

**Sharbelogy-11**

# **Saint Sharbel**

**From his Contemporaries  
To our Era**

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## **Sharbel ... Crazy by God**

Sharbel crazy by God! Yes! Because he heard the word of Christ and lived it literally ... Christ said: He who loves his father, his mother, his brothers and sisters more than me, he doesn't deserve to be my disciple...

Sharbel, therefore, considered that Christ is the beloved one, so he was attracted to Him, and he became crazy by Him ... until the end...

If only we take seriously the word of Christ in our lives ... changing our lives radically for the better and thus taking part to improve the lives of our society, so that its people live the moral values, and the spirit of Christianity literally and with accuracy.

Thus we contribute to building a better society, and God remains always our only goal.

05/01/2007

Bishop George Abou Jaoude  
Archbishop of the Maronite Diocese of Tripoli.

### **Introduction**

This book is a popular version, without footnotes to facilitate the understanding to the reader. I have mentioned the name of the witness only when the speaker talks in the first-person.

If you wish to identify the source of the information, you have either to read the book of:

**“Saint Sharbel ... as his contemporaries witnessed ”-Sharbelogy-7**

- To be found in the libraries, or obtained on the Internet in our website

**[www.saint-Charbel.com](http://www.saint-Charbel.com)**.

We have kept some explanations, to clarify some of the information that needed to be explained.

Feast of Saint Sharbel, 07/19/2009

Our Lady of the Fortress- Menjez-Akkar

Father Hanna Skandar

## **Chapter I: The first journey**

### **First: Youssef Anton, in Bkaakafra**

#### **1 – A Holy Family**

His father is Antoun Zaarour "Abu Hanna" from Bkaakafra, and his mother Brigitta Elias Yaakoub Al-Shediak from Becharre. He had two brothers: Hanna and Beshara, and two sisters: Kaoneh and Wardeh, he was the youngest. The origin name of Fr. Sharbel was Youssef; he changed it when he entered the Order. His father was a simple farmer like the majority people in his village; he was living from the cultivation of his properties, while his mother took care of the house chores. His parents were pious and righteous; they were interested in raising their children due the true Christian education.

#### **2 - The death of the father during forced labor**

At that time, the army of the prince of Lebanon Emir Beshir Shehab was making use of the owners of pack animals, to transfer to Beit Eddin the crops of the prince, including all kinds of grains.

In the harvest season of the year 1832 Anton Zaarour had a beast for burden, he was working in the region of Mejdlaya (a town between Zgharta and Tripoli). There, he was restrained for forced labor. He carried on his donkey a crop from Mejdlaya to Jbeil to be sent after that to Beit Eddin. In his coming back from Jbeil to Bekaakafra, he reached Gharfine where he got ill then died and got buried. So on August 8, 1831, Antoun Zaarouz gave up his last breath in Gharfine located in the region of Jbeil due to forced labor. His widow took care of the children with the help of his brother Tannous Zaarouz.

### **3 – The birth and the Baptism of Sharbel**

The House of St Sharbel's maternal grandfather, where he was born, is still in Khaldiye; it was renovated and converted into a church.

They said that Brigitte used to come to Khaldiye in winter with her family and their cattle, to escape the cold and poverty. She helped her parents during the olive harvest and stayed there for four months. Youssef (St. Sharbel) was born there in the winter of 1833, after few months of the death of his father (1). He got baptized in the ancient church of Our Lady of Khaldiye, or in the church of Our Lady of Bkaakafra.

(.1-- for three reasons:

- The mother still young, she gave birth after her second marriage for two kids: Tannous on September 8, 1834 ... and Noah on July 3, 1837.
- Youssef is the last child, from her first marriage, and more likely that the mother was pregnant before the death of his father.
- The priest must have with him when he entered the Order, a certificate attesting to his birth, baptism, and confirmation... So the calendar of Annaya which recorded that he was 20 years old in 1853 is more logical. )

### **4-The remarriage of his mother**

Brigitta married Lahoud Georges Ibrahim, in the month of October, 1833. Then she moved with him, to Shlifa and Btedii where he owned some lands. Around the year 1850, Lahoud ordained a priest, and called Fr. Abdel-Ahad. He did not serve in Bkaakafra, but in the region of Baalbek, and he died on the year 1853.

