



They devoted themselves to the teaching
of the apostles and to the communal life,
to the breaking of the bread
and to the prayers.

ACTS 2:42

Issue 28 | November 2024

Tidings of Comfort and Joy!



**Family of Saint
Sharbel USA**

*Find us online! Click this image to be directed to our
website in English.*

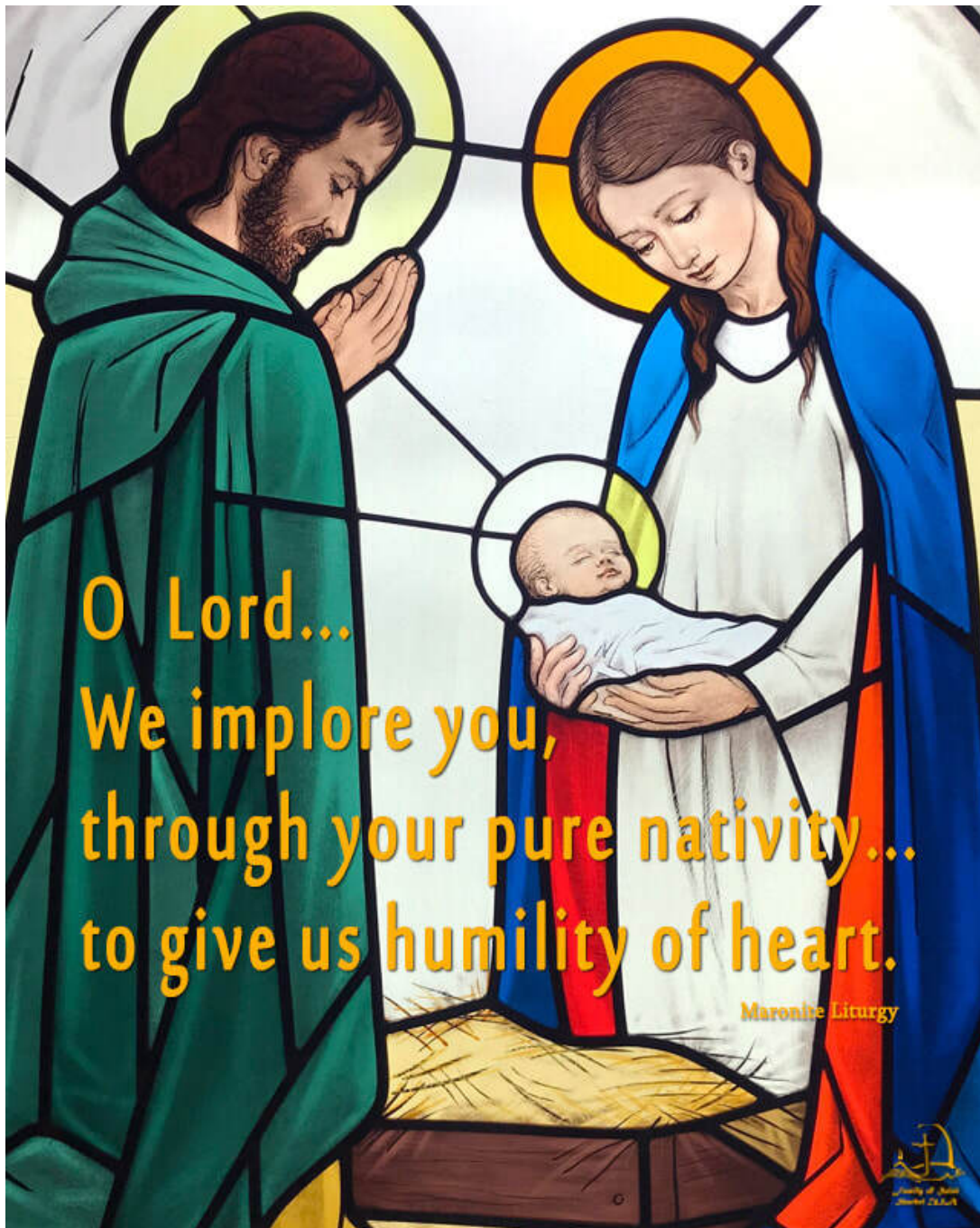
May the Peace of Christ Control Your Heart

