

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 18 | January 2024

Peace of Christ



May God's Love Warm Your Heart!

The Family of Saint Sharbel USA presents its 18th Newsletter. We are grateful and happy to be walking with you, and we ask for your prayers as our community of faith grows!

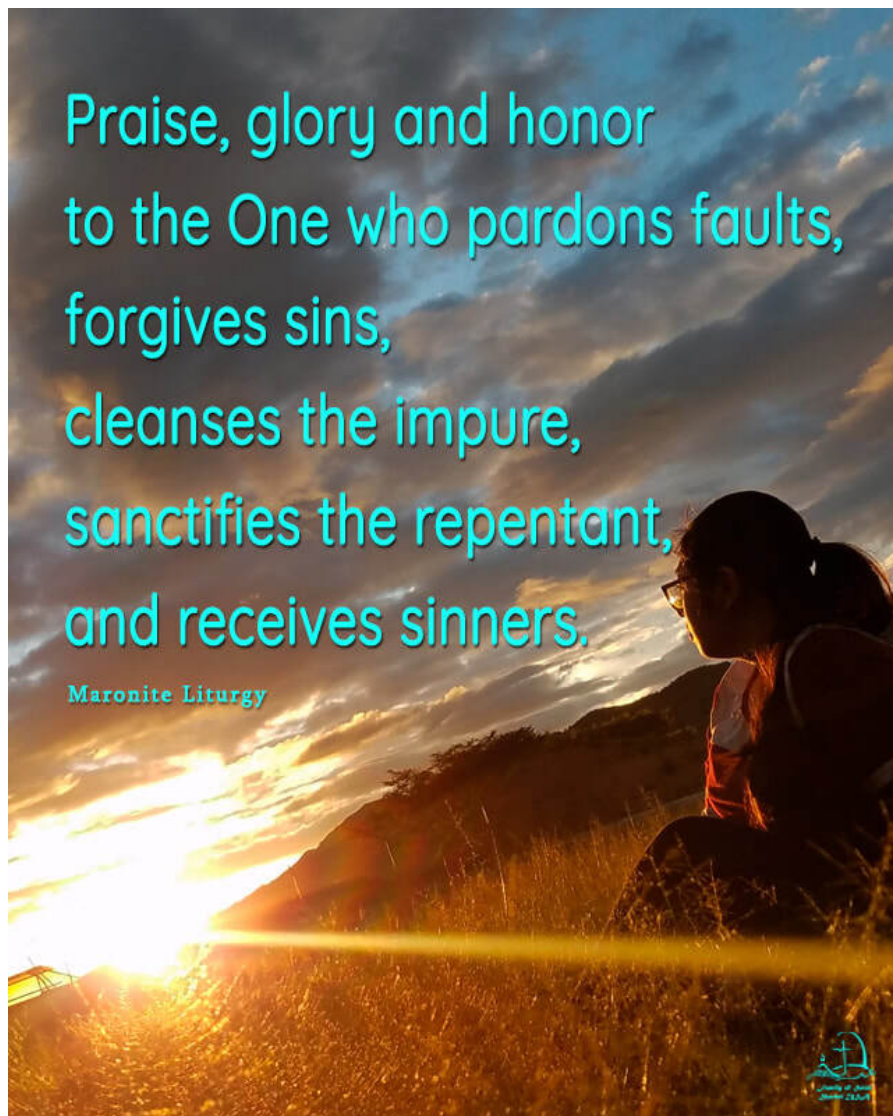
Please spread the word among your family and friends; we would love to have you all join us.

- CLICK HERE TO ACCESS OUR NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE -

View this Letter as a PDF

Contemplation Corner

A Reflection by Fr. Kamil Al-Chouefati, Pastor of Our Lady Star of the East (Pleasantville, NJ) and FSS Board Member



Praise, glory and honor
to the One who pardons faults,
forgives sins,
cleanses the impure,
sanctifies the repentant,
and receives sinners.

Maronite Liturgy

<https://www.familyofsaintsharbel.org/spiritual-designs/praise-glory-and-honor-to-the-one-who-pardons-faults>

Fasting is a social phenomenon that has existed since ancient times, including many years before Christianity. For some, fasting took a ritual form of worship and religion, imposed by society on their behavior. For example, we find it among pagan nations on various occasions, such as for preparing to meet a God in the temple, or to calm his anger, or upon the death of a close person. We also find it among the Jews on special occasions to express calamity and mourning, before performing a major work or task, to seek healing, or to prevent a disaster. The pious Jews used to fast two days a week (Monday and Thursday) as a sign of religiosity and worship, and this is what we find in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector.