### **5 -An orphan under the uncle guardianship**

Youssef lived as an orphan. His uncle Tannous raised him with his siblings. The children remained in the house after the remarriage of their mother. Brigitta was overlooking them from time to time. They looked after each other, under the supervision of their uncle Tannous, and their distant relatives.

### **6-The monastery school of St. Hawshab**

Youssef learned to read and write, according to the custom of those days, by the priests of the village, in the monastery of St. Hawshab, the village school at that time. He was carrying a prayer book always in his hands. He had a good character and cared for his brothers. Youssef grew up with age, knowledge, piety

and righteousness. He was a good example, in word and deed, among the children of his village. He prayed a lot, and often went to confession and Holy Communion.

### **7 - Joke among the disaster**

Youssef was smart and intelligent; sometimes inclined to joke; he had many jokes, of course in the context of politeness.

It was raining on Monday, October 12, 1842 [2]. Rain was abundant, followed by a torrent which rushed to Shaghoura in Becharre, close to the "Cedars of God". He described the scene in a popular poem, and recited it in the village school, where he was learning to read and write with other friends:

A small flood has started in "Toum Elmezrab"(3)  
and then went down to Shaghoura

The Arabs in "Daher El-Qadib" said;  
"The relief that comes from God is near"

This is a great opportunity for the wolf;  
to attack a sheep or a lamb

The residents of Becharre first said: we could make a visit  
This is a cloud that does not last; a passing cloud;

When it reached Becharre the people got confused  
Let's bring our shovels to close the gaps

This torrent raked the valley and left no standing wall  
People were screaming and calling, what a wonderful scene!

When it arrived to Hadchit it took the greater fame and glory  
The walls collapsed, the largest buildings were demolished

Then it reached Qanoubine , pouring right and pouring left  
The residents got troubled, and hid themselves in the dens

In the Valley of Faradice it redoubled its efforts and became stronger  
People carried the image of the Saint and said: deliver us O Saint!

The inhabitants of Bqarqacha, these gazelles, all lost Sleiman

Youssef Hanna, the crooked teeth, projected in the pit

In the pit he covered it and called his uncle Sarkis  
He came to dust off his gown, instead he ripped it down

As for the inhabitants of Bqaakfra their appearance turned pale  
When they decided to move they used boats not beasts

The residents of Hasroun and Bazoun were afraid of the stream  
They said, let's cut branches and shrubs to fill the slots

Then it reached Hadad and Qnat, a farmer-member died  
Hanging on a mulberry tree, in the garden of Hantoura

The owners of the mill, "Shahla ", fled in terror;  
The miller took it slightly, and then of fear he filled the pit.

The owners of the mill, "Blatt "exclaimed  
"Bring us the mud to coat, and clay the cracks.

When it arrived to Joura O God, what a scene!  
the largest trees in that grounds, was carried to "AlKura".

At "Tourza" it came with force, all the trees bent,  
"O people! What can we do, we have never seen such a scene!"

At Raskifa, the inhabitants, were sick of life  
The flood carried away the soil, and opened hundred graves.

At Kosba, it grew stronger and became more violent,  
It uprooted all the trees with unimaginable force.

In Bsarma, a torrent, of overwhelming pride  
Didn't spare a hand-less jar, or strainer or small jar.

At Kfarquahel (5), the people were traitors and deserved it  
The strongest walls collapsed and left no more traces.

When it arrived to "Dahr ElAain" it raked both sides

They said: "the bad luck strikes us, the sign is clear enough."

At "Abu Ali" the waves rose, higher and higher  
Some people were killed, and others abandoned their houses.

When it reached El-Mina, it raged and roared more  
Flowing from right and left, the punishment of God was visible.

The sea water became muddy; the high tides exceeded any expectation  
If it lasted a little longer, it would spare no boat.

