



Saint Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church Las Vegas

Sunday of the Birth of John the Baptist

"Prepare the Way of the Lord"

December 2025

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Pastor: Fr. Nadim Abou Zeid

Our Services

DAILY: Monday–Friday 8:00 AM English

SATURDAY VIGIL: 4:30 PM English

SUNDAY: 9:30 AM English

& 11:30 AM Arabic/Aramaic/English

1st Sunday: 4:30 PM

Rosario y la Misa en Español

2nd Sunday: 4:30 PM

Tagalog Mass

Tuesday @ 6 pm Rosary

Anointing of the Sick every 1st Tuesday

Reflection

The Church does not usually celebrate the earthly birthdays of the saints, but rather their birthdays in heaven. John the Baptizer's earthly birth is an exception. His birth serves as an announcement to the world that the promised birth of Christ is imminent.

John's birth was the cause of much rejoicing for his family and his people. He would be great in the sight of God. He would be the prophesied forerunner to the Savior. He would make the doubtful see the wisdom of the just and in this way prepare them for the teachings of our Lord. John is the bearer of the lamp illuminating the path Christ would take.

What does the birth of John teach us? It gives us a message that when a child is born, it comes to prepare the way of God, and that each of us has a mission in this life to continue the work of God.



Let us ponder:

How beautiful it is when we name our own children a Saint's name. The name has a significance and purpose plus help from heaven above. Let us keep our Christian names alive by following as model and example of their Saint.

READINGS:

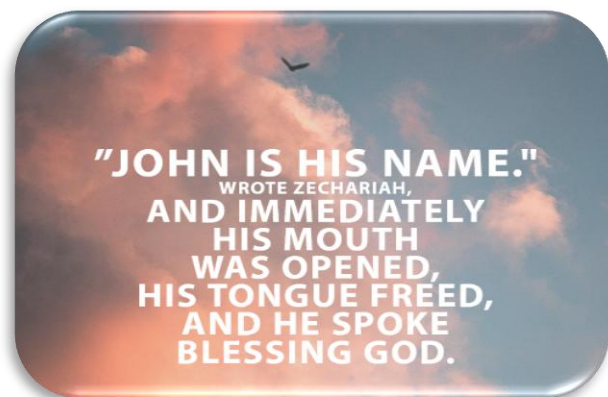
• **1 Samuel**

1:9-11, 19b-23

• **Galatians 4:21-5:1**

GOSPEL:

† **Luke 1:57-66**



Let us pray:

O God, come and touch our lips, to praise and glorify only Your name. We praise and thank you God for all the gifts You have given us, the grace of life, children, good health and especially the things that we take for granted. Give us strength to carry on to continue Your work. Amen.

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OUR HOLY FATHER POPE LEO XIV: A PILGRIM AT THE TOMB OF ST. CHARBEL

Despite the rain, crowds with flags and umbrellas welcome Pope Leo XIV at the Monastery of St. Maron in Annaya, the resting place of St. Charbel Makhoulf - "a saint that represents Lebanon."

On the winding roads leading up a hill in the Mount Lebanon region, mixed in with the Lebanese and Holy See flags and posters of Pope Leo XIV were images and statues of a hooded, bearded monk: St. Charbel Makhoulf.

For the first time, a Pope visited the tomb of this Lebanese Maronite hermit, known for numerous miraculous healings attributed to his intercession.

Pope Leo entered the small stone grotto with its rounded ceiling, and as a choir sang, he knelt to pray in front of the saint's resting place.

"The Holy Spirit formed St. Charbel so that he could teach those who live without God how to pray, those who live immersed in noise how to be silent, those who live ostentatiously how to be modest, and those who seek riches how to be poor," said the Pope in his address. "Sisters and brothers, today we entrust to Saint Charbel's intercession the needs of the Church, Lebanon and the world," he emphasized. "For the world, we ask for peace. We especially implore it for Lebanon and for the entire Levant. But we know well – and the saints remind us – that there is no peace without conversion of hearts. May Saint Charbel, therefore, help us to turn to God and ask for the gift of conversion for all of us."

As the pouring rain could be heard falling on the courtyard outside, cards were passed around the small audience in the grotto with an image of St. Charbel together with Pope Leo's concluding prayer at his tomb. One man kissed the image of the monk and then held it close to his heart.

Church knows pain of the Lebanese people

Outside, a crowd was gathered on the road leading up to the monastery. Young people, families, religious and others braved the rain and wind, waving flags and cheering, hoping to get a glimpse of the Pope



In the small stone grotto, the Pope prayed in front of the saint's resting place



Even the tiniest of hands can hold the greatest of faith. In the crowd welcoming Pope Leo XIV outside the Monastery of Saint Maron in Annaya, Lebanon, this little one lifted up St. Charbel's image like a pocket-sized homily of hope for a wounded nation. Many, including the infant came from across Lebanon, Syria and Iraq to witness a moment, never before seen in the country's history... a pope praying at the tomb of St. Charbel Makhoulf, the patron saint of Lebanon.