Fasting in Christianity is abstaining from food, drink, or another practice for two purposes: the first is to build the self and personality, and the second is the relationship with God and with others through prayer and charity. Fasting is not only a matter of food and drink, but rather it is to refine a person spiritually and physically, as he submits his body to it in order to control it and not controlled by it...

Click here to read Fr. Kamil's full reflection.

Click here to view more of our spiritual designs.

Saint Sharbel Events in the USA

Explore the links below to find an event near you!

Please call the parish's phone number to confirm dates and times.

Healing Masses at Our Lady of Victory Maronite Church have been moved to the St. Sharbel Spiritual Life Center

Healing Masses in Honor of St. Sharbel:

St. Joseph Maronite Catholic Church, Phoenix, Arizona

St. Sharbel Maronite Catholic Mission of Stockton, California

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

St. Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church, Clinton Township, Michigan

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

St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church, Astoria, New York

Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Cathedral, Brooklyn, New York

NEW! St. Sharbel Spiritual Life Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

NEW! St. Sharbel Mission of El Paso, Texas

St. Sharbel Mission of Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Healing Holy Hour in Honor of St. Sharbel:

Shrine Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Brooklyn, New York

In Case You Missed It

Mosaic of St. Sharbel: Now in the Vatican!



Earlier this month, a mosaic of St. Sharbel was installed on a wall in St. Peter's Basilica that surrounds Pope Paul VI's tomb. For many Lebanese Christians, this event held personal significance, serving as a reminder of God's grace at work in a person from their own homeland. To learn more about the mosaic and its display, see the article below!

[St. Sharbel in the Vatican: Aleteia Article](#)

Saint Spotlight



Public Domain Image - St. Maron and his followers.

Prayers for St. Maron's Feast Day

The Feast of Saint Maron is **Friday, February 9th**! For all Maronite Catholics, this feast is a holy day of obligation. To prepare, join us in praying the Hoosoyo from the **Maronite Ramsho (evening prayer) of St. Maron** on the eve of the feast, February 8th, 2024! Click the button below to access the Hoosoyo prayers.

[Click to Pray](#)

Saint James of Cyr, Disciple of Maron



Image of Cyrrhus, the region in ancient Syria nearest to the mountain where St. James lived his solitary years.

Maronite Feast Day: February 20th

Adapted from the Maronite Synaxarion:

James of Cyr was a hermit and one of the disciples of Maron. Though many of Maron's disciples never met him, Maron instructed James personally and loved him very much. James lived with Maron before retreating to a mountain far from the city, which later became famous under the name "Sheikh Khouros" or "the holy one from Khouros" because of James' sanctity.

As a hermit, James spent his time exercising virtues and excelled his master in acts of penance and good deeds. Maron, an open-air hermit, accepted the ruins of a temple as his dwelling and wore goatskins for clothing. James refused even these most minor comforts and lived in the open, saying that the skies were his roof. Exposing himself to inclement weather, James was often drenched with rain, submerged in snow and ice, and left vulnerable beneath the burning sun. By the grace of the Holy Spirit, he met all these natural challenges with great patience, as if he were not enduring these sufferings in his own body.

After remaining with him, Bishop Theodoret (who also wrote about St. Maron) wrote many examples of James's holiness and life of penitence as one of the "flowers in the garden of Maron" whose numbers and variations continue to grow to this day.

Saint James, Pray for Us!

Editor's Pick: FORMED Resource



Click the image above (copied from the FORMED online streaming platform) to be directed to "The Three Temptations" by Dr. Brant Pitre.

The Family of Saint Sharbel offers a FREE subscription to FORMED, a Catholic online platform with thousands of resources for spiritual growth, to all who are open. This month, we would like to highlight "**The Three Temptations**" by Dr. Brant Pitre, a good resource to consider as we continue and deepen our relationship with God throughout Great Lent! This roughly half-hour video covers the **three ways our hearts are drawn to sin**, thus away from faith, hope, and fidelity to God through a life of wholeness in the Spirit. At the same time, it addresses the very related spiritual wisdom that informs the Church's encouragement of **prayer, fasting, and almsgiving** throughout our lives, especially during Lent. Click the button below to access this helpful teaching!

