

Born in Kartaba, Lebanon, on March 27, 1934, Chorbishop Joseph Lahoud was the eldest of five children of Farid and Olga (Souhaid) Lahoud, well-known hotel proprietors. He felt a divine calling at a young age, entering St. Maron's Seminary in 1948 at just 14. He later earned his theology degree from St. Joseph's

University in Beirut and was ordained on April 12, 1959.

Shortly thereafter, he moved to the United States, beginning his ministry at St. Maron's Church in Torrington, Connecticut in 1961. In 1970, he was appointed pastor of Our Lady of the Cedars of Lebanon in Jamaica Plain by Archbishop Francis M. Zayek.

At the time, the parish was on the verge of bankruptcy. The property had only a rectory and community center built on land donated by Richard Cardinal Cushing. Many would have seen it as a lost cause. But not Chorbishop Lahoud.

With quiet determination and steadfast faith, he led the parish out of financial crisis. Within three years, the existing debt was paid off, and he began building the church anew. In 1974, construction began on the new church, and by 1975, the first Mass was celebrated in the monastic-inspired sanctuary that stands today.

From there, his accomplishments multiplied: He installed beautiful stained-glass windows (1977); built additional classrooms and storage (1980); paid off

mortgage (1990); added new office space and rectory living quarters (1991); planted 100 cedar trees on the property (1993); and initiated the construction of a new facility in 2000, later named the Chorbishop Joseph F. Lahoud Pastoral Center (opened 2005), to house classrooms, a shrine to Saint Rafka, and a space for parish events.

In recognition of his exemplary service:

- He was elevated to Monsignor in 1982
- Ordained Chorbishop in 1986
- Honored in 2009 with a celebration of 50 years in the priesthood
- Officially retired in 2010, though he continued to serve well into his later years
- Awarded the National Order of the Cedar on April 21, 2012, the highest state order of Lebanon. It is awarded by the President, for great services rendered to Lebanon, for acts of courage and devotion of great moral value, and for years in public service.

Even in retirement, he returned to parishes for Holy Week liturgies, mentored clergy, and participated in milestone church celebrations across New England. Parishioners and clergy alike recall his signature blend of deep faith, a tireless work ethic, and warm hospitality. Chorbishop Lahoud was not only a pastor, but a true father to his parish family. His rectory was a home for visitors, his church a sanctuary for the weary, and his presence a source of strength for the Lebanese immigrant community in Boston and beyond. His kindness, humility, and ability to unite people will remain his most enduring legacy.



CHORBISHOP
JOSEPH LAHOUD

MARCH 27, 1934 - JULY 16, 2025

MEMORIES OF CHORBISHOP JOSEPH LAHOUD AT ST. MARON OF TORRINGTON PARISH

From his obituary: *His life was a living sermon of devotion, humility, and action. May he rest in eternal peace and rise in glory.*

Fr. Lahoud married us on October 17, 1964. He was such a good and holy priest and loved by all. God bless you Chorbishop.

~ Jack and Marva Leifert



I have so many memories of Chorbishop Joseph Lahoud. He was a loving, generous priest. He was like my older brother and so kind; we used to just sit and talk a lot. When he was transferred to Cedars of Lebanon Church, I always kept in contact with him.

When I was 16. I worked across the street from the church in a grocery store and every now and then Father Lahoud would come tap on the window and I would go out to him or he would come in the door of the store and ask me when my lunch time was and say, "Come I'm making lunch" and we would sit and eat and talk.

When I was in the choir, he would come into the church and just sit and listen to us. He just like to listen to us sing.

When I was growing up as a teenager, he was so kind and meant the world to me. Rest in peace my friend.

~ Lois Seymour

I was very young when Fr. Lahoud was pastor at St. Maron. I'll always remember his soft spoken voice. He was an educated man who, in spite of his sophistication and refinement had the ability to communicate with anyone. When he entered a room, his smile and attentiveness showed you what a true human being he was! God bless and I will always love you. See you in heaven.

~ Melanie Libby

Father Joe (Chorbishop Lahoud) was my first boss. I was 15 when I inherited the position of parish secretary from Rhonda Dablain. Father Joe was a kind and patient boss who loved being with his parishioners and who made everyone feel special.

In the early '80s Lois and I stayed with him in Brockton for two days. Daryl Hartman was nearby and came to visit. We just returned from shopping for Lebanese food and were eating everything before Father Joe could get it unwrapped and on the table.

~ Adla Keywan

Fr Lahoud was our pastor for many years in Torrington and a good and holy priest. He married Charlie and me on February 6, 1966. We shared many happy times together as a family. May God give him peace.

~ Dulce Nader

My wife Julie and I were planning our wedding. It was May of 1968 and our ceremony was to be held at St. Peter's Church in Torrington. I needed permission from St. Maron's to be married there. We went to St. Maron's to visit Msgr. Lahoud, the kindest, most sincere and holiest man we knew. Msgr. Lahoud gave me the permission letter and left us with a message I still remember. He said it's wonderful that we were getting married at St. Peter's Church, wished us all his blessings and said that he and St. Maron's would always welcome us with open arms!

~ Julie and Mike Nejaime

Chorbishop always taught me about being a servant leader. His example of living the gospel message is profound. Thank you Chorbishop for your love and support.

~ Deacon Steven

When Father Lahoud first came to St Maron's, I was able to play the organ at liturgy. He was always a joyful happy priest. He was a joy to work with. God bless you may you rest in peace

~ Linda Rinaldi

Msgr. Lahoud was appreciative and gracious to all who contributed time and treasure to the parish. He required well trained people assisting him on the altar and in the choir loft, but regularly provided recreational, cultural and religious enhancement opportunities for choir members and acolytes. After each Bingo he would accompany that evening's volunteers and treat them to refreshments at the Litchfield Farm Shop (an iconic gathering place to Torringtonians of my and previous generations). Fr. Lahoud and guests would actually be dining inside, while I would be cruising the parking lot with Mike, Julie and other friends.

Every summer Fr. Lahoud would host a visiting priest or seminarian from Lebanon. My father would be directed to find a serviceable used car, preferably at a cost less than \$100.00 (actually possible then) for the visitor's use in traveling about the country. Fr. Lahoud was usually able to find a buyer at the end of the summer or give it away to someone in need of a car.

It is with deep sadness that Jane and I learned of Chorbishop Lahoud's passing. St. Maron Church in Torrington was his first parish as a new priest, and I was his first altar server. My father and I taught him about cars; he taught me about faith, persistence, and dedication to God, country, and community. We became lifelong friends and shared many confidences. I miss him greatly, but know that for a long time he has had a place reserved for him close to Jesus and that he is now enjoying a well-deserved eternal residence.

~ Sam Slaiby



[Many thanks to Adla Keywan for sharing the photos.]