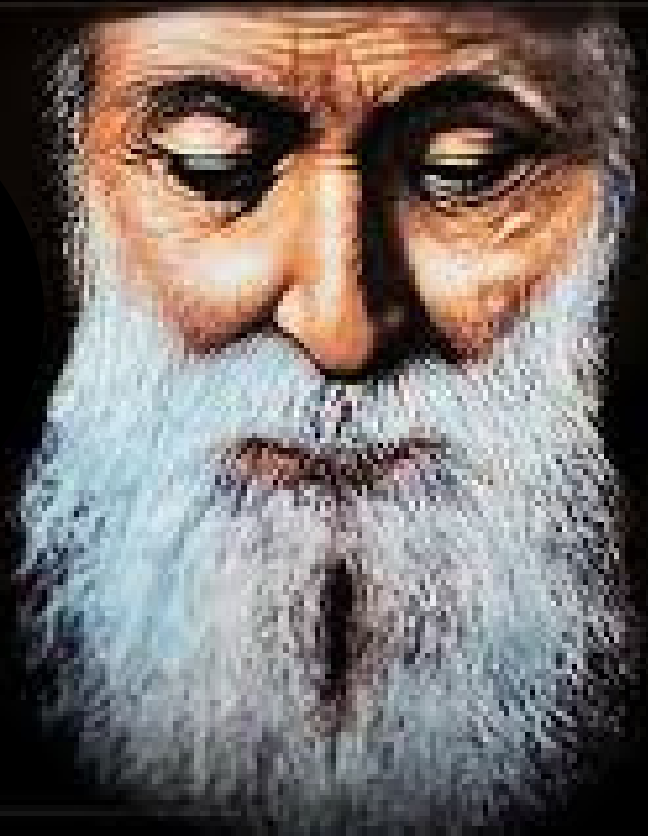


# SAINT SHARBEL

(1828-1898)

*Maronite monk and Hermit*



**“Then the righteous will shine like the sun  
in the kingdom of their Father...”**

(Mt 13:43)

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## First Reading: Romans 8:28-39

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then shall we say to these things?

If God is for us, who can be against us?

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;  
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## The Gospel: Matthew 13:36-43

Then he left the crowds and went into the house.

And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.”

He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.

The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom.

The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil.

The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels.

Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age.

The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers,

and throw them into the fiery furnace.

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

He who has ears, let him hear.

## Saint of the Week: St Sharbel (24 July)

St. Charbel was born Youssef Antoun Makhoul in 1828 in Bekaa Kфра in northern Lebanon and was the youngest of five children. His father died when he was only three years old after his mandatory enlistment under the Ottoman Empire.

He became a very pious child who was inspired by his uncles who were monks at the nearby monastery. He helped his family by tending to their small flock of goats and sheep. The local villagers would refer to him as “The Saint” due to his long hours spent in prayer in front of an icon of the Virgin Mary which he installed in a grotto.

He left home for monastic life and professed his vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in 1853. He took the name of Charbel (a second century martyr) which means “God’s story” in Aramaic. Charbel was ordained in 1859. He then spent 16 years at the monastery of Annaya praying, working, and living a life of sacrifice with his monastic community.

He was granted his request of moving to the nearby hermitage of Sts Peter and Paul and spent the next 23 years there in prayer, contemplation and worship, totally detached from the world.

He remained at the hermitage except when his superiors asked him to go into the community to use his seemingly supernatural powers to heal people of physical and spiritual ailments. He was also blessed with the ability to cast out demons.

His deep devotion to the Eucharistic presence of our Lord led him to kneel before the blessed sacrament in prayer throughout each night. This resulted in him being known as “the saint inebriated with God”.

Charbel suffered a stroke while celebrating Divine Liturgy on December 16th, 1898 and spent 8 days in pain repeating the prayer he was unable to finish during his final mass: “Father of truth, behold your Son, the sacrifice in whom You are well pleased. Accept Him who died for me.”

He then died on Christmas Eve 1898 after receiving the sacraments and was buried in the monastery’s cemetery with only a few monks in attendance.

After his burial, a mysterious light was seen surrounding his tomb. Superiors opened the tomb to find Charbel’s body incorrupt.

After that day, his body began to exude a fragrant blood-like oil which was found to have healing properties. This phenomenon could not be explained by experts who examined the body.

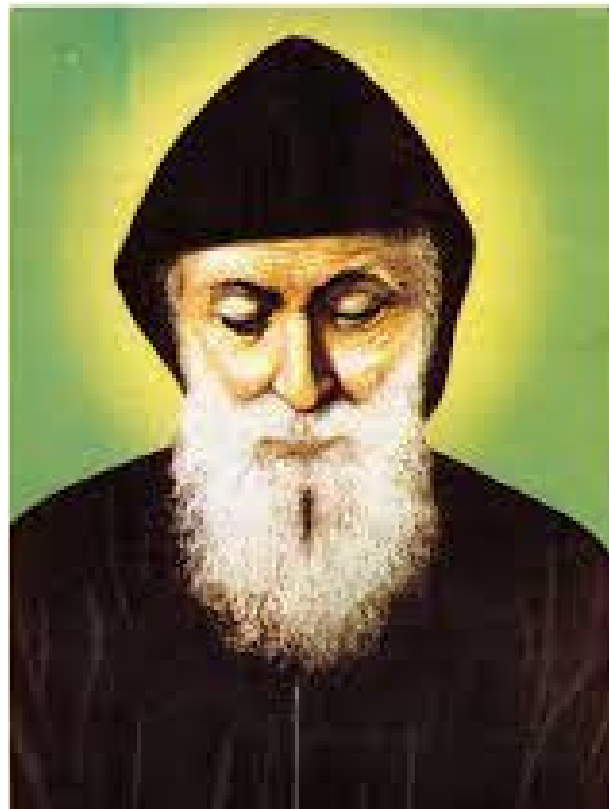


Due to the exuding of sweat and blood, Saint Sharbel's vestments, coffin and tomb had to be changed several times through the years, as shown in the picture above (coffin out of which he was exhumed in 1926).

In 1950, the tomb was opened in the presence of doctors and officials who confirmed that the body was incorrupt. Many more pilgrims flocked to the tomb to pray for Charbel's intercession and the number of miracles and healings began to increase dramatically. The tomb was opened again in 1965 and the body was still found incorrupt and very life-like.

Finally, in 1976, the body was found completely decomposed leaving only the skeleton. The incorruptible nature of his body is one of the best attested in modern times, like that of St. Bernadette of Lourdes and St. John Bosco.

The cause for Charbel's beatification began in 1954 under Pope Pius XII when he recognized Charbel's heroic virtue. His Holiness St. Paul VI presided over the beatification ceremony on December 5th, 1965 at the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council. He also presided over the canonization in 1977 in the Vatican basilica. The healing of Miriam Awad's terminal throat cancer in 1967 was accepted as the official miracle for canonization. A large number of miracles have been attributed to St. Charbel's intercession- more than 33,000! Miracles attributed to this Saint continue today with Christians and even non-Christians from all over with world.



*May his prayers be with us, amen!*

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