Watch "The Three Temptations" on FORMED

Note: The video above speaks from the perspective of the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church, hence the mention of Ash Wednesday rather than Ash Monday and other potential (minor!) liturgical differences.

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](#)

Reading Nook

The Spirit of Reconciliation as a Way of Life

By Chorbishop Seely Beggiani



Public Domain Image - "The Creation of Adam" by Michaelangelo, Sistine Chapel

In her loving wisdom, the Church encourages us to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly, especially during Great Lent. Yet reconciliation - coming back into communion - is a spirit in which we can live our whole lives, regardless of season. In the article below, Chorbishop Seely Beggiani talks about the Christian spiritual life as a soul's continual journey toward reconciliation with Our Lord. Please see the excerpt below and click the button to read more!

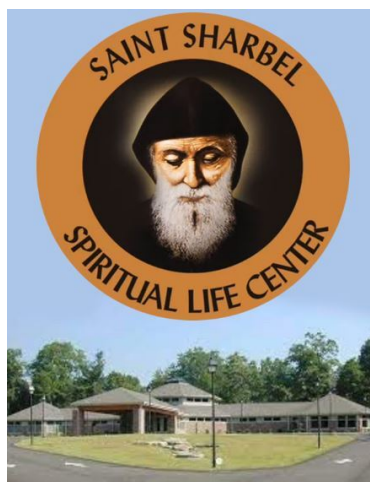
*This article has been copied from [stmaron.org](#), the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn's official website. See [stmaron.org/reconciliation](#) for more!

THE SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION AS A WAY OF LIFE

“As the season of Lent teaches us, the Christian life is one long journey of reconciliation. A sign of spiritual progress is the awareness of our own sinfulness. In the Gospel story of the Pharisee and the Publican, the Publican earned divine approval because rather than proclaim his righteousness, he beat his breast and asked only that God forgive him, a sinner. The spiritual writers tell us that a sign of progress in the ascetical acts of purifying ourselves from our faults and bad habits is the "gift of tears," namely, regret for our former way of life..."

[Read the Rest Here](#)

Articles and More



<https://www.saintsharbelcenter.org/>

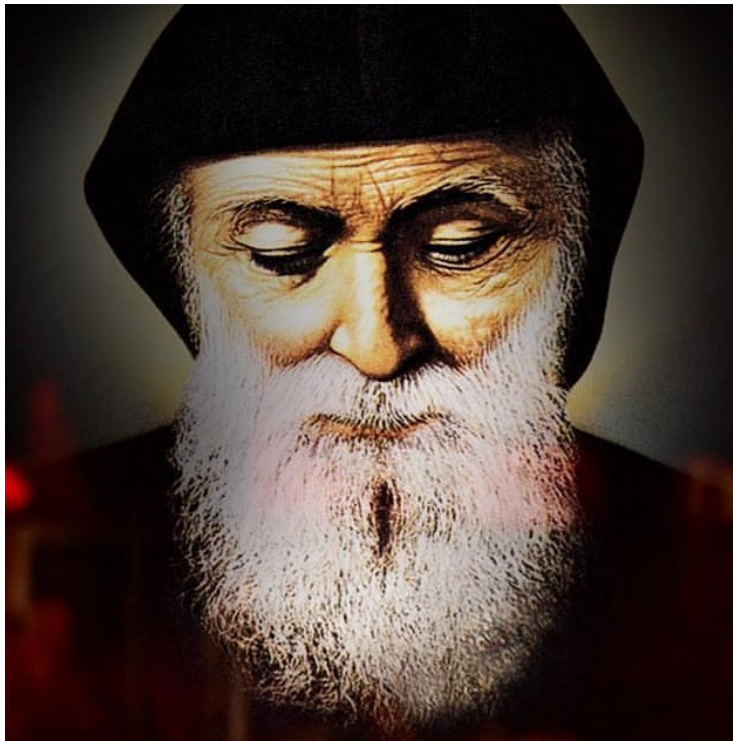
St. Sharbel Spiritual Life Center

Recently purchased by the Maronite Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn, the St. Sharbel Spiritual Life Center is now open in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania! The multi-purpose Center aims to help others “grow in holiness according to the teachings of Christ and the example of the great mystics of the Catholic Church, and to cultivate a deeper devotion to Christ in the Holy Eucharist through the example and intercession of Saint Sharbel.” It works to reach this end by offering opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration, Confession, Spiritual Direction (by appointment), Daily Mass (11:00am Monday - Friday), retreats, and more. Click below to learn more and to view upcoming events!