"I am here to see the Pope in a place where a saint resides, a saint that represents Lebanon," said Majd Samia, highlighting how **Pope Leo was elected on May 8, the day St. Charbel was born.**

"There is this link, and St. Charbel is a huge sign of hope, faith and peace for Lebanon," he continued. "The fact that the successor of Peter is here to see St. Charbel is a historical moment. He gives us hope that the Church is with us, prays for us and knows the pain of the Lebanese people," Samia emphasized.

Encouragement for Christians and those of other faiths

Elias Maroun arrived at 6:00 am with his two children, 7 and 11-years-old, one of whom is called Charbel, hoping to have the chance to see the Pope.

"Even if there is the rain and a storm, we don't care. What we care about is the ability to welcome and be happy with the Pope - this is why we are here," he said, American flag in hand, as he is Lebanese but has lived in the United States.

"We need a push for Christians in the Middle East because we are the minority here," Maroun said. "We ask the Pope to give us a push so that it can help the people, the schools, the hospitals and all that we need to be able to stay in the Middle East, especially in Lebanon and here on Mount Lebanon."

The father of two emphasized how important it was that the Pope visited this area because "no one comes to the mountains where the people are poor." Maroun also highlighted how Mount Lebanon is home to many Muslims and St. Charbel is also venerated amongst them.

"St. Charbel is important for all the Lebanese not just for the Christians and Catholics, everyone comes here and asks for help," he concluded.

OUR MARONITE PATIRARCH CARDINAL BECHARA EL SAYS POPE LEO VISITING LEBANON TO PROMOTE PEACE

Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and All the East Cardinal Beshara al-Rahi, the Patriarch of the Maronite Church, appealed to the Islamist group Hezbollah to “free itself from Iran” in an interview he did shortly before the arrival of Pope Leo XIV.

He said the papal visit is a clear message from Leo to the people of the country: “I am with you. Take heart and preserve your land. Lebanon is a land of peace, not war.”

“The Holy Father is a man of prayer,” he told the newspaper *Asharq al-Awsat*.

“He knows the worth of Lebanon and understands the looming danger of war. When asked about the security risks, he reaffirmed his determination to come,” the cardinal said. He said the message of the pope was intended for the entire Arab world: “Enough wars, killing, and destruction.”

“For fifty years, Lebanon has lived through conflict,” al-Rahi said. “It is time for that to end. War brings only devastation and death. This includes the latest fighting between Hezbollah and Israel. Human lives are being taken. Who has the right to decide the fate of another person?”

Lebanon’s army has been trying to strengthen its border with Israel which has intensified its conflict with the Hezbollah militant group after the 2023 Gaza attack on Israel.

There was a ceasefire that ended the Israel-Hezbollah war a year ago, letting Lebanon’s army increase its presence along the border to nearly 10,000 troops. However, Israel continued to threaten Lebanon because of the continued presence of Hezbollah in the country.

“There is no room for war and killing. The only path is diplomacy, long and difficult as it may be,” al-Rahi told *Asharq al-Awsat*.

The cardinal also supported President Joseph Aoun’s efforts to pursue political and diplomatic solutions.

“The Americans must influence Israel, and Iran must influence Hezbollah,” he said.

“Hezbollah knows that a final decision has been made regarding exclusive state control of arms,” al-Rahi said, adding the militant group must surrender its weapons to the Lebanese Army.

However, he claimed that Israel has not respected the ceasefire.



Pope Leo XIV greets Cardinal Bechara Boutros al-Rahi at the Vatican on October 18, 2025

“It continues daily strikes, treating Lebanon as a subordinate province. Lebanon risks becoming a pile of stones,” the cardinal said.

He said “those who bear arms” are responsible for achieving peace.

“Manhood is not measured by firing weapons, but by building peace. It is time for both Israel and Hezbollah to understand this,” he told the newspaper.

Al-Rahi also said Pope Leo chose to visit his country because “Lebanon is under real threat of war.”

Touching on political issues in the country, he said he was surprised that the call for exclusive state control of weapons is portrayed as an attack on Shia Muslims, which is the religious group of Hezbollah.

“Why do they feel targeted? ... They are present throughout ministries and public institutions. Is asking for disarmament targeting them? No other Lebanese community carries arms. I do not see how they are being singled out,” the cardinal said.

“We need political stability for the country to rise again,” he added.

“Loyalty to the nation did not grow at the same pace as belonging to it. The two must be equal if stability is to be achieved,” said al-Rahi.

He also called on Lebanon to restore mandatory military service.

“Abolishing conscription was a mistake. Military service teaches citizens that the nation they serve is their honor. Without it, how can loyalty grow?” al-Rahi asked.

2nd Sunday of Advent (Year A)**Prepare the Way of the Lord!**

As we progress in our spiritual pilgrimage toward the shrine of Jesus' manger, on this Second Sunday of Advent, St. John the Baptist reminds us that we need to prepare ourselves adequately for our encounter with the Lord. We must prove the seriousness of our resolve to change for the better, each of us in our own situation.

