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John 15:12



Man can only be fulfilled
through love

St. Charbel

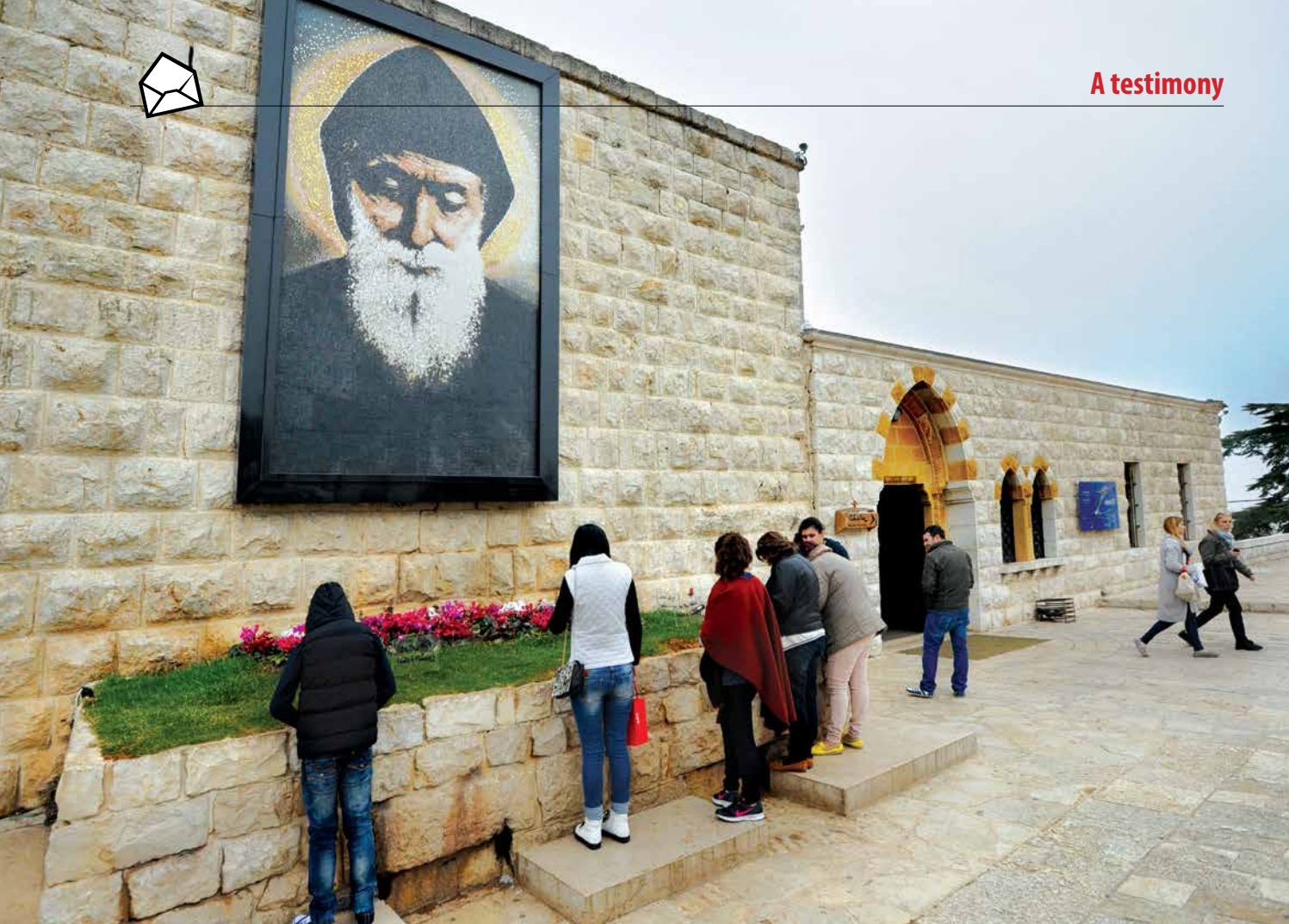


Photo: Pawel Fiszer

Pilgrims at the first burial site of St. Charbel, in Annaya, Lebanon

He offers more than healing – St. Charbel

When Christians in the Middle East make the sign of the cross, they add at the end: "There is but one God."

