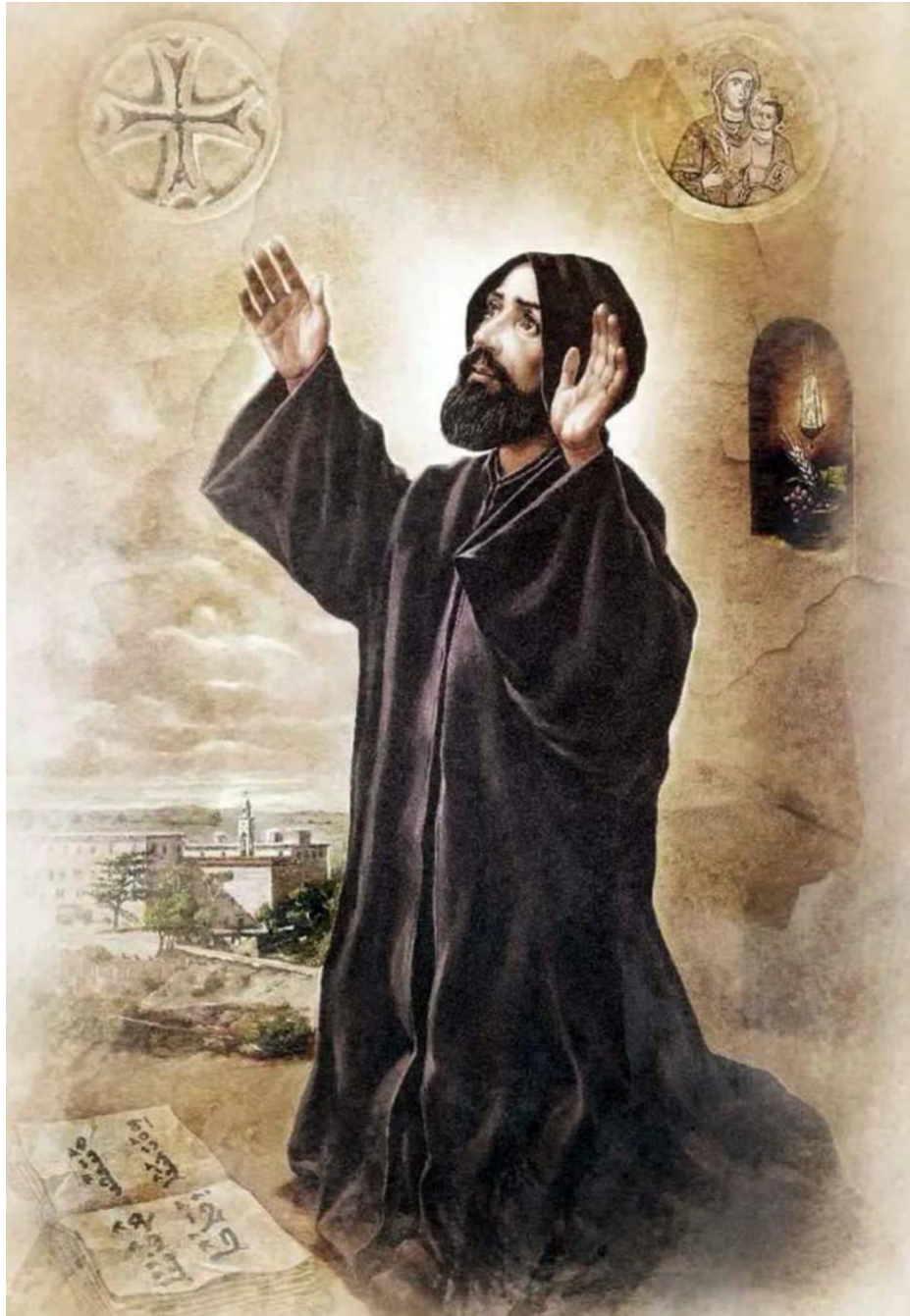


St. Nimatullah Novena



**Text by the Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina
Kfifan, Lebanon**

English Translation Modified by the Family of Saint Sharbel USA

The Life of Saint Nimatullah Kassab Al-Hardini

Youssef Kassab was born in Hardine, Batroun, Lebanon in 1808. His father was Gerges Kassab, and his mother was Maryam Raad from Tanurin, Lebanon. Youssef studied at the school of the Lebanese Maronite Order at Saint Anthony's Monastery in Houb in 1816 and stayed there until 1822. He joined the novitiate group at Saint Anthony's Monastery of Qozhaya in November 1828, adopting the name "Nimatullah."

There, he learned the craft of bookbinding. He made his solemn profession of vows on November 14, 1830. Having completed his theological studies, he was ordained a priest at the Kfifan monastery on December 25, 1833 by Bishop Semaan Zouein.

As a priest, Nimatullah assumed the responsibility of assistant general for his order three times: 1845-1848, 1850-1853, 1856-1858. He continued to practice the craft of bookbinding even when he was assistant general. He also taught at various schools of the Lebanese Maronite Order. Among his students was Brother Sharbel Makhoulf (Saint Sharbel), who studied under him from 1853 to 1858.