St. Paul gives us some practical tips about what this preparation can mean, as he invites us to live in perfect harmony with one another, accepting one another as Christ has accepted us. Only on these conditions shall we be able to glorify God with one voice and one heart as loving children should, particularly in this Advent season.

Today is also National AIDS Sunday and Catholic Handicapped Day. Let this be an opportunity for us not only to pray for those who are victimized by HIV/AIDS, but also do our share to stop the alarming rise of this pandemic that threatens the foundation of our society. At the same time, let us also show our love and solidarity for our handicapped brothers and sisters.

**A Prayer for Peace in the Middle East**

God of all nations and all people, we come to you, for you, working through your people, are the source for a just peace in the Middle East. We are exhausted by the screaming headlines that announce death tolls, bombing raids, and acts of terror in Iraq, Israel, Palestine and now Lebanon. We are worn out with grief for the innocent and the desperate, for the needless destruction of cities and livelihood, and for the burgeoning refugees.

We are weary of the powerful who give "windows of opportunity" for destruction and death. Where, oh God, are the powerful who give "windows of opportunity" for peace?

We are disheartened over the voices of revenge and fear who shout: "Evacuate your cities if you value your life! Prepare the way for war!" Where are the loud voices crying in the wilderness: "Come to the table of belonging. Prepare the way for lasting peace?"

Sustaining God, pour out your Spirit on the Christian community in Lebanon who have upheld your face and life in the land of our spiritual ancestors. Protect them and all the innocent who seek peace, reconciling justice, and simply sustenance for each day in your much-loved land.

Redeeming Christ, forgive us our cynicism and our perceived helplessness that only belittles your church and us and betrays our calling to be your hands and feet in your world.


Sustaining God, use us in our circles of influence to be the voice of Jesus who knew that war has no victors, not one.

Spirit of Peace, move us from the inside out into acts of prophetic compassion and non-violent struggle which honor every man, woman, and child. Give us the strength to face the suffering of all those who are made in your image and to reach out with your love. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen






FRONT EXPANSIONS



Saint Sharbel Catholic Church
The Maronite Mission, Las Vegas

MEMBERSHIP FORM
Monthly Donation



Saint Sharbel pray for us

For Our Church **Monthly MORTGAGE & EXPENSES**

Mother of Christ pray for us

Full Name	
Company Name	
Postal Address	
Telephone Number	H: W: C: F:
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The details of my bank / account are as follows:

Bank:	
Branch Name:	
Routing or ABA number:	
Account Number:	
Type of Account: (Current/ Saving/ Transmission)	

Please accompany with a **VOID CHECK**

I / We hereby instruct and authorise you to draw against my/our above mentioned account or any other bank or branch to which I / we may transfer my / our account the sum: (\$ _____), the necessary amount for payment of pledge due in respect of the above mentioned agreement on the 5th day of each month commencing (Month) 201 and continuing. All such withdrawals from my account by you shall be treated as though they had been signed by me/us personally. I / We understand that the withdrawals hereby authorised will be processed by computer through a system known as the ACH (Automatic Clearing House), and I / we also understand that details of each withdrawal will be printed on my bank statement.

This authority may be cancelled by me / us by giving you thirty days notice in writing. Receipt of this instruction by you shall be regarded as receipt thereof by my/our bank/building society.

