

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 16 | November 2023

Peace of Christ!



Greetings and Blessings,

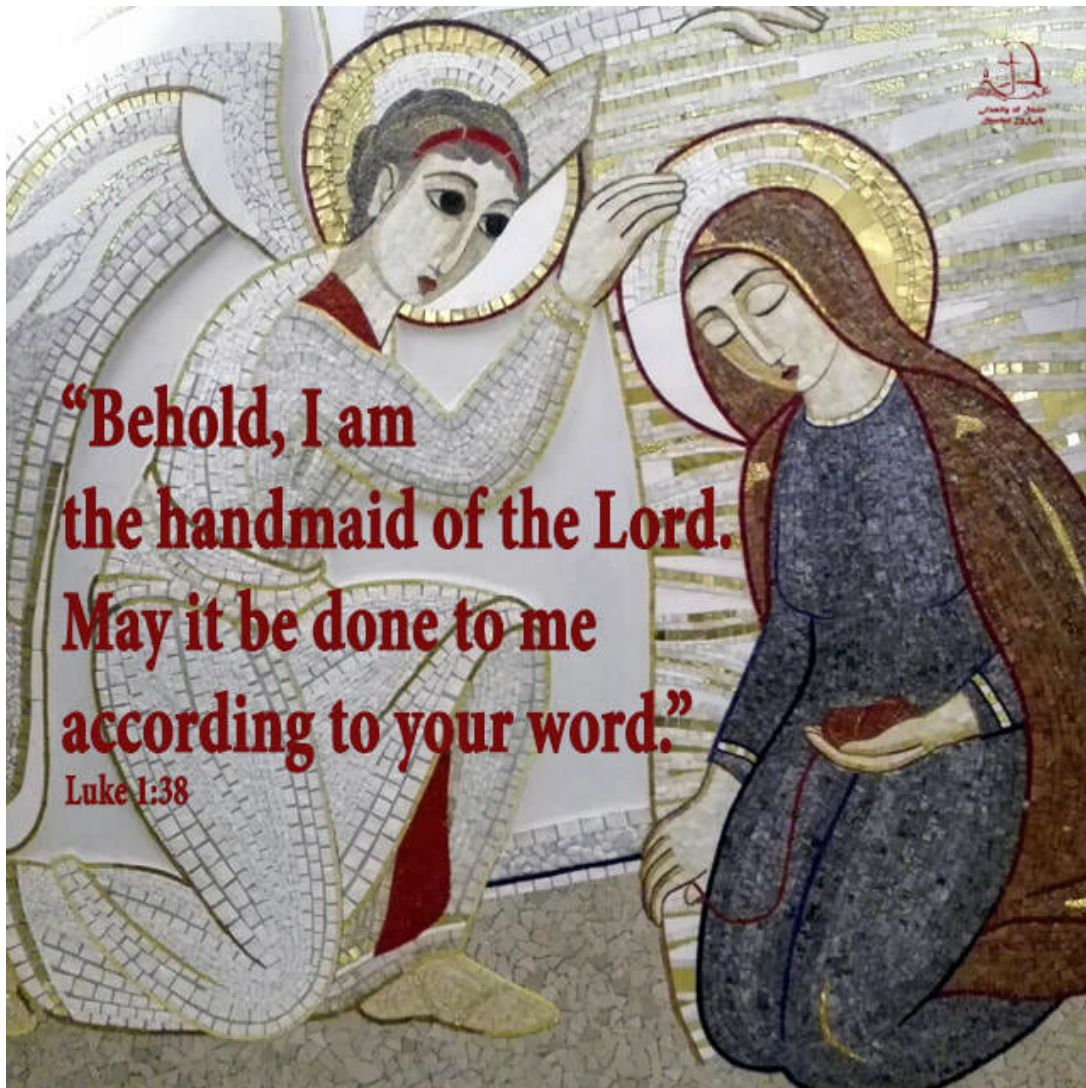
The Family of Saint Sharbel USA
presents its 16th Newsletter. We are
grateful and happy to have you on
board and ask for your prayers as our
community of faith continues to grow!
**Please spread the word among your
family and friends; we would love to
have you all join us.**

- CLICK HERE TO ACCESS OUR NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE -

