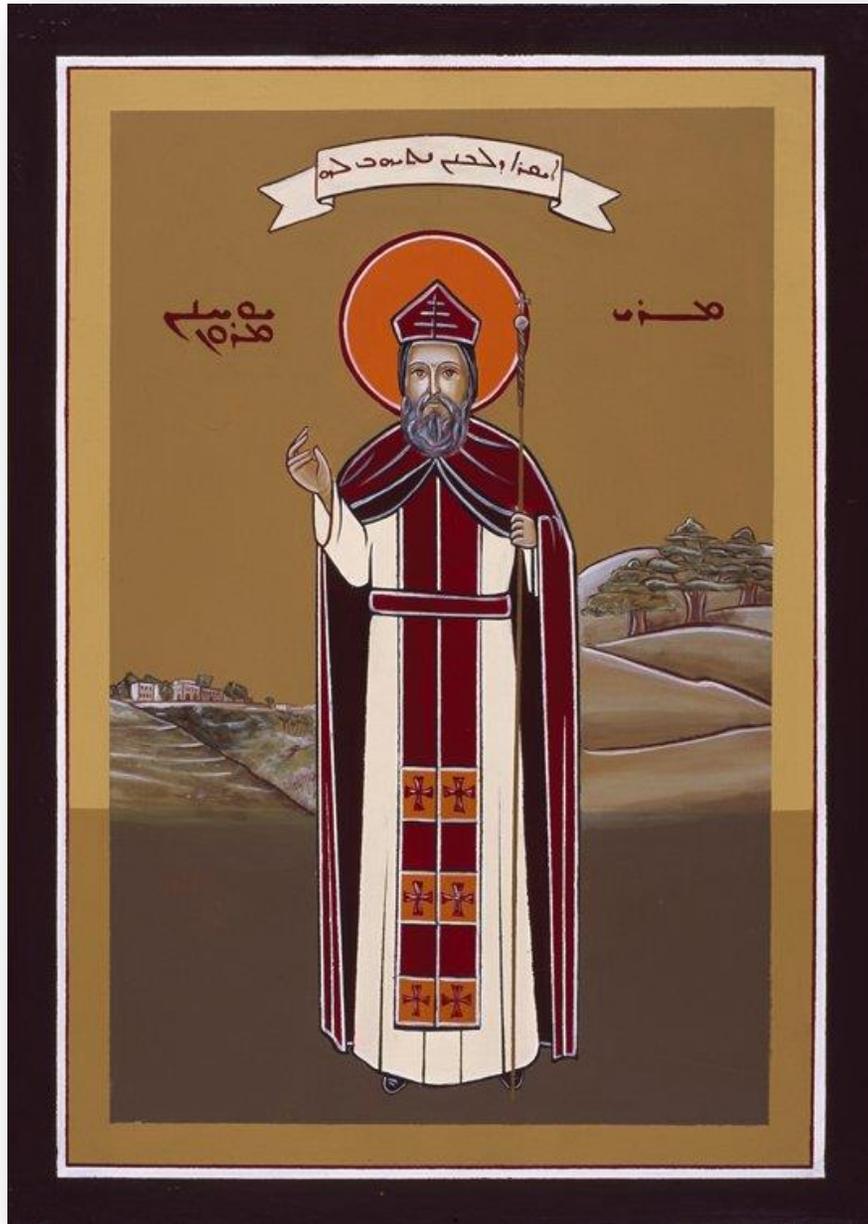


## Saint John Maron - - مار يوحنا مارون



St. John Maron's feast Day is celebrated on March 2.

John Maron was born in the seventh century and died around the year 707. He was a Syriac monk and a priest at the Monastery of Saint Maron in Syria. He added the name "Maron" to his own name.

It is believed that he was ordained a bishop in 676, and was assigned to Mount Lebanon with a mission to keep the Maronites united in the true faith and to support the faithful in an area being invaded by the Arabs.

When the Patriarchal See of Antioch became vacant due to the Arab expansion, John Maron was chosen as the new Patriarch of Antioch and all the East. It is said that he received the approval of Pope Sergius I, and became the first Maronite Patriarch of the oldest see in Christianity.

The Byzantine Emperor, Justinian II, feared the growing power of the Maradite army, who were mostly Maronites, and was angered that his approval had not been sought for the appointment of John Maron as Patriarch of Antioch. The Emperor sent his army to defeat the Maradites, and they managed to win battles against them, overrun Antioch, and destroy the monastery there, killing approximately 500 monks in the process.

It is believed that the Emperor's army captured John Maron, but that he escaped to Lebanon, and Justinian's army was defeated there. John Maron then established the monastery of *Reesh Moran* (Head of Our Lord) in Kefar Hay, Lebanon, and moved his see to Mount Lebanon. For their own protection, the Maradites sealed themselves off from the outside world and, in the mountains of Lebanon, established their own national and religious identity as Maronite Catholics, with John Maron, the Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, as their leader.