



CYPRUS RELIGIOUS GROUPS

THE **Maronites** OF CYPRUS



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Maronites piously pass under the icon of Prophet Elias in Myrtou (1959).

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Foreword

Under the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites of Cyprus are recognized as “religious groups”. In a 1960 referendum, the three religious groups were asked to choose to belong to either the Greek Cypriot or the Turkish Cypriot community. They opted to belong to the Greek Cypriot community. The members of all three groups, therefore, enjoy the same privileges, rights and benefits as the members of the Greek Cypriot community, including voting rights, eligibility for public office and election to official government and state positions at all levels. Moreover, the Armenian, Latin and Maronite religious groups, which vote in the Parliamentary Elections as part of the Greek Cypriot community, elect also one Representative each from their ranks to the Cyprus House of Representatives. These non-voting Representatives attend meetings but do not participate in the House deliberations. Nevertheless, they are consulted on legislative issues of particular interest to their respective group.

The series of publications “Cyprus Religious Groups” is intended as a basic overview, an introductory profile, on the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites of Cyprus. These short publications are by no means exhaustive on the subject and do not deal with differences of opinion and interpretation that may exist among scholars and other experts on issues related to the three groups.

This publication series, initiated by the Press and Information Office, has been undertaken with the close cooperation of the Representatives of the three religious groups in the House of Representatives, and their significant contribution is deeply appreciated. They kindly undertook the preparation of the text and also provided the photographic material. They, therefore, deserve the credit and are also responsible for the content. The Press and Information Office undertook the overall coordination and production of the publications including editing, designing and printing.

It is our hope that this series will stimulate more public and scholarly interest about the Armenian, the Latin and the Maronite religious groups of Cyprus.

Director
Press and Information Office

A Message from the Representative of the Maronite Religious Group in the House of Representatives, Mr Antonis Haji Roussos



Dear reader,

The publication you hold in your hands presents, in brief, the Maronite community of Cyprus: its history, its cultural identity, its presence and its contribution to Cypriot society.

The history of the Maronites is a story of persecution and of the struggle of the Maronites to preserve their faith, their freedom and their very existence. Cyprus was their refuge in the late 7th century when, because of Arab raids in Syria, they immigrated to the island. Today the Maronites of Cyprus are refugees again, as a result of the 1974 invasion of Cyprus by Turkey. All of the island's Maronite villages (Asomatos, Ayia Marina, Karpasha and Kormakitis) are still under Turkish military occupation.

The most serious problem the Maronite community of Cyprus faces is its survival as an entity and the preservation of its identity. The community underwent a radical change as a result of the 1974 invasion of Cyprus by Turkey and the forcible dislocation and detachment of the Maronites from their villages and, consequently, their churches and schools. Since 1974, the Maronites of Cyprus have been struggling for their survival. With the support of the government of Cyprus, however, and an intensive effort on the part of the Maronites themselves, the Maronites today constitute an organised community, active in the cultural, social and financial sectors of our homeland. Nevertheless, the Maronites' desire remains to return to their villages and to coexist harmoniously with all of the island's diverse communities in a reunited homeland.

I hope this informative publication will contribute to the effort to inform and to better understand the Maronites. It is published in the hope that it will promote multiculturalism and cultivate respect for diversity; that it will contribute to the peaceful coexistence of all of the island's communities and continued cooperation between them. On behalf of the Maronite community, I wish to express warm thanks to the Press and Information Office for taking the initiative to issue this publication and to the government of Cyprus for its longstanding support of our community.

A Brief History



● The chapel of the Virgin Mary in Kambyli.

Byzantine Era: The first appearance of Maronites in Cyprus dates to the late 7th century (686 AD), during the reign of Byzantine Emperor Justinian II – the Maronites arrived on the island in flight from Arab raids and religious clashes in Syria and Lebanon. Cyprus became a safe haven for the Maronites, who continued to arrive on the island up until the early 8th century, choosing to immigrate to Cyprus whenever they faced severe pressure from their religious opponents. In 938 AD, after the Arab destruction of Saint Maron’s Monastery in Apamea, Syria, a large wave of Maronites left the region for a number of neighbouring countries, amongst them Cyprus; it was also during this period that the Maronite Patriarchate was relocated to Lebanon. In 1090 the Maronites established a monastery dedicated to Saint John the Chrysostom in the village of Koutsovendis in the Kyrenia district.

Frankish Era: A large wave of Maronites immigrated to the island in the late 12th century, after the purchase of Cyprus by the Frankish King of Jerusalem, Guy de Lusignan, in 1192. The Frankish King, who wished to establish a Western-type feudal kingdom on the island, encouraged the settlement of Maronites to bolster the Catholic presence on the island, but also to use them as military garrisons. The Maronites enjoyed special privileges under this administration and their number increased to about 60.000. In 1224 they resided in 62 villages, mainly around the Pentadactylos mountain range. By the early 14th century, their number increased to about 80.000 in 72 villages, many of which they founded themselves. During the Frankish Era, Maronites established the Monastery of Saint George of Attalou in the Kharcha region on the Pentadactylos mountain range. It was also during this period that the Maronite Archbishopric of Cyprus was established, with Nicosia as its seat (1316).



● Rare photograph from Kormakitis square (early 1930s). The old Saint George's church is visible in the background.

