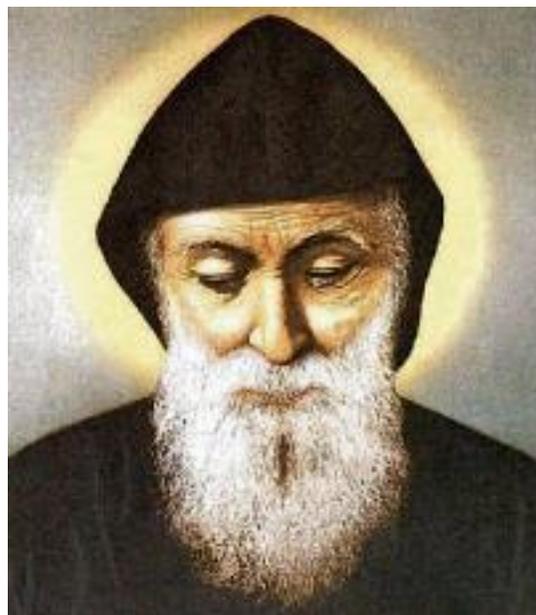


Saint Sharbel Makhlouf's Bone Relics in the USA:

A Holy Pilgrimage, Anticipating The Opening Of The Extra Ordinary Jubilee Year Of Divine Mercy.

When life becomes senseless and filled with injustices and hate, God in his divine mercy and love, rises for Him in the midst of the suffering community, saints to please Him. Saint Sharbel like other saints, guides others through the shadow of the valley of death and evil, into the harbor of safety and of light, into faith, hope and love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Saint Sharbel Makhlouf: A Sign of the Divine Mercy of God, for the East and for the West. He is the instrument of hope that is moved by the Holy Spirit and the Divine Providence. Every time a soul is in distress calls upon God through the intercession of this Saint of Lebanon, Sharbel comes bringing along healing, consolation, conversion and renewal of life both in the body and the spirit of the person who has called for help.

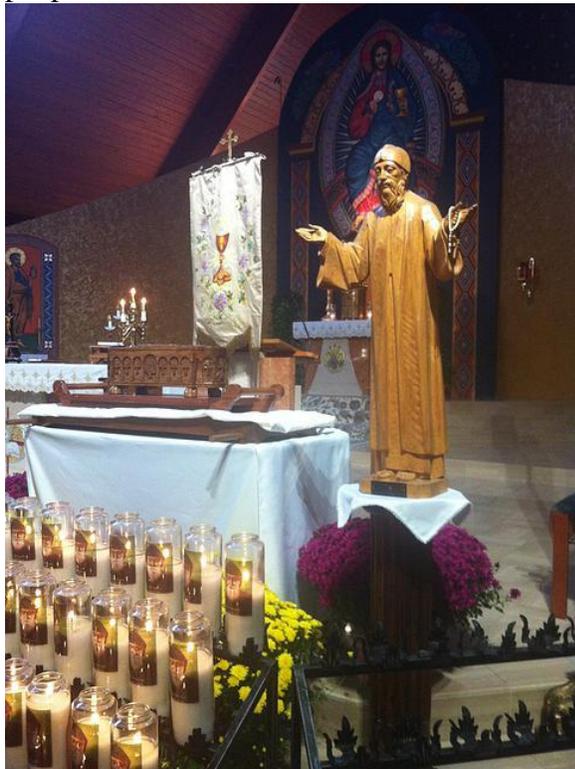


Saint Sharbel, a mystic from Lebanon, one of the most phenomenal saints in the history of the Christianity. He spent his life in prayer and at Mass. His daily schedule consisted of constant labor and in monastic life, through the vows of obedience, chastity and poverty. He was very ardent in pursuing Heaven and imitating Christ through the physical mortifications, fasting, constant prostrations and weeping at night. With this and as priest, he never lacked the pastoral care for the souls of the people that the Superior entrusted to his ministerial care in the neighboring villages to the Monastery of Saint Maron in Annaya, Lebanon.

The history of Christianity is rich in gardens of glorious saints. These are the voice of the Divine Truth. They are the stewards who reveal every time the Divine Love of the Heavenly Father through acts of charity, of mercy and of compassion.