Signed Date: _____

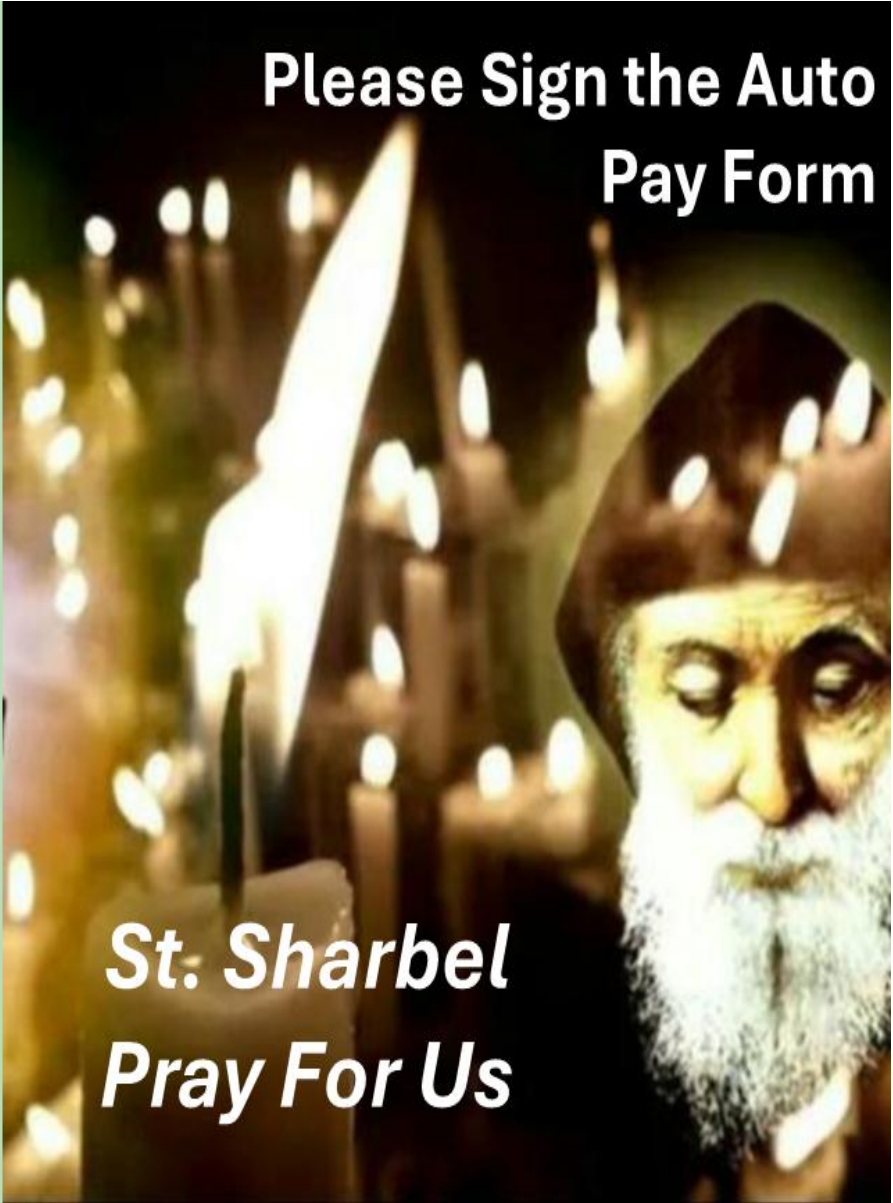
Auto Pay

SIGNATURE: As used for signing withdrawals

PLEASE RETURN TO CHURCH OFFICE

Your monthly contribution will be TAX DEDUCTIBLE, you will receive a yearly statement.
"Please hand deliver to Father Nadim Abou Zeid in a sealed envelope confidentially !! Thank you"

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Merry Christmas my precious one,

This time of year, there's a lot to celebrate—family, friends, and all the excitement of the season. But most importantly, it's a celebration of my birthday! On Christmas, we remember when I came to earth to show God's love in a whole new way and to make sure you know just how precious you are to me.

Life isn't always easy, and I know you have so much going on—school, friends, activities, and even things that feel uncertain or difficult. Remember that I'm here for you, always. You can talk to me anytime. Just as you're growing and learning, my love for you grows deeper every day, and nothing can ever change that. I came to bring hope, peace, and purpose to your life, and I love walking through every moment with you.

Christmas is a time for kindness and gratitude, so I encourage you to share your love with those around you. Maybe it's a simple "thank you," a helping hand, or spending time with family, letting them know they're important to you. Each act of kindness is a gift, and it brightens the world in a beautiful way.

You are my light—just like the lights you see shining everywhere this season. When you let your kindness, love, and faith shine, you reflect my love, and that's one of the best ways to celebrate my birthday.

So this Christmas, know that you are loved beyond measure, just as you are. I'm with you in every high and every low, guiding you and loving you through it all.

Merry Christmas, and remember—I am always with you!

With all my love,
Jesus

Feast day: December 9/Birth: 1474 - Death: 1548

Beatified By: Pope John Paul II/Canonized By: Pope John Paul II

ST. JUAN DIEGO

Juan Diego was born in 1474 in the calpulli or ward of Tlayacac in Cuauhtitlan, which was established in 1168 by Nahua tribesmen and conquered by the Aztec lord Axayacatl in 1467; and was located 20 kilometers (14 miles) north of Tenochtitlan (Mexico City). On December 9, 1531, a native Mexican named Juan Diego rose before dawn to walk fifteen miles to daily Mass in what is now Mexico City. Juan lived a simple life as a weaver, farmer, and laborer. That morning, as Juan passed Tepeyac Hill, he heard music and saw a glowing cloud encircled by a rainbow. A woman's voice called him to the top of the hill. There he saw a beautiful young woman dressed like an Aztec princess. She said she was the Virgin Mary and asked Juan to tell the bishop to build a church on that site. She said, "I vividly desire that a church be built on this site, so that in it I can be present and give my love, compassion, help, and defense, for I am your most devoted mother . . . to hear your laments and to remedy all your miseries, pains, and sufferings."

The bishop was kind but skeptical. He asked Juan to bring proof of the Lady's identity. Before Juan could go back to the Lady, he found out his uncle was dying. Hurrying to get a priest, Juan missed his meeting with the Lady. The Lady, however, met him on his path and told him that his uncle had been cured.

She then told Juan to climb to the top of the hill where they first met. Juan was shocked to find flowers growing in the frozen soil. He gathered them in his cloak and took them at once to the bishop.