The Center is open Monday through Friday, 10:00am to 4:00pm.

Center Webpage

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 the most recent testimonials with you below! **Click on a title to read the full story**; all posted testimonials have been shared with the author's permission.

Healing Testimony of the Child Tia Daoud Kinan

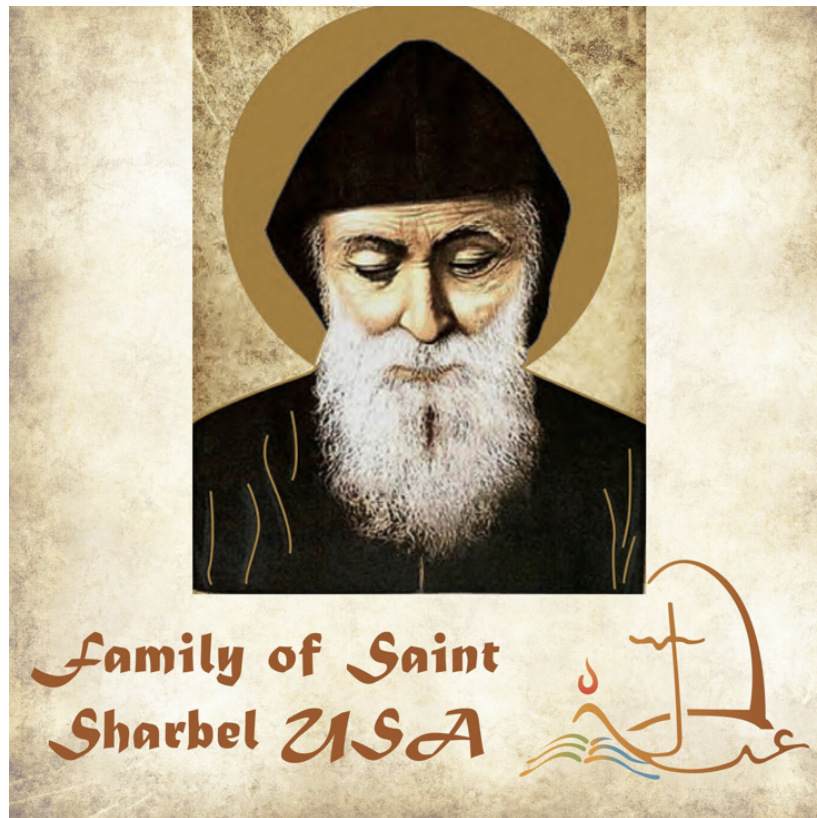
Healing Testimony of Victor G Akroush

Testimony from Angela Zurlini on Her Daughter's Struggle With Infertility

Healing Testimony of Elias Raymond Baaklini

You can read more personal testimonials on our Testimonials page **HERE**.

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. Please feel free to share!

[Listen Now](#)

New Production! St. Sharbel Ramsho and Ziyah

“St. Sharbel Ramsho and Ziyah,” recently published on the FSS Podcast, is an original musical production created by the Family of Saint Sharbel that features traditional Maronite hymns and prayers to St. Sharbel. Click the bottom link below to listen and learn more about this project!

[St. Sharbel Ramsho and Ziyah - Listen Now](#)

Zoom Prayer Gathering - Arabic



Every Tuesday night at 8:00 PM (ET), members of the Family of Saint Sharbel from various locations gather on Zoom to pray Ramsho (Maronite evening prayer) in Arabic. A priest leads the celebration, cantors sing hymns, and lectors read Scripture passages, then the priest reads the day's Gospel and gives a short homily. Following the prayers, the presiding priest proceeds to share the scheduled teaching and engage in a Q&A session and Lectio Divina.

Come experience the serenity that prayer instills in us and the fellowship our meeting creates within our Family!

Email communications@familyofsaintsharbel.org for more information or to be added to the Prayer Group email list.

Where to Find Us

- [Website](#)
- [Shrine](#)
- [YouTube.Healings](#)
- [YouTube.Family.Channel](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Shopify](#)
- [Amazon Store](#)
- [Spanish Website](#)
- [Portuguese Website](#)
- [Sanctuary](#)

of
Saint
Charbel
in
Lebanon

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



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