With great gratitude, the Family of Saint Sharbel USA presents its 28th Newsletter! As we prepare our hearts for Christ's birth, we pray you'll allow yourself to be led by the light and peace of the Lord, and we ask for your prayers as our community of faith continues to grow. **Please spread the word throughout this remarkable season!**

Contemplation Corner

The Glorious Birth of the Lord

By Fr. George El-Andari



<https://www.familyofsaintsharbel.org/spiritual-designs/give-us-humility-of-heart>

Christmas is a major holiday in the Maronite Church, and it is the second feast of our Lord after Easter, the “feast of feasts” or “the great feast.” Traditionally, in the eastern Churches, they called Christmas the winter Easter because it is a major feast which was preceded by a period of forty days of fasting and abstinence and a period of a nine-day novena that ended with a Church celebration of the Glorious Birth of our Lord, Christmas. Unlike Easter (the Resurrection) and Epiphany (the Baptism) that are the beginning of a season, Christmas is the end of a season in the liturgy. All the Sundays that precede Christmas in the Maronite Church are preparation for Christmas.

Click here to read more about the **history of Christmas** and information about

fasting, abstinence, the Christmas novena, and the season's liturgy!

Click here to view more of our spiritual designs.

Upcoming Events

“Announcements Leading to Christmas” Zoom Discussion!

The Gospels according to Matthew and Luke don't begin with the birth of Jesus - they begin with the immediate context for His birth! On **Tuesday, December 3rd**, the **Couples Ministry of the Maronite Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn** and **Bishop Gregory Mansour** plan to host a Zoom discussion on the announcements leading to Christmas, which are the ways God prepared the way for Jesus just before he was born. See the flyer below for more information - all are welcome to join!



**MARONITE
EPARCHIAL
COUPLES
MINISTRY**

ANNOUNCEMENTS LEADING TO CHRISTMAS

Join the Eparchial Couples Ministry and Bishop Gregory Mansour for a discussion on the "Announcements leading to Christmas" in the Maronite Rite as we prepare our hearts for the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Zoom Meeting ID: 824 7296 2217

Passcode: 465732



8PM-9PM EST



DECEMBER 3, 2024



BISHOP GREGORY MANSOUR

Eparchy of St. Maron



Advent Day of Retreat: National Shrine Grotto

"Experiencing the Love of
Our Immaculate Mother, Mary"

Saturday, December 7th

8:30 AM – 4:30 PM



NATIONAL SHRINE GROTTTO
MOUNT ST. MARYS UNIVERSITY



In preparation for Christmas, the **National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes** (16330 Grotto Road Emmitsburg, MD 21727) plans to host an Advent day of retreat from **8:30am - 4:30pm EST** on **Saturday, December 7th!** To view full details or register to participate, please click the button link below.

Information & Registration

Raymond Nader - “The Mystery of the Incarnation” (Zoom Talk)

Join Mr. Raymond Nader, our founder and President, on **Sunday, December 8th** at **3:00PM EST** for a Zoom talk on the Mystery of the Incarnation! Use the passcode **816342** at the link below to join.

Join the Call!

Maronite Christmas Novena



*Image sourced from:
<http://www.ladyoflebanon.org/uncategorized/season-of-the-glorious-birth-of-the-lord/>*

The Maronite Christmas Novena begins on **Sunday, December 15th!** Intended to prepare us for Christ’s birth, the Christmas novena is traditionally prayed communally in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, but it can be prayed at home as well. All of the prayers for **December 15-23** (the full span of the novena) can be accessed below, but if you are able, we encourage you to pray along with a Maronite community near you!

PDF of Novena Booklet

Saint Sharbel Events in the USA

Explore the links below to find an event near you.

Please email or call the parish, mission, or center to verify the times listed below!