Juan told the bishop what had happened and opened his cloak. The flowers that fell to the ground were Castilian roses (which were not grown in Mexico). But the bishop's eyes were on the glowing image of the Lady imprinted inside Juan's cloak.



Soon after, a church was built on the site where our Lady appeared, and thousands converted to Christianity. Our Lady of Guadalupe was declared the patroness of the Americas. He died on May 30, 1548, at the age of 74.

Juan Diego deeply loved the Holy Eucharist, and by special permission of the Bishop he received Holy Communion three times a week, a highly unusual occurrence in those times.

Pope John Paul II praised Juan Diego for his simple faith nourished by catechesis and pictured him (who said to the Blessed Virgin Mary: "I am a nobody, I am a small rope, a tiny ladder, the tail end, a leaf") as a model of humility for all of us.

In His Footsteps: Juan walked fifteen miles to attend Mass every day. Participate in Mass one day this week that is not a Sunday Mass. If this is impossible, take a long walk outside and notice the miracles of God's love during that walk. You may not see roses in the snow or hear music, but there is plenty to praise God for!

Prayer: Blessed Juan, you faced the skepticism and rejection of a bishop and the crowds to bring Mary's message to Mexico. Pray for us that when we are faced with obstacles to our faith, we may show that same courage and commitment. Amen.

Eucharistic Adoration

- Do you want peace & quiet?
- Do you want to have a date?
- Do you want to be loved?
- Sign up for a date with Jesus!

Then Eucharistic Adoration is for You!

Eucharistic Adoration is a privilege and gift to us here at St. Sharbel from **7 AM – 6 PM DAILY**

- Sign up forms are available on the table in the Adoration Chapel
- Check the hours that are available on the picture frame on the table or in the white binder
- If you have already sign up, it is your responsibility to make sure you show up or call someone to cover your hour. Names and telephone numbers are in the white binder.

Questions: Contact the Parish Office or Mylynn Lim at 702 769-2382



NUESTRO NOTICIAS DE LA COMUNIDAD ESPAÑOLA

El Grupo Guadalupano de la Iglesia
de San Charbel

Te invita a que asistas a la Misa y El
Rosario que se celebran el primer
domingo cada mes comenzado,



St. Sharbel Church
*Feast of
Guadalupe*



Friday Dec. 12
Rosary @
5:20 pm

Mass @ 6 pm
Followed by
a Fiesta

DIA: Domingo 7 de Diciembre del 2025

HORA: Rosario 4:30 pm Misa 5 pm

DONDE: Iglesia Catolica de San Charbel
10325 Rancho Destino Rd,
Las Vegas, NV 89183

Despues de la Misa te invitamos a que nos
acompañes a una pequeña recepcion donde
compartiremos: café, postres, y bocadillos
con todos los asistentes.

Si tienes alguna duda communicate con:
Oficina de la Iglesia 702-616-6902



*Ruega
por
nosotros*

***St. Sharbel Church
Black Nazarene
Statue***



We are bringing back the grace and blessing of our Black Nazarene“ Poon Jesus Nazareno”, a House-to-House visit to be with you and your family for seven (7) days, Sunday to Sunday. A Novena prayer for your family's petition is available when you pick up the Black Nazarene Statue at St. Sharbel Church, after our Holy Mass on Sunday at 9:30 am. And, for courtesy, please return our Black Nazarene Statue the next Sunday before the 9:30 am Holy Mass, so it will be available for the next family on schedule. Your kind donation (Love Offering) to our Poon Jesus Nazareno intention will be greatly appreciated.

For registration and scheduling, please call the following members of the Black Nazarene Group to assist you:

Teresa Lacape 702-524-1086

***St. Sharbel Church
Simbang Gabi
Christmas Novena***

12/15 to 12/23

@ 6 pm

EXCEPT

Sat. 12/20 @ 4:30 pm



MIRACLES OF SAINT SHARBEL

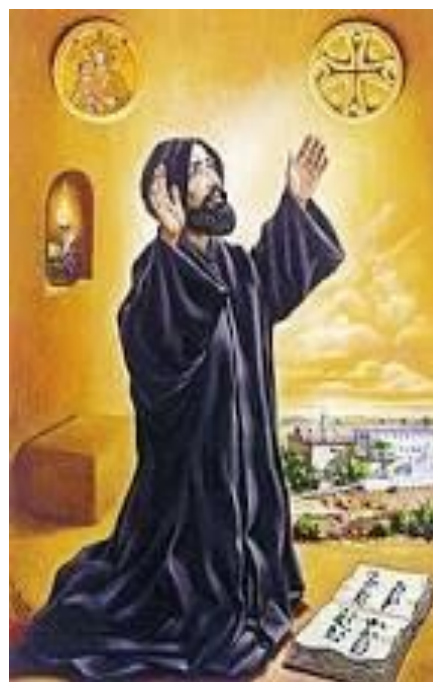
Healing of Abda Harb

She got cancer in her neck, and it was extended to her tongue. The day of the surgery was set, her son made a vow, and he went bare-foot to the hermitage of Saints Peter and Paul in Annaya. When he arrived, he knelt in the cell of St. Sharbel's in agony and started praying the rosary. While praying, he had a vision that his mother was dead and lying in a coffin. He started praying deeper and when he finished, he felt a relief and serenity. He went to the hospital armed with a greater hope.