This ancient tradition bears witness to the fact that Jesus' followers are not idolaters who believe in three gods, as the Koran suggests, but that they believe in one God in three Persons.

Bartłomiej Grysa

From the mystery of the Holy Trinity, St. Charbel derived the strength to live close to God. Every day he undertook the difficulty of struggling for salvation,

both of his own soul and those of others, devoting himself to his work, and celebrating the Eucharist, which was the summit of his encounter with the Triune God. He

lived a quiet life, surrendered completely to Jesus. After death he became an intermediary for many people, not just for those associated with the miraculous healings of the sick.

The monk who looks after children

A particular Muslim girl from the town of Kabb Ilias, in Lebanon, offered the following testimony:

One night in 1994 (I was 11 years old) it was very cold. I was alone in the house with my younger siblings. My mother was at the



When my mother was sleeping at around midnight on the day before the operation, St. Charbel came to her. When she woke up, he said: “Bring a white sheet and lay your daughter on it on the rug. Give me a needle, some thread, and scissors so that I can perform an operation”

hospital with my youngest sister. I was very afraid. Suddenly an old man, looking like a monk, dressed in a black robe with a hood over his head came into the house. He also had a long, white beard. He came in and simply said: “Don’t be afraid!”

The fire in the stove which heats the house had gone out. The old man rekindled it. There were dishes with milk in them in the kitchen - mama had intended to cook some rice in them. The stranger entered the kitchen and prepared a meal. Then he returned to me and my siblings and did our homework with us (the next day we would all have exams, passing with full marks for our grades). Next the man held his finger up to his lips and repeated: “Don’t be afraid!”

After a few hours mama returned. When she opened the door, the monk rushed out. I asked mama if she had seen him, but she answered that she hadn’t. Then I told her everything that had happened that night. Mama went to the kitchen and put her hand on the pot. It was still warm. She believed our story, and began to thank God for the help He had sent.

After some time we visited the home of a Christian, who was a friend of mama’s. There was a portrait of St. Charbel hanging on the wall in the living room. I immediately recognized him as the old man who had visited us. I pointed to the portrait and