Masses in Honor of St. Sharbel:

Include blessing with and/or veneration of the relic and/or oil of Saint Sharbel

St. Joseph Maronite Catholic Church, Phoenix, Arizona

St. Sharbel Maronite Catholic Mission of Stockton, California

NEW! Our Lady of Lebanon, Miami, Florida

National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, Emmitsburg, Maryland

St. Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church, Clinton Township, Michigan

NEW! St. Maron Maronite Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Our Lady Star of the East Maronite Catholic Church, Pleasantville, New Jersey

St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church, Astoria, New York

NEW! Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Church, Norman, Oklahoma

St. Sharbel Spiritual Life Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

St. Sharbel Mission, El Paso, Texas

NEW! St. George Maronite Church, San Antonio, Texas

St. Sharbel Mission of Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Holy Hours in Honor of St. Sharbel:

Recent News



First-Class Relic of St. Sharbel in Tulsa, OK

On October 26th, the Family of Saint Sharbel was blessed with the opportunity to give a first-class relic of St. Sharbel to Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma! Click the button link below to learn more about this event and the relic.

[Learn More](#)

Volunteer Opportunities!

The Family of Saint Sharbel is currently seeking volunteers to help in two areas: researching and documenting media (articles, books, audio, videos - anything!) and locations related to St. Sharbel around the globe and researching and documenting Maronite/Syriac spirituality and liturgy over time. If you have the time or interest for either, please fill out the corresponding form linked below! We ask that volunteers for both roles be capable of comfortably using an Excel sheet we will provide to collect data, and we ask that volunteers for Maronite/Syriac spirituality and liturgy have some background knowledge on the subject. Information in all languages is welcome!

Research - St. Sharbel Around the Globe

Research Maronite/Syriac Spirituality

St. Sharbel Illustrated Book - Available in Arabic and English!



Click this image to view a promotional video about the book!

St. Sharbel of Lebanon: Saint of Wonders is one of the Family of Saint Sharbel's latest projects! Available in **English and Arabic**, this illustrated book recounts the life of Saint Sharbel in context, beginning with a brief history of the Maronite Church and the Lebanese Maronite Order and ending with the legacy left behind by Christ's work in this Saint, including the formation of the Family of Saint Sharbel. Click the links below to learn more or purchase this book in your preferred language!

Order Online - Arabic

Order Online - English

Saint Spotlight

St. Barbara - Virgin & Martyr



"Saint Barbara in Her Tower" by Robert Campin

Feast Day: December 4th

St. Barbara was born to a wealthy man named Dioscorus during the late 3rd century AD. Though various reasons have been cited—Barbara's beauty and concern about the world's influence, to name a couple—Barbara's father locked her in a tower in an effort to protect her from the outside world. During her time in the tower, however, Barbara's desire to know the true God flourished. Despite her father's staunch pagan faith, Barbara secretly converted to Christianity and vowed to remain a consecrated virgin. Eventually, Barbara's father presented a man for her to marry, but she refused in fidelity to her vow. She later confessed her Christian faith, which outraged Dioscorus. In response, he sought to harm Barbara, so she hid from him. She was eventually discovered, tortured, and killed for her faith.

Saint Barbara is popular in Middle Eastern countries, including Lebanon, where many

children celebrate her feast day, “**Eid il-Birbara**,” by wearing costumes and enjoying a traditional wheat dish called *Birbara*. Eid il-Birbara can look much like Halloween on the surface, but the costumes and food serve a different purpose: costumes, in this case, are meant to recall how St. Barbara hid herself, and sprouted wheat signifies new life.

To learn more about St. Barbara and traditions accompanying her feast, click the link below!

St. Barbara, pray for us!

[More on St. Barbara & Eid il-Birbara](#)

Reading Nook

The Maronite Journey to Christmas

by Fr. Charbel Dib



Maronite Icon of the Nativity

"The Maronite journey to Christmas is one that is unique and beautiful. Although this reflection could probably fill the whole page of this paper, we'll focus on two of the very unique aspects of this journey.