Saints like Saint Sharbel, are the living extension of the power of the Gospel of Christ. In a special way saint Sharbel stands as a compassionate witness for hope and a very active messenger for the Divine Mercy.

His operations of healings and conversions are a remarkable testimony for the Gospel as the Living Word of God. In fact, in the recent century the ministry of Saint Sharbel, through miracles and significant conversions of thousands of people, make him a visible sign of God's Mercy and of God's will to save people.



The visit of the Relics of Saint Sharbel in the United States of America is a great sign for the visibility of the Eastern Church, specifically the Maronite Church as a fountain of holiness and treasure of great saints to be shared in with the full heritage of the Universal Church. As Bishop Zaidan wrote in a recent article: *“The veneration of holy relics has a long history in the Church...”* these are remains of holy men and women who died. *“... and often the sites of their burials became shrines, and the items associated with them, as well as their very bodies, were held in great esteem”* (*“The Visit of The Relics of saint Sharbel,* Bishop A.

E. Zaidan, in *The Maronite Voice, Volume 11, Issue 9, October 2015.*

With these words, Bishop Zaidan announced the official pilgrimage travel of the relics of saint Sharbel in the United States of America. Using the words of Pope Francis, Bishop Zaidan announces the spiritual emphasis of this visit to be *“to seek out those in need of God's Mercy and salvation and to draw them closer.”* (Ibid: (*“The Visit of The Relics of saint Sharbel,* Bishop A. E. Zaidan,)) In fact, back in July when Bishop Zaidan shared with the clergy of the Eparchy the good news of the coming of the relics of Saint Sharbel to the United States, he emphasized the following goals:

1- The visit of the Relics of saint Sharbel is the Maronite Church's contribution and way of evangelization in the year of Mercy.

2- Bishop Zaidan promoted the intention of the visit as to be offered for the conversion of souls.

3- Bishop Zaidan insisted that a central point of the visit is to encourage confessions and to raise awareness about the important spirituality and the liturgical value of the Maronite Church in general.

4- Bishop Zaidan encouraged the pastors and the people of God, that any gifts or contributions that could be offered during the visit will be utilized once all expenses are paid to help the situation of the persecuted Christians and the depressed Christians in Lebanon and through it those who are suffering from the lack of food and safety. Bishop wants the Maronite Church to be a vivid and visible tool of active charity by ways of raising awareness first and by acts of active work second.

5- As the pastor of souls, and knowing the spiritual needs of the faithful in the various parishes, bishop Zaidan who reckons the importance of the relics to come in contact with all the faithful in the Eparchy and elsewhere, decided that the relics will visit all the parishes and missions of the Eparchy of

Our Lady of Lebanon whose territory covers 34 States in the United States of America. In fact the relics will spend anywhere between 2 to three days in most parishes and missions.

6- The spiritual influence of the relics must be reflected, according to bishop Zaidan, in the emphasis on celebrating the Divine Liturgy (the Mass) in the presence of the relics as the central focus of our adoration to God. More so, the bishop encouraged all people to approach the sacrament of reconciliation and penance by attending to confession. He urges priests and pastors to seek the help of visiting priests or calling upon other priests to come and help in answering the spiritual needs of the faithful in confession.

7- on the logistical side, the bishop of course named a committee of four priests guided by Chorbishop Sharbel Maroun to prepare the visit covering all its different aspects. More so, an updated map of the Eparchy was made for the occasion.



The relics will be traveling in all the parishes, bishop Zaidan declared, first in the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon from October 2-2015 until the end of January, 2016.

After January, Bishop Gregory Mansour will receive the relics of Saint Sharbel in the eparchy of Saint Maron New York in various parishes.

The full schedule of the visit of the relics of Saint Sharbel from October until January along with photo and video galleries can be found on the special website created for the occasion by the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, under the direction of Fr. George Hajj, pastor of Saint Anthony of Padua, Cincinnati, OH. The website is: www.stsharbelusa.org



How Will The Faithful Have To Prepare For The Visit in reason to reap the best spiritual benefit from this visit?