View this Letter as a PDF

Contemplation Corner

A Reflection by Deacon George Geagea, FSS-USA Board Member



<https://www.familyofsaintsharbel.org/spiritual-designs/behold-i-am-the-handmaid-of-the-lord>

Embracing Mary's Model: A Call to Transformative Faith

In the heart of our Christian narrative lies a figure of unparalleled grace and obedience, Mother Mary, whose role in relation to the birth of Christ provides

not only a cornerstone of faith but a blueprint for transformative living. This article seeks to explore Mary's profound contribution to our spiritual heritage and also to ignite a call to action, urging each of us to embody the virtues she exemplified in our daily lives.

Mary's Role: The Embodiment of Faith and Courage

Mary's journey begins with the Annunciation, where, despite the potential for misunderstanding and judgment, she embraces God's will with a heart of faith: "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). This act of surrender, coupled with her unwavering trust in God's plan, sets a foundational example for Christians.

The Nativity, marked by simplicity and humility, further highlights Mary's role. Her willingness to bear and nurture the Messiah in a manger, away from the trappings of wealth and power, underscores a life dedicated to divine purpose over worldly acclaim.

Click here to read Deacon George'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.

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

Our Lady of Victory Maronite Catholic Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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

Shrine Dedication 6th Anniversary

On Saturday, November 4th, 2023, The Family of Saint Sharbel USA and The National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes commemorated the sixth anniversary of the dedication of St. Sharbel's Shrine in Emmitsburg, MD. This event included adoration, opportunities for confession, Mass, veneration of St. Sharbel's relic, and more! To read more about the day, please [click here](#). To view a video, please click the button below!



Shrine Dedication 6th Anniversary Video

Perturbations: A Conversation with Raymond Nader

On Sunday, November 12th, 2023, Nathan (@AWaifSoul on X/Twitter), host of the podcast “Perturbations” and cohost of “Liminal Phrames” and “Calling All Beings,” made "A Conversation with Raymond Nader" public on his YouTube channel. **Click the image below** to listen!

Nathan has a seminary background and now studies Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) and consciousness.



Image copied from YouTube; click to view the video!

[Listen Now](#)

Saint Spotlight

Saint Ignatius of Antioch



This Byzantine icon of St. Ignatius is a public-domain image of artwork in Hosios Loukas Monastery in Boeotia, Greece.

Feast Day: December 20

Saint Ignatius of Antioch was said to have been born sometime in the first century AD and martyred in Rome during the reign of Trajan (98 - 117 AD), supposedly on December 20th. As Bishop of Syrian Antioch, St. Ignatius was one of the Church's earliest theologians. A handful of his teachings are recorded in letters written to six early churches (Ephesians, Philadelphians, Magnesians, Romans, Smyrnaeans, and Trallians) and to Bishop Polycarp. St. Ignatius is known to this day for emphasizing the importance of "flawless unison" in the Church under the bishop and other ecclesial authorities (who share Christ's headship over the Church), stressing the necessity of the Eucharist and the Lord's Day, warning against being seduced by false teachings, and presenting martyrdom as a victorious union with Christ. His writings have made him both a controversial and intriguing figure in the Church's history, as his letters testify to a hierarchically-structured Church—at least to some degree—as early as the second century AD.

Saint Ignatius, Pray for Us!