Venetian Era: In 1489 Cyprus became a colony of Venice and remained so for almost a century, until 1570. The harsh administration of the Venetians, in combination with the calamities that hit the island and the Muslim raids, were an impediment to the development and prosperity of the Maronites of Cyprus. Many Maronites were forced to convert to the Latin rite to survive, while others were persecuted. By the end of the Venetian Era, the number of Maronite villages had been reduced to 33.

Ottoman Era: The Ottoman rule of Cyprus, beginning in 1570-1571, was a tremendous threat to the Maronite community. The Ottomans recognised the Orthodox Church as the only representative Christian Church on the island and persecuted the Maronites. In the face of the harshness of the Ottoman administration of Cyprus, a large number of Maronites were forced to either become Muslims or to join the Orthodox Church. Many Maronites became Linobambaki (Crypto-Christians), hiding their worship and holding onto the hope that the Ottomans would leave Cyprus. In 1572 there were approximately 8,000 Maronites in 23 villages; by 1686 there were only 150 Maronites in just eight villages (Asomatos, Ayia Marina, Kambyli, Karpasha, Khrysidha, Klepini, Kormakitis and Vouno). The Maronite Archbishop was forced to leave Cyprus for Lebanon, where the Maronite Archbishopric was relocated in 1673. As a result of the Archbishop's departure, the island's Maronite churches were under the jurisdiction of Franciscan priests between 1690 and 1759 and under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Kyrenia between 1759 and 1840.



● *The picturesque chapel of Saint George of the Seed in Kormakitis.*

In 1735 two Maronite monks were sent to Cyprus, Cypriot Petros and Lebanese Macarius. These two pioneering monks built the Prophet Elias Monastery near the village of Ayia Marina Skyllouras. The number of Maronites gradually increased and by 1776 the community numbered 503 persons in 10 villages and in the towns of Nicosia and Larnaka. Thanks to the intervention of the French Consul, the Maronites returned in 1840 under the jurisdiction of their Archbishop, who resided in Lebanon. He was represented in Cyprus by a Chorepiscopus (a church official, below the rank of a Bishop, whose jurisdiction is confined to rural districts). During the Tanzimat period (1839-1876), a period of fundamental reforms within the Ottoman Empire, the Maronite Chorepiscopus participated in the Administrative Council (Mejlis Idare). The 19th century found about 1.500 Maronites inhabiting six villages: Asomatos, Ayia Marina, Kambyli, Karpasha, Kormakitis and Vouno.

British Era: The British period, 1878-1960, definitively changed the prevalent political and social conditions in Cyprus. The progressive administration and the promotion of pluralism and religious freedom bolstered the smaller communities of Cyprus. The Maronites, who were a closed society, took advantage of these favourable conditions and the urban development that accompanied them and many moved from their villages to the towns, particularly Nicosia. They retained, however, a special link with their land and villages, only four of which had remained: Asomatos, Ayia Marina, Karpasha and Kormakitis. Those who remained in the villages were mainly engaged in agriculture and farming, while those who moved to the towns practised liberal professions or found employment in the private or public sector. Modest and industrious, the Maronites have always contributed to the progress of Cyprus through their work and volunteer activities. A number of Maronites even volunteered during the World Wars (1914-1918 and 1939-1945).



● The Prophet Elias Monastery near Ayia Marina Skylouras had for centuries been the Maronites' spiritual centre (1945).



● From the restoration of the Virgin Mary church in Kamyli (1956).



● Saint Marina's church in Ayia Marina Skylouras (2010).



● Saint George's cathedral at Kormakitis square.

The new favourable conditions facilitated the demographic growth of the Maronite community and helped improve the quality of life of the Maronites. The community developed culturally and socially, establishing organised groups, churches, associations and schools. In 1928 Kormakitis and Ayia Marina each established a Cooperative Credit Society, amongst the first in Cyprus. The Asomatos Co-Op followed in 1929, the Karpasha Co-Op in 1930. Today, only the Kormakitis Co-Op remains in operation.

Independence Era: With the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960, Maronites were recognised as a religious group and were represented by an elected Representative in the Greek Communal Chamber. This was a result of the 1960 referendum in which they decided to belong to the Greek-Cypriot community, along with the Republic's other two constitutionally recognised religious groups, the Armenians and the Latins (Articles 2 and 109 of the Constitution). The Maronites, according to Article 109 of



● Maronite Vicar General, Fr. John Foradaris, welcomes Governor Sir Hugh Foot and his wife Sylvia in Kormakitis (1959).



● Archbishop Elias Farah and Chorepiscopus John Foradaris welcome President Makarios in Kormakitis (1960).

the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, were represented in the Greek Communal Chamber by a member of the Chamber elected by and from within their community. As a result of the inter-communal clashes between Greek and Turkish Cypriots in 1963-1964, the Greek Communal Chamber was abolished in 1965, and since then the Maronite community has been



● Saint Sharbel's church in Limassol.



● Photograph from the 2007 pilgrimage to the ruined Monastery of Prophet Elias.



● The 15th century wooden cross, which is kept at the Holy Cross church in Karpasha.



● Visit of Lady Sylvia Foot at Kormakitis School for Girls (1959).

represented in the House of Representatives by an elected Representative (Law 12/1965).