( 2- The eyewitness ,Salim Khairalah, described the flood: At 3:00pm the river of "Abu-Ali" overflowed and the water covered the bridge; devastated the iron gate (Bab Al Hadid), Al-Suwaïqa, the Slaughterhouse, the "Haraj" market, Al-Milaha, and attacked with rage the Christian quarter. Markets and shops had been swallowed up; the water reached the ceiling; the houses, by force of the waves, collapsed on its people ; cattle, horses, donkeys and camels fled away; the sycamore and poplars trees were uprooted; men, women and children drowned in the markets; approximately the third of the region, was devastated; the stores were completely damaged with their contents: furniture, copper items, mattresses, blankets, supplies, gold and silver; were estimated at 3,000 bags of gold (each bag 500 pound); damage also in gardens, in windmills and fruit trees surpassed the 2,000 bags of money. More than 100 women died because of terror ,which was so weird ! The waters rose, about 6 feet above the bridge. The whole event took place in half an hour, if God didn't take care of his creatures, more people would have drowned in the water. But at 4:00pm the River calmed down, the water was so muddy and dark like the clay, but God had mercy in his people. If the flood had lasted another quarter of an hour, two-thirds of the region might be affected, and if this had happened in the night, we would have suffered similar losses; if God didn't save us, we would have been died with the rest of the people. To Him be praise in all circumstances, now and forever. Amen. When the water flowed back , the Basha came with some divers, they collected all the treasures carried by the 'flood", and he won lot of money.

3-Toum Al Mezrab and Dahr al Qadib are two peaks of the mountain "Al Makmel" which is the highest mountain in Lebanon, at an altitude of 3080m

4- The word is not clear, it means he was at first mocking from the flood then he collapsed from fear.

5- At that time, its inhabitants were from the lineage of princes....they were oppressors and any bride should spend her first night of marriage among them. )

### **8-The "Rock of the Saint" and the cow**

He used to plow his father's properties, isolated himself away from other children of his age, and avoided the frequent contact with people; seeking solitude and loneliness, not only to pray but also to avoid unpleasant conversations. He led his cow, which he inherited from his father, to pasture, while he sat aside in a place called "the rock of Bhaiss", a rock that resembled to a cave, a property of his family, and a prayer book in his hand. He visited this place quite often, that the people called it the "Rock of the Saint." When the cow had eaten enough, he let her rest, saying: "**Rest now, "Zahra" it's my turn and not yours, I want to pray.**" So he prayed, even when his cow rested, then again, if the cow got up to eat, he told her: "**Do not start now, wait till I finish my prayer because I cannot talk with you and God at the same time, God is my priority.**" There, he spent a long time absorbed in prayer, and we never heard that he left his cow ruined the property of others.

### **9 - "The Saint" and the cave.**

Since his childhood, Sharbel felt a deep desire for prayer and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. He was kneeling in the church, like a monument, without moving, prayed alone, and went to the grotto for prayer, the fact that aroused astonishment, and sometimes the scorn of his peers. This cave is called so far, "the Cave of the Saint." It's located south of Bkaakafra, and it belonged to his family.

There, he took refuge so often, carried a handful of incense that was burning before an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, where he laid a bouquet of flowers. Because of his great devotion, his tendency to prayer, his attendance to the mass and the ritual liturgy, and his distinction by his good behavior; the people in the village called him "the Saint". At first, to make fun of him, but then, God accomplished their prediction by making him actually a saint.

## **10 - Miseries**

His step-mother, the wife of his uncle Tannous who was his guardian, died on 9/9/1839, when Sharbel was six years old. Also when he was seven, the civil war broke against the Egyptians and killed at least two people from Bkaakafra, by the soldiers of Ibrahim Basha, in the summer of 1840. At the age of 14, an outbreak of the contagious cholera widespread, and at least one person from Bkaakafra died and buried outside the village on 11/10/1847.

In the ambiance, of these tragedies and natural death, Youssef wrote a poem describing the fact, especially the dead of young people, either by murdering or because of illness, and then he reflected on the eternity:

### **- Poetry -**

O ye tears! Pour yourselves! The sun of life declined;  
Death struck me and closed my lids; my parents bore me no more;  
They called the priests to funeral and covered my body with soil;

O sinner! Submerged in the sea,  
Thou art a passing shadow in life;  
Death came knocking at your door  
What was the use of being young!