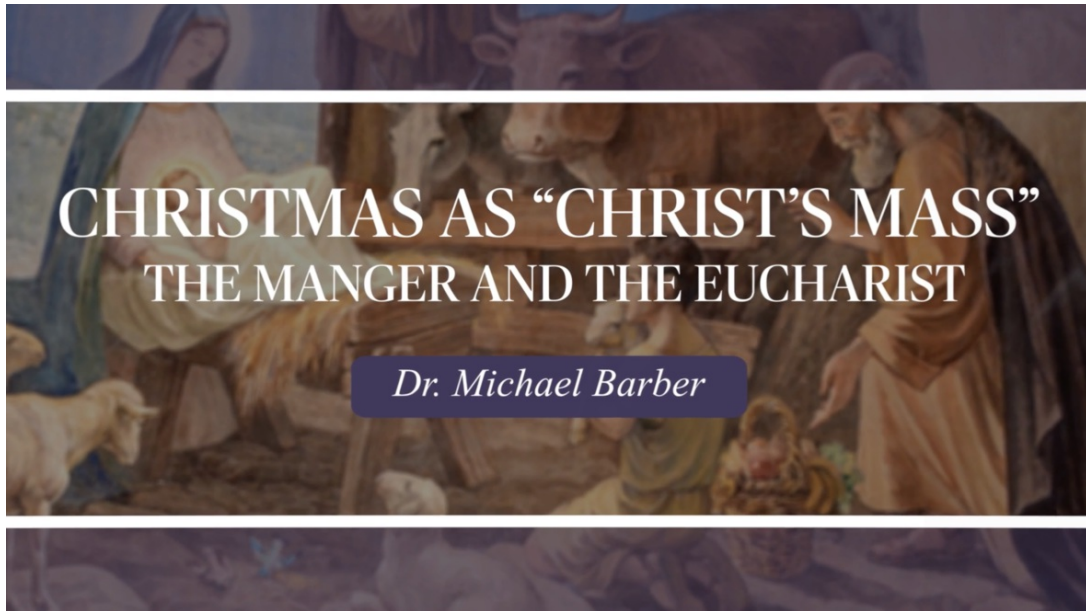
To read a full article on St. Ignatius, view Fr. Yuhanna Azize's reflection

here.

To watch a video about St. Ignatius, check out [this resource](#) on FORMED!

[Read the Letters of Saint Ignatius Here](#)

Editor's Pick: FORMED Resource



Click the image above (copied from the FORMED online streaming platform) to be directed to Dr. Michael Barber's talk, "Christmas as 'Christ's Mass': The Manger and the Eucharist."

The Family of Saint Sharbel offers a FREE subscription to FORMED, a Catholic online platform with thousands of resources for spiritual growth.

Whether you've just heard the name or know the story inside out, much of the world is aware of Christmas, the celebration of Jesus' birth. But what does Jesus' birth really mean, and why should it matter to us? Where did some of our most popular traditions come from, and how can they become means for our spiritual growth? In *The True Meaning of Christmas* and "Christmas as 'Christ's Mass': The Manger and the Eucharist," Dr. Michael Barber unpacks some of the theology of Christmas, exploring these questions and more. For a series of short video explanations (about 5 minutes each) on various Christmas traditions and related topics, check out [The True Meaning of Christmas here](#). For a more in-depth resource, "[Christmas as 'Christ's Mass': The Manger and the Eucharist](#)" is an excellent 30-minute talk that unpacks the connection between Christmas and the liturgy we celebrate each Sunday. Both are available for free on FORMED below!

The True Meaning of Christmas

Christmas as "Christ's Mass": The Manger and the Eucharist

Sign up to 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:

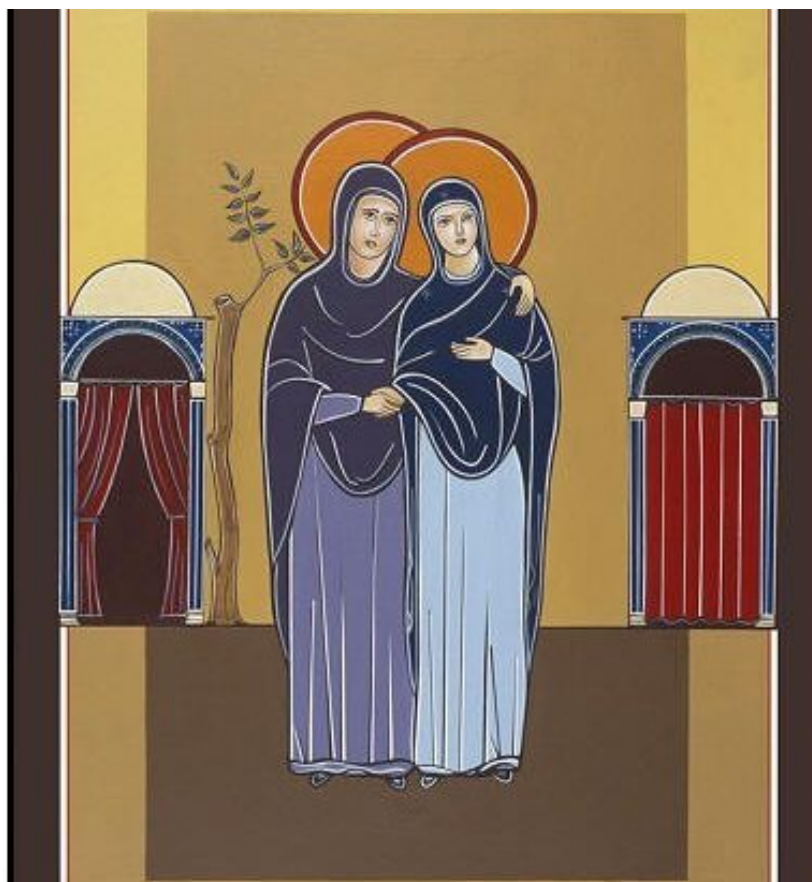
Instagram: [formedcatholic](#)