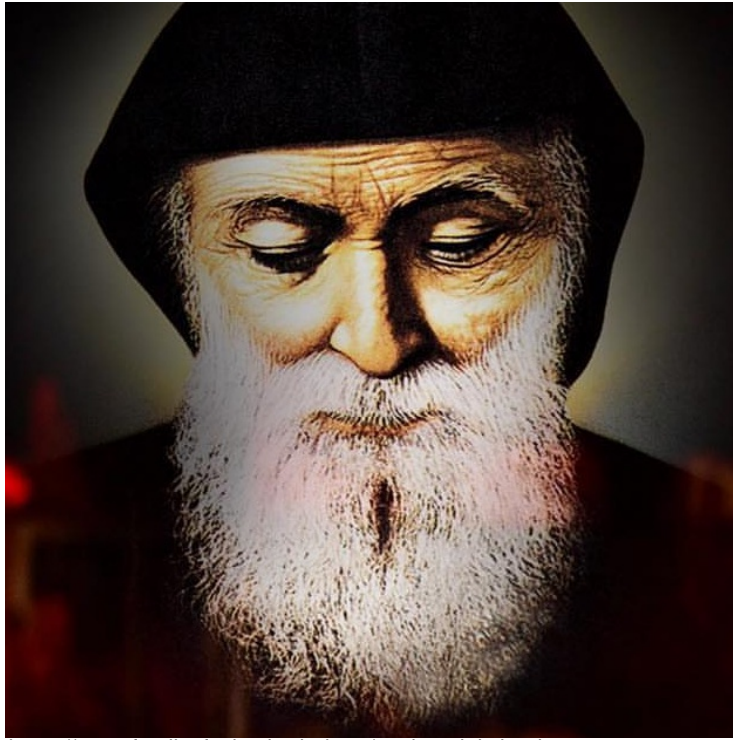
Like all the Eastern Churches, as Maronites, our theology or beliefs can be found in the liturgical celebrations of the church. So the best place to start a reflection on the Maronite journey to Christmas, is in fact the liturgy.

Much like the season of Advent in the Roman Catholic Calendar, the Maronite journey to Christmas is a distinct season within our liturgical cycle that aims to prepare the faithful to welcome the birth of the Messiah. Officially known as the "Season of the Glorious Birth of our Lord" or the "Season of Announcements", the journey goes for six Sundays and focuses on the announcement to Zechariah, the Annunciation to Mary, Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, Birth of John the Baptist, Revelation to Joseph and the Genealogy of Jesus..."

[Read More Here](#)

Articles and More

New Testimonials



<https://www.familyofsaintsharbel.org/testimonials.html>

Periodically, we receive stories from people around the globe who have experienced the work of God through the intercession of St. Sharbel. We would like to share the most recent testimonies we've received with you below! Click on a title to read the full story; all posted testimonies have been shared with the author's permission.

[Healing Testimony of Youssef Assad Lahoud](#)

[Healing Testimony of Rami Mamoun Al-Zweeny](#)

[Healing Testimony of Nadia Nasan Hanna Matar](#)

You can read more personal testimonials on our Testimonials page **[HERE](#)**.

Disclaimer: All testimonials posted on the Family of Saint Sharbel's website are based solely on person-to-person accounts. Unlike Vatican-approved miracles, the claims within these testimonies have not been subjected to extensive scientific review.

Editor's Pick: [FORMED Resource](#)



Click the image above (copied from the FORMED online streaming platform) to be directed to the Littlest Saints video menu!

The Family of Saint Sharbel offers you a FREE subscription to FORMED, an online Catholic platform that contains thousands of resources for spiritual growth!

This Month's Highlighted FORMED Resource:

Share with your kids and grandkids! In a few short weeks, the Church celebrates the mystery of Christ's glorious birth - when God revealed Himself as a tiny child! This in mind, we would like to highlight *Littlest Saints*, a children's series available on FORMED, this month. Designed to make Saints—souls through whom God becomes incarnate each day—accessible to elementary-aged youth, *Littlest Saints* videos tell the stories of canonized Saints using children's voices and child actors. In doing so, they are meant to help children identify the Spirit of God at work and inspire them to follow Him in their own daily lives! Click the button below to view the series' menu.

Watch Now

To view this resource and many others, sign up for FORMED **FOR FREE** by following these simple steps:

- (1) **Go to:** <https://formed.org/signup>
- (2) **Enter:** Family of Saint Sharbel
- (3) **Enter** your name and email address and you're in!

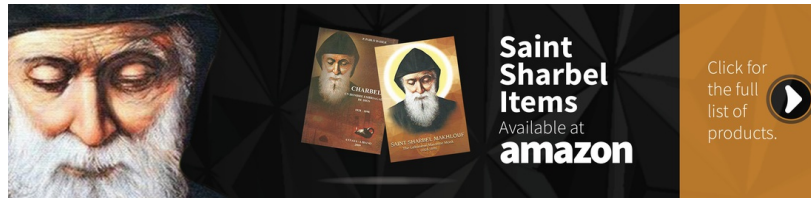
Below are the links to FORMED on social media:

Instagram: [formedcatholic](#)

Facebook: [FORMEDCatholic](#)

YouTube: [Augustine Institute](#)

Family of Saint Sharbel Shops



Click this image to view our Amazon shop!