The Maronites were only slightly affected during the 1963-1964 inter-communal clashes between Greek and Turkish Cypriots; among the community's minimal

casualties of the conflict was the Maronite church of the Virgin Mary in the village of Kambyli, which was seized and converted into a grocery store. However, the Maronite community sustained a serious blow as a result of the 1974 Turkish invasion: all Maronite villages were occupied by the invaders, rendering 80

● View of Turkish-occupied Asomatos.



percent of the island's Maronites refugees, while about 5 percent remained enclaved in Asomatos, Karpasha and Kormakitis. Seven Maronites were killed during the war and one is still missing. The Turkish Air Force bombed the renowned Prophet Elias Monastery and the village of Ayia Marina and seized the following churches: Sacred Heart of Jesus in Famagusta, Saint Anthony in Kythrea, Saint Romanos in Vouno, the Virgin Mary in Kambyli and the Virgin Mary of Marki. The village of Ayia Marina Skyllouras was taken over by the Turkish military authorities and was turned into a military zone – it remains inaccessible to this day. Access to the village of Asomatos, in the Kyrenia district, is also restricted, and its inhabitants are allowed into the village only on Sundays to celebrate Mass at the church of Archangel Michael.

Tied to their land and unsure of the future of their community away from their villages and churches, a number of Maronites chose to remain in the occupied area, despite the harshness of life under occupation. In 1975 there were 979 enclaved Maronites. Over time and in the face of myriad difficulties, including the lack of educational institutions, many Maronites, particularly the younger ones, settled in the government controlled areas of Cyprus. In 1985 the number of enclaved Maronites shrank to 332, then to 234 in 1995; today in the village of Kormakitis there are about 120 enclaved elderly people, 15 in Karpasha and only one in Asomatos, Mrs Emilia Partella, an octogenarian and a heroic figure for the inhabitants of Asomatos. An assertive people who love their land, the Maronites have never stopped struggling for the return to their villages, which they visit at regular intervals, especially during major religious feasts.



- The occupied Karpasha village.



- Ayia Marina Skyllouras village is presently an army camp of the Turkish military.

Despite the Turkish military occupation and the displacement of most Maronites from their villages, the Maronite community, assisted and supported by the government of Cyprus, has managed to preserve its mores and customs, and in 1988 the Maronite Archbishopric returned to Nicosia after 315 years. On 1 February 1995 the Republic of Cyprus signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which includes the Maronites, the Armenians and the Latins, and on 17 October 2008 Cypriot Maronite Arabic (CMA) was recognised by the Republic of Cyprus as a minority language, based on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe. The community, small in size but rich in tradition, is organised socially and culturally and some of its members have distinguished themselves in the private and public sector, thus contributing to the cultural, economic and social development of Cyprus.



- Panoramic view of Turkish-occupied Kormakitis.

Demographic Profile

According to the first modern count of the population of Cyprus, in 1841, Maronites numbered 1.400 persons: 300 in Nicosia (out of a total of 12.000 residents), 100 in the Morfou region and 1.000 in the Kyrenia region in the Maronite villages of Asomatos, Ayia Marina, Kambyli, Karpasha, Kormakitis and Vouno. According to the first official Cyprus population census, in 1881, Maronites numbered 830; in the second official census, in 1891, their number had increased to 1.131.

During the British Era, the number of Maronites increased significantly. According to official census figures, Maronites numbered 1.130 in 1901, 1.073 in 1911, 1.350 in 1921, 1.704 in 1931, 2.083 in 1946, 2.445 in 1956 and 2.752 in 1960. The table below presents the population of Maronites in Cyprus and their geographical distribution for each census.

	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1946	1956	1960
Nicosia District	113	177	150	153	223	364	504	677	798
Limassol District	68	82	65	16	44	95	51	63	102
Famagusta District	10	91	22	14	12	7	11	60	33
Larnaka District	27	81	101	11	14	35	7	23	18
Pafos District	--	6	--	--	11	6	--	4	7
Kyrenia District	612	694	792	879	1.046	1.197	1.510	1.618	1.794
Total	830	1.131	1.130	1.073	1.350	1.704	2.083	2.445	2.752

Source: British Administration, Department of Statistics and Research of the Republic of Cyprus.

Today, the Maronite community constitutes the second largest Christian community in Cyprus after the Orthodox community – there are 5.000 Maronites in Cyprus, according to the official demographic data of 2011: 75 percent of the Maronite population lives in Nicosia, 15 percent in Limassol, 5 percent in Larnaka and 5 percent in Kochatis, Marki and Pafos, as well as in the occupied villages of Asomatos, Karpasha and Kormakitis.

Important Personalities

The Maronite community's contribution to the development and prosperity of Cyprus dates back to its arrival on the island. Maronites initially served as soldiers, then became farmers and land owners. Today many Maronites are entrepreneurs while their contribution to the letters, the arts and the sciences in Cyprus is substantial.

The Maronites who played an important role in the development of the community and in the development of Cyprus in general include the following politicians:

- Joseph Yamakis (1918-2004), Nicosia MP with the Patriotic Front at the first parliamentary elections of the Republic of Cyprus.
- John Mavrides (1922-1992), Maronite Representative for over 25 years.
- Avraam Antoniou (1928-2001), General Secretary of the Pancyprrian Federation of Labour (PEO) and an MP with the AKEL party for the Nicosia district.
- Fr. Joseph Triantaphyllides (1873-1945), who, in addition to Vicar General, also served as a Legislative Council member during British colonial rule.
- Telesforos Nacouzi (1916-1968) spearheaded the establishment of the Social Insurance Department of the Republic of Cyprus and served as its first Director.
- The current Maronite Representative in the House of Representatives, Antonis Haji Roussos, has been elected for four consecutive terms since 1996.