Facebook: [FORMEDCatholic](#)

YouTube: [Augustine Institute](#)

Reading Nook

Maronite Synaxarion: Season of Announcements



An icon of the Blessed Mother's Visit to Elizabeth

Title: Reflections from the Maronite Synaxarion

Language: English

Abstract: As part of her tradition, the Maronite Church both prepares for and celebrates Christmas during the Season of the Glorious Birth of Our Lord, which spans from the six Sundays before Christmas (the Season of Announcements) until the Feast of Epiphany. Leading up to Christmas Day, Maronites traditionally center their contemplation around five chronological events (The Announcement to Zechariah, The Announcement to Mary, The Visitation to Elizabeth, The Birth of John the Baptizer, and the Revelation to Joseph) and one the genealogy of Jesus (Genealogy Sunday), all tied to the coming of the Messiah. The online reflections linked below are excerpts from the Maronite Synaxarion for Ramsho (evening prayer) for each of the six weeks before Christmas; each is meant to help us understand what we commemorate as we prepare to celebrate our Lord's birth. Read this Sunday's reflection [here](#) or pick from any of them below!

Announcement to Zechariah

Announcement to Mary

Visitation to Elizabeth

Birth of John the Baptizer

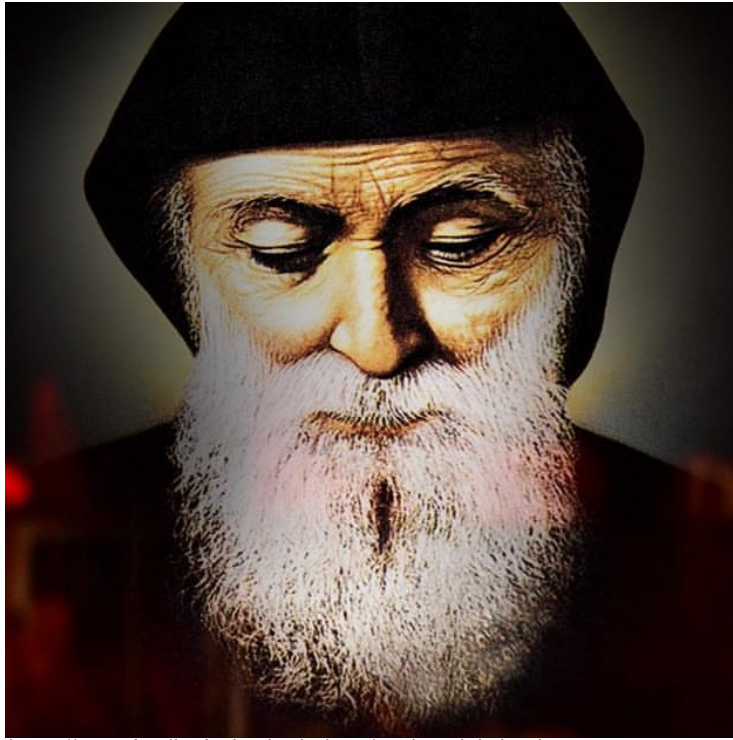
Revelation to Joseph

Genealogy Sunday

Though its reflections can stand alone, the Maronite Synaxarion for Ramsho (evening prayer) is meant to be part of the Maronite Liturgy of the Hours (Divine Office) in English. To access the Maronite Liturgy of the Hours online in English, Ramsho (evening prayer), Sootoro (night prayer), and Safro (morning prayer) are available [here](#)!