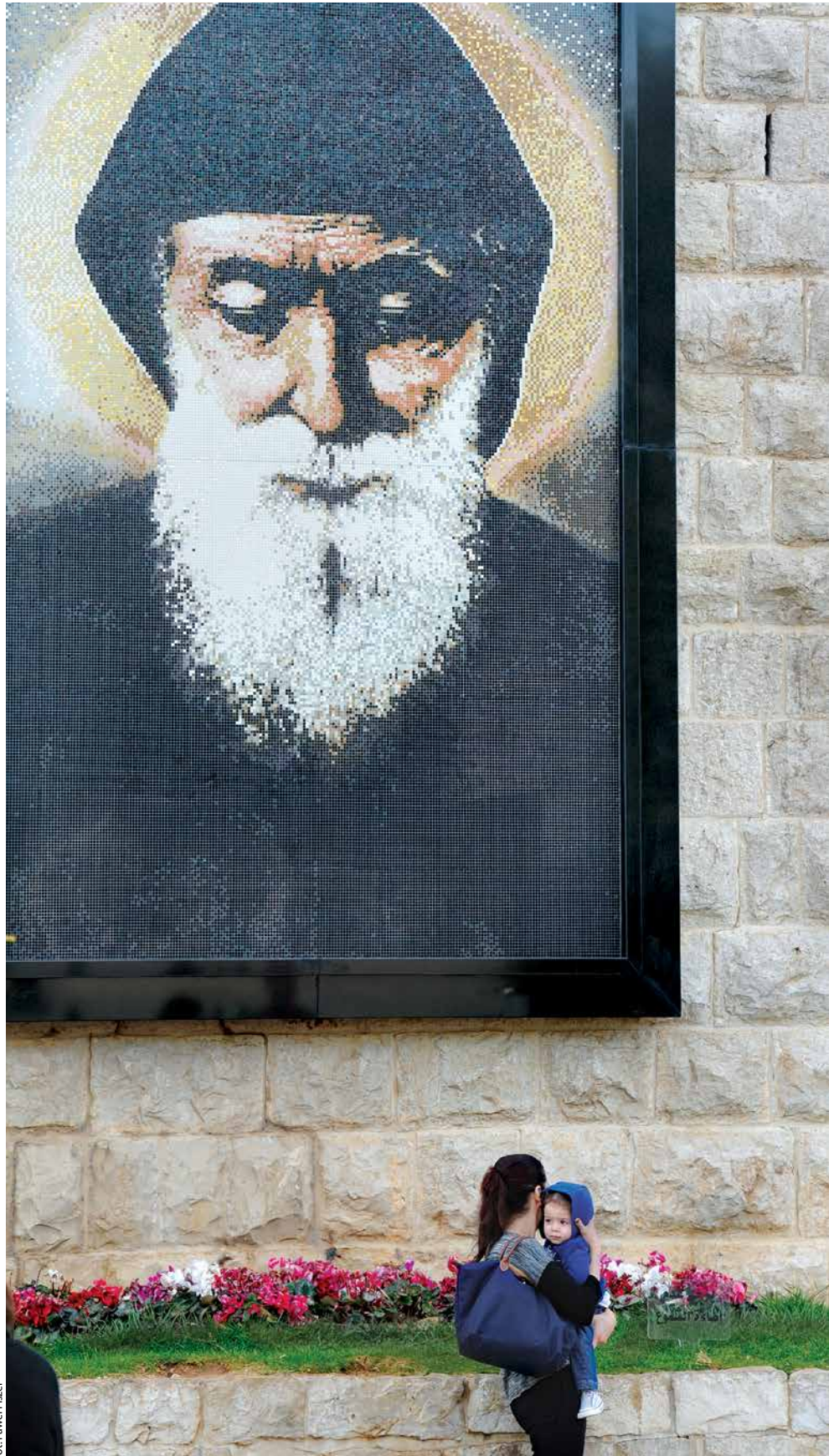


Foto: Paweł Fiszler

The physical healing and special treatment that lead to conversion are merely invitations which God send to each of us: so that we could also live for heaven



I began to pray to the Lord Jesus for a miracle

pillow for the Lord Jesus' feet. It is a symbol of peace and healing, as well as the birthplace of saints, in particular St. Charbel, the saint of Lebanon and friend of all Lebanese.

I come from the El-Beka province. I am a Muslim, but I love the Lord Jesus all the more because He sent us St. Charbel. I was living in desperation and poverty, which led to the death of my daughter at the age of only three months. On a particular day after her death, I felt very unhappy. I couldn't stand living in poverty and hunger any more, so I determined to commit suicide by throwing myself off the roof of the house. I was in a miserable shape, but just then I saw St. Charbel at the door of the room floating above the ground. In one hand he held a club, and in the other a golden orb. He moved towards the corner of the room where I kept the Koran. He took up the book, and returning to the doorway he read: "In the name of the merciful and gracious God: We will certainly test you with some fear and hunger, and some loss of possessions and lives and crops. But give good news to the steadfast. Those who, when a calamity afflicts them, say, 'To God we belong, and to Him we will return.' Upon these are blessings and mercy from their Lord. These are the guided ones." (sura 2,155-157). The phrase "these are the guided ones" stuck in my mind. I knew that St. Charbel was guiding me on the right path because he appeared to me at exactly that critical moment.

A week later St. Charbel appeared for a second time when I was sitting at the window watching the children playing in the yard. It reminded me of my deceased daughter. I felt great sorrow and bitterness that she wasn't able to play there with them. Then, the holy monk appeared carrying a white dove in his hands. He approached me and wiped away my tears, saying: "Don't cry! Whenever you miss



Photo: Pawel Fiszer

said: "Mama, that's the old man who visited us that night!"

St. Charbel, you are so beautiful! You, who love scared children! You warm them, teach them, cook for them, and stay with them until their mother returns - I thank you with my whole heart!

Binding up wounds and bringing comfort

A certain Muslim woman wrote the following, but wished to maintain her anonymity:

We Lebanese are very fortunate! We live in a country that is the



your daughter, this dove will come to you.” Since that time, whenever I start thinking about my daughter, I see a white dove.