The clerics who deserve special mention for their support of the Maronite community through exceedingly difficult times include Chorepiscopi John Cirilli (1888-1925) and John Foradaris (1909-2000), Fr. Antony Terzis (1907-2007) and the Abbot of Prophet Elias' Monastery, Fr. Andreas Frangos (1916-2000), a pioneer in the effort to erect a new church in Ayia Marina. The inhabitants of the village were unable to enjoy the church, however, because of the 1974 Turkish invasion.

In the letters and the arts, Filissa Hadjihanna (1947-1999) was a leading figure in the production of educational programmes and Elias Partellas (1911-2002) was Headmaster of the Terra Santa Elementary School – both made important contributions as educators. Antonis Hadji Alexandrou Liatsou (1899-1983) was a distinguished jurist.

A large number of Maronites excel today in business, in the sciences and in culture and politics, both in Cyprus and abroad.

Cypriot Maronite Arabic

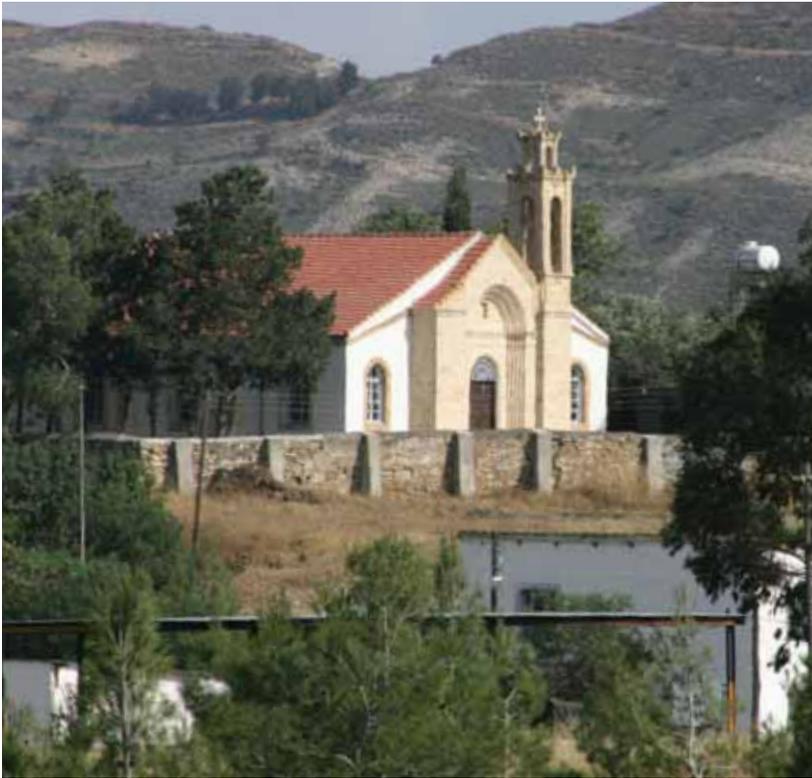
Greek is the mother tongue of the Maronites of Cyprus. In Kormakitis, however, the inhabitants have been speaking Cypriot Maronite Arabic (CMA) since the 12th century – this distinct dialect was the predominant language in the village prior to the 1974 Turkish invasion. It is noteworthy that before 1974, Maronite children only began learning Greek in the first grade of Elementary School. CMA, or simply “Sanna” (our language), as the inhabitants of Kormakitis call it, was an inextricable part of the daily life of the village and was directly identified with the village’s mores and customs.

CMA contains mainly Arabic words, the majority of which, however, are not easily understood by speakers of modern Arabic. This is a result of the geographic and linguistic isolation of CMA from the broader region where Arabic was spoken; these words were either partially altered or retained their antique form. CMA attracts the interest of distinguished linguists, as it contains Arabic terms of Aramaic origin, the language of Christ. It is an important reference source for linguistic and ethnographic research in the broader Mediterranean region.

The 1974 invasion of Cyprus displaced the Maronites from their villages and dispersed them to various locations throughout the government controlled areas of the Republic of Cyprus. As a consequence, CMA is now understood by an estimated 1.200 people – it survives to this day through oral transmission, as it lacked a written format. In 1993 UNESCO included CMA in the Red Book of Endangered Languages; in 2002 the Council of Europe classified it as a seriously endangered language. In December 2007, Maltese linguist Alexander Borg presented CMA’s alphabet, with the ultimate goal of codifying and preserving it. On 17 October 2008, CMA was recognised by the Republic of Cyprus as a minority language of Cyprus, based on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe. The Ministry of Education and Culture has appointed a committee of experts for the development and implementation of a structured policy to revive and preserve CMA, while the Maronite community continues to strain to preserve their language and everything that is embodied in its words and idioms.

The Maronite Archbishopric of Cyprus

The Maronite Archbishopric of Cyprus was established in 1316. Because of the harsh oppression of the Maronite community under Ottoman rule, the Archbishopric was relocated to Lebanon in 1673; beginning in 1768, the Vicar General represented the Archbishop in Cyprus. In 1988 the seat of the Archbishopric returned to Nicosia. The head of the Archbishopric is Youssef Soueif (since 2008) and the Chorepiscopus is Monsignor John Orphanou (since 1989). The Maronite Archbishopric of Cyprus is housed in its own building in Nicosia, which was expanded in 1990, after the Archbishopric’s return to Cyprus in 1988. The Archbishopric receives an annual grant from the government of Cyprus.