Articles and More

Healing Testimony of Elias Raymond Baaklini



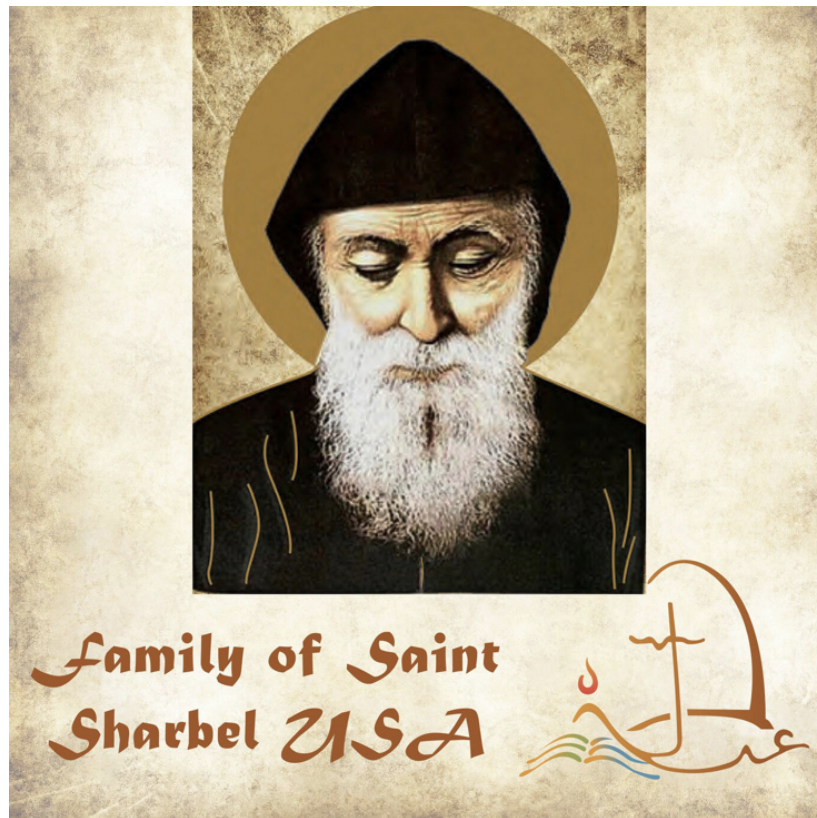
<https://www.familyofsaintsharbel.org/testimonials.html>

Mr. Elias Raymond Baaklini is married to Mrs. Aida and has three children. Born in 1957 in Qornet Chahwane, he resides in Antelias, Lebanon. He tells about his health condition, as outlined in the medical report: "A tumor appeared in my throat on the left side, so I was admitted to the hospital where Dr. Sami Faddoul took care of me and conducted the necessary tests and X rays." It was revealed that I had cancer in my left tonsil. On November 5, 2022, I started the necessary treatments, especially radiation therapy administered by Dr. Eli Aazar.

During this time, my daughter visited the shrine of Saint Sharbel in Annaya, asking for his intercession before the Lord Jesus Christ to heal me. She brought a Saint Sharbel belt from his shrine and placed it around my neck. However, due to intensive radiation treatment and neck inflammation, I removed the ribbon, cut a part of it and tied it as a bracelet on my hand. The remaining part was placed by my wife under my mattress. After a few days, when my wife came to clean my bed, she found the remaining belt girdle oozing oil onto the bed's wood and sheets, interpreting this phenomenon as a good sign from Saint Sharbel.

Read the full Testimonial [HERE](#).

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



<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](#)

**Newest Episode - Perturbations: A Conversation with
Raymond Nader**

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 the Ramsho (evening liturgy of the hours) 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 give the scheduled teaching and engage in a Q&A session.

Come experience the serenity that prayer instills in us and the fellowship our meeting creates among all the members of our Family!

Email communications@familyofsaintsharbel.org for more information and be put on the Prayer Group email list.

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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