St. Charbel came to me the third time when my youngest son was undergoing surgery. The doctor who was performing the operation said that if the boy’s temperature didn’t return to normal, he would not permit him to leave the hospital. The next day his temperature went up to 41°C (105.8F). The doctor wouldn’t let us leave the hospital. Early in the morning, I began to pray to the Lord Jesus for a miracle, because I urgently needed to return to the rest of the children, whom I had left alone in the house. The Koran teaches that only Jesus can perform miracles. At that moment I heard Majda El-Roumi singing about St. Charbel. Hearing this song I said out loud: “Where are you St. Charbel?!” I suddenly noticed that my son’s condition was beginning to improve. Dear God! St. Charbel, you are so wonderful! I called the nurse, and after checking the boy, she confirmed that his temperature had returned to normal. I would like to add parenthetically that this caused a quarrel between her and the doctor, who had just finished examining my son. In order to calm them down I stood up and said in a very confident voice that this was one of St. Charbel’s miracles. Then they let us leave the hospital.

Thanks to the help of St. Charbel my life was transformed beyond recognition. Thanks to this holy monk, I have brought my children up in goodness, wisdom, generosity, and courage.

The chance of survival was 1%

Maria Tarrazi tells us:

I was born in 1992 in Achach in northern Lebanon. My mother had a great devotion to St. Charbel. When I was born, I weighed only 900 grams (less than 2 pounds), and my lungs had not fully developed. I had to spend three months in an incubator. I was fed an expensive mixture through tubes. The doctors told my mother that I wouldn’t survive because I had a number of

Thanks to the help of St. Charbel my life was transformed beyond recognition

illnesses, and my low weight didn’t offer much hope for recovery. They also asked the family for authorization to perform an operation, even though they gave the chances for its success at only 1% at most.

When my mother was sleeping at around midnight on the day before the operation, St. Charbel came to her. When she woke up, he said: “Bring a white sheet and lay your daughter on it on the rug. Give me a needle, some thread, and scissors so that I can perform an operation.” Mama brought him the things he had asked for, and went back to sleep. In the morning she told my father what had happened. Both parents went to the hospital, known as Annai, and laid the robe of St. Charbel (a relic from his habit) on me. When it came time to perform the operation, mama asked the doctors to repeat their tests one last time. The doctors could not get over their amazement. It turned out that I was healthy, and the operation would not be necessary!

St. Charbel and the well-known Lebanese anchorwoman

The people whom I knew were talking sarcastically about: “the saint from Lebanon?!” I started to think and talk like them: ‘What kind of a lie is this?! They’ll use anything to promote Lebanon: the green forests, the beautiful weather, the ancient cedars, and now they’ve thought up a saint! It’s all designed to cover up the bitter reality that we live in here’.

For a month and a half I was struggling with hoarseness. At one point, I lost my voice completely. From that time on I couldn’t escape the anxiety and doubt, thinking that this might be some incurable disease, like cancer of the larynx.

One day, my friend and neighbor Rachel said:

– Mrs. Mo’arbes was asking about you, and asked that you visit her.

– And who is she?

– A woman who has a portrait of St. Charbel that discharges oil.

– Where does she live?

– In Rajfun, not far from here.

Maybe we could go together?

– If you want, you can come with me – I said with no enthusiasm. And added: – but what does she want from me?

– She saw something in a dream, and wanted to talk to you about it.

So we found ourselves on our way to visit Mrs. Mo’arbes. On our arrival, the woman told us that St. Charbel had announced to her that I shouldn’t be afraid, because this isn’t cancer. I can add that Mrs. Mo’arbes had not previously known about my illness. She gave me a piece of cotton dampened with oil for me to swallow. My voice returned to me as soon as I had swallowed it, and there was no remnant of the hoarseness. Since that time I have taken an interest in this saint, and have stopped speaking negatively about him.”

Live for heaven

“The entire church from east to west is invited to great joy. Our hearts are turned towards heaven where from this time on we know with certainty that St. Charbel is united to the infinite happiness of the saints, in the light of Christ, glorifying Him and interceding for us” (from Pope Paul VI’s homily at the canonization of Fr. Charbel on October 9, 1977). This joy that Bl. Paul VI was referring to continues today through the specific mission that St. Charbel is conducting. Physical healings as well as extraordinary assistance are only an invitation that God directs towards each of us: that we live for heaven, for the glory of God, glorifying the Creator here, along with the saints, whom He has specifically placed along our paths. There is no doubt that St. Charbel – the merciful Jesus’ humble envoy to the world – belongs to this holy company in our times.