- Archangel Michael's church in Asomatos.



- The cathedral of the Virgin Mary of Graces in Paphos Gate area in Nicosia.

Churches, Monasteries and Chapels

The 1974 Turkish invasion had devastating consequences for the Maronite community of Cyprus, which, in addition to its economic destruction, was faced with the serious problem of preserving its cultural and religious identity. In 1974 there was only one Maronite church in the government controlled area of Cyprus, the Virgin Mary of Graces cathedral in Nicosia. After many sacrifices by the enclaved Maronites, and after representations by the government of Cyprus and by the Holy See, the Maronites have succeeded in regularly holding Mass at some of the churches in their occupied villages.

The following churches and chapels are located in the Turkish occupied areas:

Kormakitis: Mass is held at Saint George cathedral (1933) in the village square, at the old Saint George church, located at the Franciscan sisters' nunnery (1534), at the picturesque chapel of Saint George of Kornos (1852) – which celebrates the feast day of Saint George of the Seed on 3 November – and at the Virgin Mary Chapel (1453) on the west side of the village.



● Saint Anthony's chapel in Kythrea.



● Saint Marina's church in Kochatis.



● The chapel of the Virgin Mary to the west of Kormakitis.

Karpasha: The Holy Cross church, which dates to the 15th century, was fully renovated in 1924. In the church there are two priceless wooden crosses: the purely Byzantine cross dates to the 15th century, while the Cypriot-Byzantine cross dates to the 17th century.

Asomatos: Mass is held at Archangel Michael church (1774) once a week. As the village is a military camp for the Turkish occupying forces, its inhabitants are only allowed to enter the village on Sundays, exclusively for the celebration of the Holy Mass.

Ayia Marina: The old Saint Marina church (1650) remains inaccessible, while the new church (1972), which is also dedicated to the village's patron Saint, has been officiated only four times since 1974: on 17 July 2010, 17 July 2011, 17 July 2012 and on 11 February 2012, during the visit of the Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, Mar Bechara Boutros Rahi.

Ayia Marina village was converted into a military base by Turkish occupation forces and its inhabitants are still denied access to their houses and churches.

The Prophet Elias Monastery (1735) in Ayia Marina Skyllouras, which had for centuries been the spiritual centre of the Maronite community, was bombed during the second phase of the 1974 invasion and sustained serious damage – after the bombing, the monastery's grounds were used by the Turkish army. The monastery celebrated the feast of Prophet Elias for the first time since 1974 on 23 July 2006, and ever since a pilgrimage is permitted every year in honour of the Prophet Elias feast. The UNDP-ACT made a donation in 2008 for the cleaning and fencing of the monastery.



- *The imposing dependency of the Prophet Elias Monastery in Kochatis.*

Other Churches

- The chapel of the Virgin Mary in Kambyli (13th century) was restored in 2008-2009 with funding from the SAVE programme and through the initiative of the “Kormakitis Trust” Heritage Club.
- The Virgin Mary chapel in Marki (1636) is ruined.
- Saint Anthony’s chapel in Kythrea (1955) is ruined.
- Saint Romanos chapel in Vouno (1518) is used by the Turkish occupation authorities as a “museum”.
- The church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Famagusta (1900) is located in the fenced area of Varosha.
- The ruins of the churches of Prophet Elias (1508) and Saint John of Kokkinokremmos (12th century) remain in Ayia Marina.



- *Saint Marina's church in Polemidhia.*



● Saint Maron's church in Anthoupolis.

Currently, Mass is held at the following places of worship in the area of Cyprus under government control:

Nicosia

- The Virgin Mary of Graces cathedral (17th century), which was rebuilt between 1959 and 1961.
- Saint Marina church in Kochatis (1975).
- Saint Maron church in Anthoupolis (1986).
- Saint Maron chapel in the building of the Archbishopric (2001).
- Prophet Elias chapel in Kochatis (2006).
- Saint Rebecca chapel in Acropolis (2007).

The church of the Virgin Mary is under construction in Marki. There are also two monasteries in the Nicosia District, the Monastery of Prophet Elias in Kochatis (2006) and Saint Rebecca Monastery in Acropolis (2007).

In Limassol, Mass is held at Saint Marina church in Kato Polemidhia (1974) and at Saint Sharbel church (2003). There are no Maronite churches in the other towns in the government controlled areas of the Republic of Cyprus. In Larnaka, Maronites attend Mass at Saint Joseph's Latin Nunnery, while in Pafos they have been using the Orthodox churches of Panayia Chrysopolitissa since 1987 and Saint Demetrius since 2006, with the kind permission of the former Bishop of Pafos Chrysostomos, now Archbishop Chrysostomos II, Head of the Church of Cyprus.



● The "Saint Maron" Elementary School in Anthoupolis.



● The "Saint Maron" kindergarten in Anthoupolis.



● Scene with children at "Saint Maron" kindergarten.