## **11 - Weddings: early marriages**

Early marriages were common in the old society; Sharbel was almost 12 years, when his sister, Kaoneh, got married in March 19, 1845 at the age of fifteen. In less than two months, his brother Hanna got married in May 3, 1845, at the age of sixteen, and had a baby girl at the end of March 1846.

## **Second: Sharbel the Monk**

### **1 - The two maternal uncles of Saint Sharbel**

Fr. Sharbel had two maternal uncles: Youssef and Antonios, sons of Elias El-Shediac, who had no other children; both entered the Lebanese Order. The first, took the name of Augustin, the second, was called Daniel. Fr. Daniel was the youngest, but he was ordained before his brother. Being the eldest, Augustin remained at his father's house to serve him because he was already old and didn't have anybody to take care of him. After the death of the father, the elder brother followed the youngest; fulfilling two sacred obligations. Both were virtuous hermits, and thus the proverb came true with St. Sharbel: "Although the boy changes, he looks like his maternal uncle." The two monks were born in their village Becharre or in Khaldieh where the family had spent the winter. Daniel pronounced his vows on 2/29/1838 and was ordained a priest on 6/20/1841. He lived with St. Sharbel in the monasteries of Kfifane and Maifouq. He was the **spiritual father of St. Al-Hardini Nehemtallah**, while Augustin pronounced his vows on 7/1/1841 and was ordained on 3/23/1847, he remained on the convent of Kozhaya and then transferred to Our Lady of Maiifouk convent.

After that, the two brothers were transferred to the convent of Kozhaya to remain there after 11/2/1874. Then, Daniel entered the hermitage of Saint Boula-Ghebta that belongs to Kozhaya convent, before February 8/1875, his brother Augustin followed him.

Both of them died as hermits; Fr. Augustin the **hermit** died, provided with the last rites, he died suffering from dropsy, in the state of holiness on 11/1/1884. Fr. Daniel the **hermit** died, already well advanced in age, provided by the last rites, on March 23, 1895. He was virtuous, he passed away, saying: " I long to resolve myself, to be with Christ."

### **2-On the way to the priesthood... in the convent of Kozhaya**

Sharbel remained in the village until the age of eighteen; he did not infatuated with entertainment, nor to hang out with youngsters, rather he sought solitude, isolation and prayer. He used to go with his brother Hanna, to visit his two uncles. Once Fr. Daniel went to Bqaakafra and when he wanted to go back to the convent, he asked Hanna Antoun Zaarour, to allow his brother Youssef to accompany him, Hanna said: "Uncle, I am afraid that Youssef will never come back and will stay in the convent, if he goes with you."

Daniel replied: "I hope that he will enter the Order, there's nothing worth it in this world." Then Youssef accompanied his uncle to the monastery of Kozhaya.

### **3-In the monastery of Mayfouq: follow me: (Mk 2/14)**

After eight days from his returning to Bkaakaфра, Youssef entered the Order accompanied by Fr. Daniel, to the Monastery of Our Lady of Mayfouq, where his uncle lived at that time. There, Youssef entered the novitiate and called **Sharbel** on August 8, 1851. He stayed in his secular clothes for eight days, after which he put on the monastic custom; which means he had to go deeper in spirit and neglected the body; knowing that he left his biological parents, and surrendered himself to his spiritual parents. (the superior and the novices' teacher). During the period of novitiate, he performed his duties perfectly, and was very pleased by his vocation. He was a model in the observation of the monastic rules and regulations, and an example in his obedience to the superiors, and his love for his brethren.

### **4-The name of Sharbel**

Sharbel is a Syriac name, a compound of two words; sharb means story or tale, and El means God; the name of Sharbel therefore means the story or the anecdote of God. This name was carried by a Syriac martyr who was the Bishop of Edessa (now in Turkey), and was crucified in 121. Several monks of the Lebanese Maronite Order bore the name of Sharbel. The remains of St. Sharbel's church are still in Bqoufa, near Baghlett-Becharre. It's known till today, that part of the territory of Baghlett-Becharre near Bqoufa, belongs to Al-Shidiac family; the family of Sharbel's mother. Sharbel may have visited frequently the properties of his maternal grandfather and became aware of Saint Sharbel, the patron saint of that church, and would have prayed there.