Saint Nimatullah died at the monastery of Saints Cyprian and Justina on December 14, 1858 after suffering a brief but incurable illness. After his body was transferred and sealed, Nimatullah's beatification case was submitted to the Apostolic See in Rome on May 4, 1926. He was declared Venerable on September 7, 1989. At the behest of His Beatitude Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Butrus Sfier, his body was examined and transferred to a new coffin on May 18, 1996.

After Nimatullah's death, several cures were effected through his intercession, including:

- Raising a child from death
- Healing a person from a neurological disease
 - Healing a blind person's vision
 - Healing a person from cancer

Pope John Paul II beatified Nimatullah at Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome on Sunday May 10, 1998. With permission from His Beatitude Cardinal Mar Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir, Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and the East, Nimatullah's body was exhumed and transferred to a new shrine on May 8, 2004.

Saint Nimatullah was canonized by Pope John Paul II on May 16, 2004. The Maronite Church celebrates his feast on December 14th.

To the Reader:

Fellow believer, prayer is the daily presence of faith, hope, and love before God. Let us glorify God the Father who created the sky and the earth and who created us in His image and likeness. Let us worship His only Son who became human and redeemed us with his life, death, and resurrection! Let us thank the Holy Spirit who completes our salvation! In this spirit, know that this novena need not be prayed only for urgent requests, over nine continuous days, in hours of difficulty and distress or periods of weakness and need. Rather, let these prayers present an opportunity for us to ascend with St. Nimatullah from the darkness of the earth to the luminosity of heaven and receive the great love that joins us each day. May we be nurtured by the blessing that nourished the saints.

Novena Day 1: Prayer to the Father

Pray Matthew 6:9-13, the Lord's Prayer.

O Father in Heaven,

You invited us from the obscurity of nihilism to the light of existence, and You help us every day to fulfill our life's calling, each one of us in his own state. You asked Saint Nimatullah to embrace the evangelical counsels through his monastic vows, and he responded to Your call with happiness, resolution, and stability. Like him, strengthen us in our faith in You and in our battle for You that we may complete our daily duties with energy, joy, and fidelity. Through Saint Nimatullah's intercession, grant us this grace (...) so that we may comply with you more each day of our Christian life and follow Saint Nimatullah in accepting our holy call, sanctifying Your name, and glorifying You, Your son, and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be)

Novena Day 2: Prayer to the Son

Read John 19:25-37, an excerpt from the Passion narrative.

O beloved son of God, Our Lord Jesus Christ, you were in your life, death, and resurrection the greatest example of human perfection. You taught the disciples you chose, took them as close companions, made them yours, told them your secrets, and sent them preaching about you to everyone.

You gave Saint Nimatullah the responsibility of teaching, so he did his best to understand your Holy Bible and serve your sacraments, following your path with his disciples and brothers in knowledge and holiness.

Like Saint Nimatullah, help us understand the bible and illuminate our minds with right knowledge so that we may grow each day in blessing and perfection, seeking our unique purpose. Through Saint Nimatullah's intercession, grant us this grace (...) so that we may grow in knowledge and wisdom, offering a pure testimony about you before our brothers and during the practice of all our humanitarian deeds, honoring each person's rights and dignity. We devoutly prostrate ourselves before You, your Father, and your Holy Spirit, now and forever.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be)

Novena Day 3: Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Read Acts 2:1-13, the story of Pentecost.

O Holy Advocate, our consolation, you, Holy Spirit of God, have filled your disciples with seven gifts: wisdom, knowledge, understanding, counsel, fortitude, piety, and fear of the Lord. You made ignorant souls into wise men capable of testifying to the truth of the Bible. Like your first disciples, you have also filled Saint Nimatullah's soul, trained him toward the path of perfection, and made him responsible for teaching others. Lead our steps as you did his despite our daily stumbles and errors. Grant us determination and courage so that we may become glowing lamps, letting people see your light, glorify you, and thank you.

Through Saint Nimatullah's intercession, grant us this grace (...) so that we shall seek your inspiration in all we do, correcting error, preserving harmony and love, and pouring out the hidden contents of our heart so that you may purify and enrich us with your divine gifts. We thank you, the Father who sent you to us, and the Son through whom you dwell in us to sanctify us now and forever.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be)

Novena Day 4: Prayer to the Virgin Mary

Read Luke 1:26-38, the story of the Annunciation.

O Mother of God, holy Virgin Mary, you accepted the angel's news and were inhabited by the holy Son of God, the One to whom you devoted your whole life as a dedicated, believing mother. You were the closest person to Jesus during his life, death, and resurrection, and you became one of his first believers, present at the center of the first apostles.

During his life on earth, you filled Saint Nimatullah's heart with outstanding filial love until your name was continuously on his lips, praising you night and day. Like him, we promise you to honor our enemies and greet you with the angelic salutation. We recite your rosary, tasting the sweetness of living under your protection, and we contemplate your beauty.