Educational Institutions

Before the Turkish invasion there was an Elementary School in each Maronite village. The coeducational Elementary Schools, which had operated in Asomatos and Ayia Marina since 1887 and 1892, respectively, were shut down in 1974. In Karpasha, the coeducational Elementary School (1905) remained in operation with Joseph Toumazos as teacher until 1988 to serve the few children who remained in the village. Finally, in Kormakitis, the Boys School and the Girls School merged in 1965 into a new coeducational Elementary School. This school served the village's enclaved children until 1999 – during the enclavement period, Elias Kasapis (Headmaster 1974-1991) and Elias Yiallouris (Headmaster 1991-1999) taught classes at the school, along with nuns Bernadette Skordi and Patrick Frantzia.

The Maronite community presently has the "Saint Maron" kindergarten and the "Saint Maron" Elementary

School in Anthoupolis, which have been operating since 1987 and 2002, respectively. Before 1995, the kindergarten was called "Saint Anthony" and was located in Acropolis. These are public schools with the same status as the rest of the public schools in Cyprus and they follow the curriculum of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The "Saint Maron" Elementary School is an all-day school and in the afternoon the faculty offers its students traditional Maronite music and Cypriot Maronite Arabic lessons. The school is attended by 95 children (80 for the Elementary School and 15 for the kindergarten) and is supervised by the 11-member Maronites School Committee, which is appointed by the Council of Ministers at the suggestion of the Minister of Education and Culture, who consults with the Maronite Representative. Maronites also attend the Terra Santa (1646) and Saint Mary's (1923) Latin schools, which are considered "national schools" for Maronites and Latins.



● Scene from a gathering of the 99th Maronite Scouts Group.



● The renovated building of the old kindergarten in Kormakitis, which presently operates as Folkloric Museum.



● The Asomatos Youth Association football team.

Foundations and Clubs

The determination of the Maronite community to survive and to preserve its cultural identity following the 1974 invasion of Cyprus by Turkey has led to the proliferation of community clubs and the creation of foundations and infrastructure to facilitate the community's regrouping and consolidation.

Maronites currently operate the following foundations:

- The Maronite Welfare Association of Cyprus, established in 1996 by initiative of the Maronite Representative.
- The "Saint Anthony" Old People's Home, which houses elderly Maronites and Greek-Cypriots, was founded and built in 2001 in Anthoupolis by initiative of the Maronite Representative, through government and community subsidies.
- The AMKKA (Ayia Marina, Kormakitis, Karpasha, Asomatos) Cooperative Savings Bank was established in 1998, also an initiative of the Maronite Representative. AMKKA acts as a connecting link with the Service for Humanitarian Affairs to facilitate financial transactions for the enclaved.
- The Chorepiscopus John Foradaris Foundation (2000). Maronites have an active social presence, with numerous culture, sport and youth clubs. The following clubs are involved in sports and have football teams:
 - "Kormakitis" Club was established in 1992 and has a clubhouse in the heart of Nicosia, next to the Virgin Mary of Graces cathedral.
 - Kedros Ayias Marinas Skyllouras was established in 1967 and has a clubhouse in Kochatis.
 - Asomatos Youth Association was established in 1951 and is housed in a rented clubhouse in Ayios Pavlos, Nicosia.
 - Anthoupolis Maronites' Association was established in 1987 and is housed in a rented clubhouse in Anthoupolis.



- The AMKKA Co-Operative Savings' Bank is the only co-operative credit society in walled Nicosia.



- The "Saint Anthony" Old People's Home houses Maronite and Greek-Cypriot elderly.

Maronite cultural and social clubs and associations:

- 99th Maronite Scouts Group (1959).
- Karpasha Holy Cross Youth Club (1972).
- Kato Polemidhia Maronite Youth Centre (1984).
- Catholic Maronite Youth of Cyprus (1988).
- Association of Maronite University Graduates in Cyprus (1996).
- Maronite Community Choir (1997).
- "Kermia Ztite" Cultural Group (2006).
- Association of Displaced Persons from Ayia Marina "The Return" (2006).
- "Xki Fi Sanna" (Speak in Our Language) Club (2007).
- "Kormakitis Trust" Heritage Club (2007).
- Musical Group of the Maronites of Cyprus (2007).
- Women's Association Movement of Asomatos (2007).
- "Archangel Michael" Cultural Group of Asomatos Keryneias (2009).

The Maronite community established a folkloric museum in occupied Kormakitis in 2012 with donations from the UNDP-PFF and the government of the Republic of Cyprus at the initiative of the Maronite Welfare Association of Cyprus and the "Kormakitis Trust" Heritage Club. In Kormakitis there is also an ecclesiastical museum, which was established in 2010 at Saint George cathedral with funding from the Anastasios G. Leventis Foundation.



- The Folkloric Museum in Kormakitis has been operating since February 2012.

- The stone monument at Kormakitis square symbolises the arrival of the village's first inhabitants from Kour village in Lebanon.