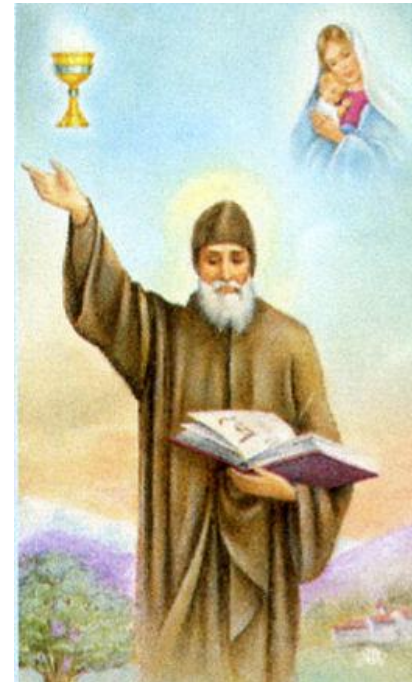
After the surgery, the doctor said: "I did my best". When Abda recovered conscience, she thanked her son for praying for her in the hermitage. Her son, amazed, asked her: "Who told you?" She said: "When they started the surgery, Saint Sharbel came and took me to the hermitage where you were praying for me."

Afterwards, she underwent many medical tests, and all revealed that she was completely healed and the disease disappeared. She visited the convent of Saint Maron in Annaya and got her healing registered on March 29, 2011.

The Teacher



The Student



***Saint Sharbel Miracle Oil & Novena are
available at the St. Sharbel
Relic Grotto.***

***If you have received graces of healing &
blessing through St. Sharbel, write or call us
at the office for Donation.***

SAINT DANIEL, THE STYLITE

(ROMAN October 10; MARONITE December 11)

St. Daniel the Stylite was a famous Christian monk who lived in the 5th century AD. He is known for his ascetic lifestyle and extreme devotion to God, which led him to live on top of a column (or "stylite") for many years. Despite the challenges and hardships, he faced, Daniel remained steadfast in his faith and became a powerful symbol of Christian piety and endurance.

Life and Background

Daniel was born in Syria, in the city of Antioch, around the year 409 AD. Little is known about his early life, but it is believed that he grew up in a devout Christian family and received a good education. At a young age, Daniel felt called to the monastic life and decided to become a monk.

The Column

In order to pursue a life of extreme asceticism, Daniel chose to live on top of a column. This practice, known as stylitism, had been popular among some Christian monks in the region (particularly St. Simeon), and Daniel was drawn to it as a way of testing his faith and devotion to God. He constructed a small platform at the top of the column and lived there, exposed to the elements, for many years.

Hardships and Challenges

Living on top of a column was not easy, and Daniel faced many challenges during his time there. He was exposed to the scorching heat of the sun in the summer and the freezing cold of the winter. He was also vulnerable to attacks from wild animals and was constantly at risk of falling off the column. Despite these hardships, Daniel remained steadfast in his faith and continued to live on the column, surviving on a diet of bread and water.

The Miracle of the Ravens

One of the most famous stories about Daniel the Stylite concerns a miraculous event that occurred during his time on the column. According to legend, a group of ravens used to bring him food each day, and when the food ran out, they would fly to the nearest village and bring back bread for him.



Thou becamest a pillar of patience and didst emulate the Forefathers, O righteous one: Job in his sufferings, Joseph in temptations, and the life of the bodiless while in the body, O Daniel, our righteous Father, intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

Apolytikion of Daniel the Stylite

. This miracle is said to have been a sign of Daniel's holiness and his special relationship with God.

Legacy and Impact

Despite the challenges and hardships, he faced, Daniel remained steadfast in his faith and devotion to God. His extreme asceticism and his willingness to endure hardships for the sake of his faith made him a powerful symbol of Christian piety and endurance. Many people came to visit him on the column, seeking his guidance and wisdom. Daniel's fame spread throughout the region, and he became known as St. Daniel the Stylite.

Conclusion

St. Daniel the Stylite was a famous Christian monk who lived in the 5th century AD. He is known for his extreme asceticism and devotion to God, which led him to live on top of a column for many years. Despite the challenges and hardships, he faced, Daniel remained steadfast in his faith and became a powerful symbol of Christian piety and endurance. His story continues to inspire people to this day.