In a letter sent to all the clergy of the eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, Chorbishop Maroun recommended that the priests and pastors in our parishes will share the following symbols of the faith with their parishioners and guests: 1- A film of the life of saint Sharbel with English Subtitles. It will be very beneficial if the faithful, on their own, also search on

Google or go on YouTube to watch the movies on the life of Saint Sharbel whose name could be also spelled: “Charbel” with the “C”.

2- For occasions like these, some paraliturgical symbols of our faith could include Candles with the sticker of Saint Sharbel and Holy Oil and/ or incense.

These could be five-day candles and small bags of incense and/ or holy oil. All are blessed and consecrated by being touched to the relics of Saint Sharbel.

These are weapons for protection, and extended elements for blessing taken by the faithful to their homes, the faithful will utilize them in times of distress. Of course when used by the faithful with the special Novena or other forms of prayers to Saint Sharbel, and with faith and Trust in God, as the author of our salvation, they could benefit from being protected against all evil whether against the body or the soul.

A special liturgical book was also prepared for the occasion of the visit of the relics of Saint Sharbel to the United States. These books contained the life of Saint Sharbel, the Evening Prayer, Devotions such as the blessing with Icon or the Holy Image of the saint, the Novena and a selected lectionary made of readings for the Mass, the Evening prayer, and readings from the book of Fr. Paul Daher (Lebanese Maronite Order), written in 1965, on the life and miracles of Saint Sharbel. This book also contains prayers and hymns in English, Arabic, and Syriac. One prayer in Spanish was included for the many faithful from the Hispanic community who have special devotion to Saint Sharbel. All the hymns are translated in English and could be sung in phonetics as well.

In conclusion, discovering the face of Saint Sharbel for American Faithful from all churches, especially by the Maronite Faithful, means to RE-DISCOVER the

face of Christ himself, glorified in the saints.

Bishops Zaidan and Mansour, with all their respective clergy from both Maronite Eparchies in the US, are only sharing the gift of St. Sharbel from the eternal garden of saints to try to make a difference in our parishes and in the Catholic Church as a whole. Through this gift the vision is to make the Church as a visible sign of hope and joy where there is oppression and sadness.



The bishops and clergy, through Saint Sharbel, are trying to save the families from these times of dissensions and divisions. These times where every family is being hit by pastoral, moral, spiritual, economic, sexual, social and political divisions and confusion. The institution of the family is always the first Church where we all feel God, commit to be living members of His Holy Church, and engage in the ministry of saving the souls.

Saint Sharbel, who had made a tough choice with his mother who he refused to see when she came to visit him at the Hermitage, is calling us to build our homes in Heaven. There together with our own families we will be gathered in the love of God.

Saint Sharbel comes to the United States in very prophetic times as a messenger of

peace, confirmer of the faith in the solid truth of the Gospel, and as a sign for the Divine Mercy from Heaven. In this Year as the world is sadly witnessing the transgressions and the active persecution against the Church in the Middle East and other places, and during the times where the Church is concluding the Synod on the Pastoral challenges for the Families, and where soon, on December 8, Pope Francis will open the Year of Mercy, Saint Sharbel, left his hermitage, left Lebanon to be the Ambassador of the Splendor of God here in the Land of the Free and the protector of the oppressed. Coming to the USA at this time, is a sign that God does not leave orphans his children, and that the light of salvation will come always from the East, and is announced here in the heart of the West. Saint Sharbel brings with him the Gospel of the family of the Maronite village, to the families of this great nation to save families and to bless them as the living entity called: the Home Church.

Finally, saint Sharbel on whose hands God has revealed compassion and healing to the hardest cases of people with spiritual and medical difficulties, now in America is ready for a greater mission: the mission of demonstrating the value of mysticism and monastic life as the remedy for the periled materialism and blind modernism that turned men and against men, and people against God. Saint Sharbel will open up the hearts and minds of many, to declare a good Year for the Lord, filled with Mercy and compassion. We count of him, and on the active prayers of all the faithful, so he can renew the face of the Earth, renew life in our parishes, renew the joy inside the families, and bring good tiding to oppressed by evil and sin. The Church must be ready to reap the fruits of the hard labor that Saint Sharbel will do while here in our land of the United States of America.

May God be blessed by Saint Sharbel and all the saints.



Fr. Andre Y S. Mahanna
St Rafka Church
Denver, CO.
October 21, 2015