Monuments

The Maronite community has the following monuments in Cyprus:

- The marble statue of Saint Joseph holding the Christ in the courtyard of Saint George cathedral in Kormakitis (1948), a donation by Chorepiscopus John Foradaris.
- The marble monument of fallen and missing Maronites in the courtyard of Saint Maron church in Anthoupolis (2002), a donation from the government of Cyprus.
- The bronze busts of Chorepiscopus John Foradaris and Representative John Mavrides in the courtyard of the Archbishopric in Acropolis (2007), a donation from the government of Cyprus.
- The brass bust of enclaved priest Antony Terzis in the cemetery in Kormakitis (2009), a donation by the Terzis family.
- The marble statue of the Virgin Mary in the courtyard of the Virgin Mary chapel in Kormakitis (2009), a donation by Representative Antonis Haji Roussos.
- The marble statue of Saint Sharbel in the courtyard of Saint Sharbel church in Limassol (2009), a donation by Representative Antonis Haji Roussos.
- The marble statue of the Virgin Mary in the courtyard of Saint Maron church in Anthoupolis (2010), a donation by Representative Antonis Haji Roussos.
- The carved stone sculpture (2012) in the village square in Kormakitis depicting a ship's mast. The sculpture memorialises the arrival of the first inhabitants of Kormakitis from the village of Kour in Lebanon and was a donation from Lebanese Maronites and Marios Haji Roussos. The sculpture is made of stone from the Kour region and bears the inscription, in CMA, "Naxni jina u Kur majit", meaning "We came but Kour did not". The inscription is one of the versions regarding the origin of the name of the village.



- Maronite Representative, Antonis Haji Roussos, laying a wreath at the Monument of Fallen and Missing Maronites in Anthoupolis.



- The busts of Chorepiscopus John Foradaris and Representative John Mavrides at the courtyard of the Archbishopric in Nicosia.

- The Maronite cemetery outside Nicosia.



Cemeteries

The Maronite cemetery in Nicosia is located in the Ayii Trimithias area and has been used since 1979. Between 1957 and 1974, a shared Maronite-Latin cemetery operated in Ayios Dhometios (Grammar School area), which after the 1974 Turkish invasion was abandoned, as it is adjacent to the ceasefire line. A new cemetery is planned for Marki on land provided by the government of Cyprus. The Maronite cemetery in Limassol is located in the Ayios Athanasios area and has been used since 1998; prior to its establishment, Maronites were using the Latin cemetery in the Neapolis area.

In occupied Kormakitis, the current cemetery has been in use since 1946. In addition to enclaved Maronites, members of the community who were displaced in 1974 are also buried in Kormakitis. There are also two cemeteries in occupied Ayia Marina, the newest established in 1955, and two in occupied Asomatos, the newest in use since 1911. The cemetery in Karpasha remains in use. Prior to 1966, the Maronite community also had a cemetery in Famagusta.



- Snapshot from the production of "The Voice of the Maronites" radio programme.

Mass Media

Maronites are very active in the information sector, particularly since the 1974 invasion. Today, the community produces the following printed and electronic media:

- Kinotiko Vima (Community Tribune) monthly newspaper (2000).
- O Typos ton Maroniton (The Press of the Maronites) monthly newspaper (2001).
- "I Foni ton Maroniton" (The Voice of the Maronites) radio program (1999), broadcast by CyBC's First Programme every Friday between 17:00 and 18:00.
- Official community web page - www.maronitesofcyprus.com (2009).
- Official Archbishopric web page - www.maronitearcheparchy.org.cy (2010).
- Web pages dedicated to the Maronite villages (www.kormakitis.net, www.asomatos.com, www.ayiamarina.com and www.karpasha.com).

There are also web pages for Maronite clubs and groups that promote the work and activities of these associations.

CHRONOLOGY

- 686 The first documented immigration of Maronites to Cyprus.
- 938 Second mass immigration of Maronites to Cyprus after the destruction of Saint Maron Monastery in Apamea, Syria.
- 1090 Establishment of a monastery dedicated to Saint John the Chrysostom in Koutsovendis.
- 1192 Third wave of immigration with the purchase of Cyprus by Guy de Lusignan.
- 1267-1307 More Maronites seek shelter in Cyprus, in flight from Muslim attacks after the Fall of Jerusalem (1267), the Siege (1271) and Fall of Tripoli (1289), the Massacres in Damascus (1292) and the war with the Mamelukes (1292-1307).
- 1316 Establishment of the Maronite Archbishopric of Cyprus in Nicosia.
- 1673 The seat of the Archbishopric is relocated to Lebanon.
- 1768 A Chorepiscopus begins to represent the Maronite Archbishop in Cyprus.
- 20 October 1933 Archbishop Bulus Awad consecrates Saint George cathedral in Kormakitis.
- 21 March 1948 Vicar General John Foradaris unveils the marble statue of Saint Joseph in the courtyard of Saint George cathedral in Kormakitis.
- 6 August 1960 John Mavrides is declared Maronite Representative in the Greek Communal Chamber, with no other contestant.
- 16 August 1960 Cyprus gains its Independence. The new Constitution recognises Maronites as a religious group.
- 13 November 1960 Maronites choose in a referendum to belong to the Greek-Cypriot community.
- 28 October 1961 Archbishop Elias Farah inaugurates the Virgin Mary of Graces cathedral at Pafos Gate in Nicosia.
- 19 July 1970 John Mavrides is elected Maronite Representative, securing 59,92 percent of the votes.
- 1974 The Turkish invasion devastates the Maronites of Cyprus, with all four Maronite villages - Asomatos, Ayia Marina, Karpasha and Kormakitis - coming under military occupation.
- 3 October 1976 John Mavrides is re-elected Maronite Representative, securing 65,26 percent of the votes.
- 27 September 1981 Ninos Hadjirosos is elected Maronite Representative, securing 50,96 percent of the votes.
- 13 July 1986 John Mavrides is elected Maronite Representative, securing 45,41 percent of the votes.
- 7 December 1986 Archbishop Elias Bechara consecrates Saint Maron church in Anthoupolis.
- 1988 The seat of the Archbishopric returns to Nicosia. Boutros Gemayel is the Archbishop.
- 18 March 1990 Minister of Interior Christodoulos Veniamin inaugurates the Kato Polemidhia Youth Centre.
- 19 May 1991 John Poyiadjis is elected Maronite Representative, securing 31,58 percent of the votes.
- 22 March 1994 Lakatamia Municipality renames Margaret street into Saint Maron street.