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION December 8

Today is a Holy Day of Obligation in the United States, a day on which we celebrate the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary (the Immaculate Conception has been, since 1846, the Patroness of the United States). Note that it is *she*, Mary herself, who is the Immaculate Conception; the day does not refer to Mary's conceiving Jesus by the Holy Ghost, but to the conception *of* Mary in the womb of her mother, St. Anne, by Mary's father, St. Joachim. What makes her conception immaculate is not that she was conceived by the Holy Ghost of a virgin, as was Christ Our Lord, but that from the very moment of her conception, she was filled with grace by God, Who knew, in His omniscience, that she would say "yes" to the Angel Gabriel and become the Mother of the Savior. Exactly nine months from now, on September 8, we will celebrate Mary's birthday.

Most of what we know about Mary's parents, Sts. Anne and Joachim, is derived from the apocryphal Protoevangelium of St. James and the Gospel of the Nativity of Mary. St. Anne is the patron of childless people, pregnant women, and grandmothers (her Feast Day is 26 July); St. Joachim is the patron of grandfathers.

As said, at the very moment of Mary's conception in St. Anne's womb, God filled Mary with grace and preserved her from the stain of sin so she might be a pure vessel by whom Christ could enter the world; "Immaculate Conception," then is a title for Mary -- a title reflecting her being and which reveals that the New Adam saved the New Eve from the stain of original sin in an act foretold in the first Book of Scripture: Genesis 3:15

I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel. Adam and Eve, Mary and Jesus -- the only four persons with human natures who were, *in their first moments*, without sin (and, of course, Mary and Jesus remained sinless).

Mary is the All Holy, and it had to be this way: Christ took from her *His very Flesh and Blood* -- the Flesh that was scourged for us, the Blood that was spilt for us, the Bread of Life that saves us!

Symbols for the day are any of the usual Marian symbols (the color blue, her crown of 12 stars representing the 12 Tribes of Israel and the 12 Apostles), but especially those which emphasize her purity, such as lilies and her Immaculate Heart.

There are no special practices today that I know of, but, as with all Marian Feasts, it is a good day to pray the Magnificat, the Litany of Loreto, the Little Crown of the Blessed Virgin, the Akathistos Hymn to the Theotokos, the Ave Maris Stella (Hail, Star of the Ocean), the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary.

The Epistle reading today will be from Proverbs 8:23-25, the Gradual will be Judith 13:23, the Tract will be Psalm 86:1, and the Gospel will be Luke 1:26-28.

OUR FILIPINO COMMUNITY NEWS

SIMBANG GABI, MISA DE AGUINALDO, AND MISA DE GALLO

Simbang Gabi, *Misa de Aguinaldo*, and *Misa de Gallo* are now commonly interchanged to refer to the Masses held at dawn nine days before Christmas. Historical context, however, shows that this was not originally the case.

The novena Masses held at dawn from Dec. 16 to 24 are properly called *Misas de Aguinaldo*, which originated in Spain, according to historical research conducted by the late Dominican historian Fr. Fidel Villarroel, O.P. “Aguinaldo” means a gift given during the Christmas season.

Misa de Aguinaldo should not be confused with Misa de Gallo (Rooster’s Mass), which in Spain referred to Mass on Christmas Eve or Dec. 24, he said.

“There has always been in Spain the Misa de Gallo, which is celebrated at midnight on December 24 even today, and is wrongly used by Filipinos when referring to the novena of dawn Masses celebrated in this country,” Villarroel said in his 1999 paper.

“In Spain, when the Masses de Aguinaldo existed, they were celebrated in the early hours of the morning,” he added.

The Spanish Dominican cited 18th- and 19th-century texts using the term *de Aguinaldo*, or variations or misspellings thereof, to refer to the dawn Masses. The term *de Aguinaldo* was also used by the 1953 plenary council of bishops as well as the “Ordo” or liturgical calendar, he pointed out.

The current Ordo (page 11) continues to adhere to this practice and refers to the novena Masses as “Aguinaldo Masses.”



Villarroel argued that novena Masses held during evenings at churches, chapels, and malls for the benefit of office workers, often called *Simbang Gabi*, should still be considered *Misas de Aguinaldo*.

Also consulted older dictionaries for this fact-check.

The 1973 *Diksyunaryo-Tesaurus Pilipino-Ingles* by the late Jose Villa Panganiban, a former director of the national language institute (now Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino), defines “Misa-de-galyo” as “midnight Mass.”

The terms “Misa-de-galyo” and “Misa Aginaldo” however were interchangeable in the 1986 Tagalog-English dictionary of Fr. Leo English, the Redemptorist priest, likely reflecting popular, although historically incorrect, usage.

PASKO: Christmas in the Philippines

The Tagalog word **Pasko** derives from the Spanish word *Pascua*. Although the word *Pascua* means Easter, *Pascua de Navidad* refers to Christmas.

The Philippines is known for having the world’s longest Christmas season. The four months that end with the syllable *-ber* are considered Christmas months, which is why stores and households start playing carols on the first day of September! And the holiday season extends beyond December 31st. It doesn’t end until the Feast of the Epiphany or Three Kings (**Tatlong Hari**) which falls around January 6.