Through Saint Nimatullah's intercession and yours, we ask that God grant us this grace (...). Virgin Mary, respond to us and accompany us so that we may always live in the blessing of your son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Through your prayers, may God enable us to enjoy seeing both of you in eternity, glorifying your son with you, the Father, and the Holy Spirit now and forever.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be)

Novena Day 5: Prayer to St. Nimatullah, The Prayerful Monk

Read Mark 9:2-13, the transfiguration of Jesus.

O Saint Nimatullah, example of monastic piety, the spirit of devotion and prayer that you continued practicing during your monastic life brought you up from your parents' home. You used to pass the night awake in front of the "prisoner of love" in the Eucharist, talking to him and preparing yourself for the divine offering. You celebrated the Divine Liturgy with ardent love, piety, and devoutness, and, after it, you worshiped and thanked God cheerfully.

Saint Nimatullah, prayerful monk, pray that we, like you, may grow in the love of prayer, allowing our weak bodies to rise and our past to be washed clean with repentance. In this manner, may we be freed from concerns about our judgment and may our desire to love our Lord Jesus increase. Saint Nimatullah, on our behalf, ask Jesus to grant us this grace (...) and teach us how to commit ourselves to the path leading to saintliness. We glorify Christ with you, with God our Father, and with the Holy Spirit now and forever.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be)

Novena Day 6: Prayer to St. Nimatullah, The Working Monk

Read 1 Thessalonians.

O Saint Nimatullah, example of holy labor, you combined your prayer with your work; you plowed the soil, practiced stitching, bound books, and performed all your monastic duties with love, poverty, modesty, and complete dedication. You took Jesus working in Nazareth and the disciple Paul the tentmaker as examples, following in the footsteps of the saints.

Like you, we mean to work assiduously, completing our duties to our families, societies, and communities and encouraging each other to pursue Christian morals and sanctify our lives through work and prayer.

Saint Nimatullah, on our behalf, ask God to grant us this grace (...) not only so that we may rise above banality and pettiness but also so that we may grow ever more sensitive to the spirit of morality. May we, in this manner, work with accuracy and be met with success. With you, we glorify God the Father, his Son, and his Holy Spirit now and forever.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be)

Novena Day 7: Prayer to St. Nimatullah, The Teacher

Read Matthew 5:1-12, the Beatitudes (an excerpt from the Sermon on the Mount).

O Saint Nimatullah, exemplary teacher, you taught the young and loved them as Christ did, educating their minds and souls. You also taught the brothers of your order literary theology; the pure spirit of the bible inspired you, and you explained the truth clearly while being a living example. May God grant us teachers like you who take care of God's people, their students, with great love and dedication.

Saint Nimatullah, on our behalf, please ask your holy master to grant us this grace (...) so that He may renew in us good health, zeal, and energy, transforming weakness into strength. In this way, may we become witnesses to God's love and great affection, and may God's presence in his holy, apostolic Church persist. With you, we glorify Christ and thank his Father and the Holy Spirit now and forever.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be)

Novena Day 8: Prayer to St. Nimatullah, The Administrator

Read Hebrews 13:7-19.

O Saint Nimatullah, responsible monk, you were appointed as a general administrator in the friary three times. In Jesus' name, you were the perfect example of a modest administrator; you sacrificed yourself, were hard on yourself but tender on your brothers, and you were virtuous, poor, and obedient. Like you, let us complete all our responsibilities devoutly.

Our bodies are weak, but our souls can be strong, depending on who fortifies us. So, ask for us with all the intimacy that you have with the heart of our beloved redeemer, this grace (...) to be granted. Teach us how to discover the spirit of responsibility, to listen to our souls' inspirations, so that we may maintain great virtue in the middle of a world that tends toward apathy. In this manner, may Jesus Christ remain our way, truth, and life. We glorify Christ, his Father, and his living Holy Spirit now and forever.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be)

Novena Day 9: Prayer to St. Nimatullah, The Blessed Apostle

Read Revelation 1:9-20.

O Saint Nimatullah, exemplary apostle, you provided some clerical services to parishes near the monastery, and you were to them the image of a fervent apostle: you attracted believers to devotion and prayer with sweet words, an angelic life, and a permanent union with God. During your life on earth, you were called “the saint of Kfifan.”

Like you, we would like to return to our original glory, becoming witnesses to truth in our daily acts and relationships. We ask you to ask the greatest authority that we recognize, our Lord Jesus, to grant us this grace (...) so that, with it, we may triumph over temptations and difficulties. In this way, may

God transform the agitations in our hearts into calm, the confusion in our eyes into peace, the cruelty on our tongues into love, the perversion of our minds into integrity, and the harshness in our voices into gentleness.

May God the Father, his son our Lord Jesus Christ, and the living Holy Spirit be glorified in us as they were in you, now and forever.

(Our Father, Hail Mary and The Glory Be)