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- 27 September 1995 Nicosia Municipality renames Fabvier Street into Saint Maron street.
- 18 May 1996 President Glafcos Clerides lays the foundation stone for Saint Sharbel church in Limassol.
- 26 May 1996 Antonis Haji Roussos is elected Maronite Representative, securing 32,36 percent of the votes.
- 29 November 1998 Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism Nicos Rolandis and Cooperative Banks Commissioner Erotokritos Chlorakiotis inaugurate the AMKKA (Aya Marina, Kormakitis, Karpasha, Asomatos) Cooperative Savings Bank.
- 30 October 1999 President Glafcos Clerides lays the foundation stone for “Saint Anthony” Old People’s Home.
- 4 April 2001 President Glafcos Clerides inaugurates “Saint Anthony” Old People’s Home.
- 11 May 2001 President Glafcos Clerides lays the foundation stone for “Saint Maron” Elementary School.
- 27 May 2001 Antonis Haji Roussos is re-elected Maronite Representative, securing 43,38 percent of the votes.
- 23 December 2001 Archbishop Boutros Gemayel consecrates Saint Maron chapel at the Archbishopric.
- 29 September 2002 Minister of Defence Socrates Hasikos unveils the monument of fallen and missing Maronites in the courtyard of Saint Maron church in Anthoupolis.
- 17 March 2002 Archbishop Boutros Gemayel consecrates Saint Marina church in Kochatis.
- 23 January 2003 Archbishop Boutros Gemayel consecrates Saint Sharbel church in Limassol.
- 10 June 2003 Minister of Education and Culture Pefkios Georgiades inaugurates “Saint Maron” Elementary School.
- 13 November 2003 Archbishop Boutros Gemayel inaugurates Saint Sharbel church hall in Limassol.
- 21 May 2006 Antonis Haji Roussos is re-elected Maronite Representative, securing 43,78 percent of the votes.
- 13 July 2006 For the first time since the 1974 invasion, Maronites visit Prophet Elias Monastery near Aya Marina Skyllouras.
- 21 April 2007 Minister of Education and Culture Akis Cleanthous unveils the busts of Chorepiscopus Foradaris and Representative Mavrides in the courtyard of the Archbishopric.
- 24 October 2007 Minister of Interior Christos Patsalides inaugurates the renovated “Kormakitis” clubhouse in Nicosia.
- 17 October 2008 CMA is recognised by the Republic of Cyprus as a minority language, based on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe.
- 17 December 2008 Archbishop Boutros Gemayel inaugurates the Saint Rebecca Nunnery and chapel in Acropolis.
- 9 February 2009 Archbishop Youssef Soueif and Representative Antonis Haji Roussos unveil the bust of Fr. Antony Terzis at Kormakitis cemetery.

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- 23 May 2009 Archbishops Boutros Gemayel and Youssef Soueif inaugurate the park of the Virgin Mary; they unveil the statue of the Virgin Mary in the courtyard of the Virgin Mary church in Kormakitis.
- 9 May 2010 Archbishop Youssef Soueif and Anastasios P. Leventis inaugurate the ecclesiastical museum in Kormakitis.
- 5 June 2010 Pope Benedict XVI unveils a commemorative plaque on the occasion of his visit to “Saint Maron” Elementary School in Anthoupolis.
- 6 June 2010 Pope Benedict XVI unveils a commemorative plaque on the occasion of his visit to the Virgin Mary of Graces cathedral in Nicosia.
- 17 July 2010 For the first time since the 1974 invasion, Holy Mass is celebrated at the occupied Saint Marina church in Ayia Marina Skyllouras.
- 1 May 2011 Karpasha Holy Cross Youth club President Joseph Kokkinos inaugurates the association’s clubhouse in Nicosia.
- 22 May 2011 Antonis Haji Roussos is re-elected Maronite Representative, securing 33,28 percent of the votes.
- 11 February 2012 Representative Antonis Haji Roussos, Alessandra Viezzer (EU Project Support Office) and Tiziana Zennaro (UNDP-PFF) inaugurate the Kormakitis Folkloric Museum.
- 11 February 2012 The Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, Mar Bechara Boutros Rahi, unveils a sculpture memorialising the arrival of the first inhabitants of Kormakitis from Kour, in Lebanon, in the Kormakitis village square; he also unveils a commemorative plaque on the occasion of his visit to Saint George cathedral.
- 12 February 2012 The Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, Mar Bechara Boutros Rahi, lays the foundation stone for the church of the Virgin Mary in Marki.
- 13 February 2012 The Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, Mar Bechara Boutros Rahi, unveils a commemorative plaque on the occasion of his visit to Saint Sharbel church in Limassol.



● The political and religious leadership of the Maronites with Archbishop Makarios III (1960s).



● Rare photograph with camels in front of Kormakitis' cathedral (1930s).



● The people of Kormakitis in a commemorative photograph (1950s).

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● Litany in Kormakitis with Chorepiscopus John Foradaris. The nunnery is visible in the background (1940s).





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