If Mexico has *piñatas*, the Philippines has its **parol**. Of course, a parol is not something to hit with a stick. It is a Christmas lantern, most commonly in the shape of a five-pointed star. The bamboo or rattan frame is covered with rice paper, tissue or cellophane. Almost every family either builds or buys one to hang by the window or door. Shopping malls construct giant versions of parol. Traditionally, a candle was placed inside for light to shine through; for safety reasons, people now use bulbs or even a flashlight. Families, schools and other places also display a creche or nativity scene called **belen**. Christmas trees made of plastic are decorated with lights, tinsel and balls.

MALIGAYANG PASKO!



The Tagalog word for gift is **regalo**, but Filipinos have a special word for “Christmas gift” — **pamasko**. The Filipino version of Secret Santa is called **Monito Monita** or **Kris Kringle**. Students in their classes and office workers all hold gift exchanges during the Christmas season. Children receive fresh bills of money called *aginaldo*, usually when they visit their godparents and elderly relatives on Christmas morning.

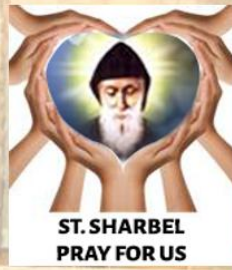
Mostly Catholics, Filipinos begin a novena (a series of nine masses) on December 16th. The masses are part of the cherished religious tradition of **Simbang Gabi**, which literally means “Night Worship.” Filipinos go to church at four o’clock in the morning and afterward have breakfast together. A traditional drink during this season is a warm ginger tea called **salabat** and a traditional treat is a flat but thick yellow rice cake called **bibingka**.

On Christmas Eve (**Bisperas ng Pasko**), a few Filipino towns commemorate Joseph and Mary’s search for a place to stay with a reenactment called **panunuluyan**, a tradition very similar to the Mexican *posadas*.

What every Filipino looks forward to is **Noche Buena**, the grand family dinner after the midnight mass. Christmas morning is the time for visiting relatives. Filipinos wear new if not their best clothes. Children do **mano**, which is kissing or bringing to their forehead the hand of an elderly person. This is when they receive their **pamasko**, certainly **aginaldo** from godfathers and godmothers. Christmas lunch and Christmas dinner are with family.

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***Nativity Play
&
Christmas Carol***

Friday December 19

@ 5:30 pm

in the main Church.

All are Welcome!



St. Sharbel Church

MASS SCHEDULE

Christmas Eve

(Wednesday) 12/24/2025

8 AM (English) daily Mass

4:30 PM (English) Vigil Mass

Christmas Day

(Thursday) 12/25/2025

9:30 AM (English)

11:30 AM (Arabic & English)

New Years Day

(Thursday) 1/1/2026

10 AM (English)

WEEKEND**Sat. 4:30 pm Dec 6**

*Rachel Gilyard

Sun. 9:30 am Dec 7

+Gloria Brennan

+Janet Fields Lim

+Susan P. Alexander

Sun. 11:30 amOur Holy Father Pope Leo
XIV's Visit to Lebanon**Sun. Spanish Mass****4:30pm**

Por la paz en el mundo

HOLY MASS INTENTIONS**Pray for Us****DAILY 8AM****MONDAY Dec 8**Thanksgiving to our
Blessed Mother Mary**TUESDAY Dec 9**

*Charles J. Murphy

WEDNESDAY Dec 10

Healing of the Sick

THURSDAY Dec 11

*Edna Penuela

FRIDAY Dec 12

Unborn Babies

**SAINT SHARBEL COMMUNITY
LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS****1. TUESDAY:** 5:30 p.m. Rosary in the Chapel.**2. SECOND COLLECTION:** Sunday. December 7th
for Maronite Patriarchal Charities.**3. FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE –
FRIDAY DECEMBER 12th** @ 5:20 Rosary & 6:00
PM Mass followed by a Fiesta**4. CHRISTMAS NOVENA:** Begins Monday Dec. 15
to Tuesday, December 23 @ 6 PM except for
Saturday December 20 @ 4:30 PM.**5. NATIVITY PLAY & CHRISTMAS CAROL:** Friday,
December 19th at 5:30 PM.**6. ADOPT A SMILE:** Sponsor a family in need or
give us a name of a family. For further
information, call Rita @ (702) 677-0927.**7. CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR MASS SCHEDULE:**

- Wednesday - Dec 24th @ 8:00 AM Daily Mass & 4:30 PM Vigil Mass
- Thursday - Dec 25th @ 9:30 AM; 11:30 AM
- Thursday – Jan 1st @ 10:00 AM in the main Church

WEEKLY COLLECTIONS**November 29 & 30*****Weekend Masses**

Thu. 8 am	\$544
Sat. 4:30 pm	\$1,077
Sun. 9:30 am	\$1,507
Sun. 11:30 am	\$707
Total	\$3,835

*General	\$1,215
*Building Fund	\$3,735
*Helping Hand	\$291



Weekly Church:
Estimate Expense
\$10,558