The Family of Saint Sharbel is on **Amazon** and **Shopify**! On these two platforms, books, novenas, prayer cards, and sacramentals related to St. Sharbel and Catholic spirituality are available for order, including works created by the Family of Saint Sharbel. Click the buttons below to explore!

[Amazon](#)

[Shopify](#)

Catch us on YouTube!



Image from the Family of Saint Sharbel's Miracles & Healings channel. Click to view!

The Family of Saint Sharbel USA is on YouTube! For more content including talks, testimonies, and event recordings, visit any of our three channels below.

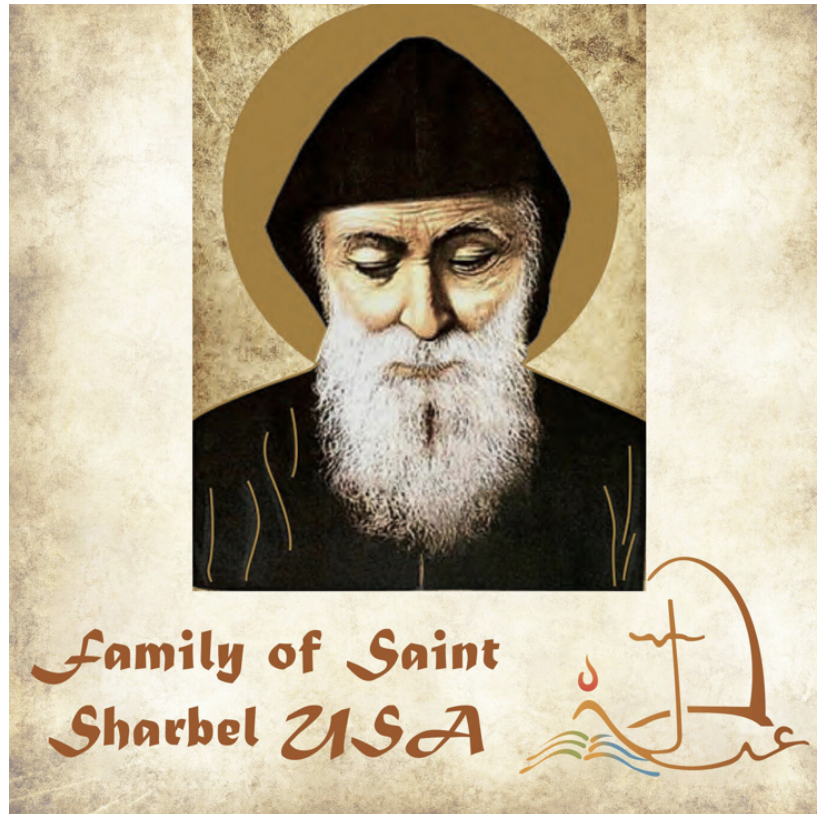
May God bless you!

[St. Sharbel's Miracles & Healings](#)

[Maronite Saints & Blesseds](#)

[Family of Saint Sharbel USA](#)

Family of Saint Sharbel Podcast



<https://www.familyofsaintsharbel.org/podcast>

The Family of Saint Sharbel (FSS) Podcast is now available in English and Arabic! Episodes currently include talks on the Maronite Divine Liturgy, Syriac Spirituality, the Silence of God, and more. Listen at the link below or through your podcast app of preference, and please feel free to share!

[Listen Now](#)

Zoom Prayer Gathering - Arabic



[Click Here to Learn More!](#)

Questions or Comments?

Email communications@familyofsaintsharbel.org to let us know!

Where to Find Us

- [Website](#)
- [Shrine](#)
- [YouTube.Healings](#)
- [YouTube.Family.Channel](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Online.Shop](#)
- [Amazon.Store](#)
- [Spanish.Website](#)
- [Portuguese.Website](#)
- [Sanctuary.of.Saint.Charbel.in.Lebanon](#)

**God Bless,
The Family of Saint Sharbel USA**



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