### **5 - He didn't look back (Lk 9/62)**

First, his uncle and guardian, Tannous, followed him, then his mother and after that, his two brothers, Hanna and Beshara; they all tried to prevent him from entering the Order and bring him back home, but he refused to return with them. After that, his mother Brigitta went to Mayfouk, where Sharbel was

a novice, accompanied by her brother-in-law, Tannous Zaarour, she tried again to bring her son back to the village, watching the exit of the novices who were heading to the fields, hoping to see her son. When she saw him, she rushed and grabbed him by the habit, while he was staring at the ground, and she said: "Come home with me." He took advantage of her distraction, escaped from her and followed his brothers. About twelve times, she and his uncle Tannous went there to bring him back to Bqaakafra but they failed. In Mayfouq the people called him a "Holy Spirit"; he raked behind the laborers, kept his eyes lowered to the ground; he looked at no one and spoke to no one.

### **6-Do not grieve for Youssef (Lk 23.28)**

When Brigita had despaired from the returning of her son Youssef to Bqaakafra, she felt a great sadness that the signs appeared on her face; for she was always thinking of Youssef. Then, after the death of her daughter, Wardeh, the villagers told her: "Do not grieve for Youssef; God put you to the test, by the death of your young daughter." Wardeh died, on November 22, 1851, bearing the last sacraments.

### **7-Wardeh....the fervent**

She was a very pious girl addicted to prayer; she prayed with great fervor, knelt upright, raised her arms and recited the rosary. She was engaged to Tannous Hanna El Khaïssi; and she had a long rosary in her pocket, so when the villagers saw her praying, they told her: "Your rosary is so long, once you get married, do your stepmother let you recite it?" She replied: "Let me die before walking into her house." Indeed, her wish was granted, because she died a virgin and betrothed. She kept saying: "O my Lord, bring the good, and take away the evil, I'd rather die before I get married if the marriage does not delight you." It was said that her cousin, Antoun Boutros Zaarour, saw a dove getting out the window of her house when she died.

When her fiancé came to visit her, while she was kneeling and praying her arms outstretched, she used to tell her niece, the daughter of Hanna: "Stand behind me, block between me and my fiancé by lifting your arms like me, so I can complete my prayers."

### **8-A crazy adventure (Mt 18/8-9)**

The Superior General and his councils banned the joint work between monks and women in the treatment of silkworms, even if this affected the monasteries incomes. Therefore, it became accustomed in Mayfouq to send the novices to peel the bars of mulberry branches and pluck them, while women and girls in the other hand, took care of feeding the worms, in the same house.

It happened that one of those girls, who worked at the convent, noticed the decency of Fr. Sharbel, which distinguished him from others. Willing to test him, she threw at him a silkworm from above where she stood, then came down to pick up the worm and put it in his hand; so he left the monastery at night, and went to the convent of Saint Maron Annaya which is isolated and far away from the civilization.

Therefore, we read in the diary of Mayfouq convent, opposite the name of brother Sharbel the term "defrocked", which means that he left the Order. But when Sharbel recounted this event to the superior of the convent of St. Maron Annaya, the latter, had consulted the Superior General about this novice, then the Superior General granted approval to admit Sharbel, in the convent of St. Maron Annaya to resume his second year of novitiate. The term "defrocked" annoyed his brother Hanna, but he knew that the real reason for leaving Mayfouq was his desire to a complete withdrawal from the world. Fr. Ephrem of Bqaakafra, one of his fellow villagers, was at that time, in the monastery of Saint Maron Annaya.

### **9-You have the words of eternal life (Jn 6:68)**

After this news, Brigitta hastened to bring him back to Bkaakafra. So, while he was leaving the monastery of Saint Maron with the novices, to work in the field, she rushed towards him held him by his habit, insisting to bring him back with her. But when she found that he was persisted in his vocation, she told him: "Either stay firm in the Order and become a good priest, or come back home immediately with me." Sharbel replied: " What you have said, be done."

### **10-My burden is light (Mt 11:30)**

After the novitiate, Sharbel made his solemn vows, and wore the angelic hood, handed from the higher priest of the monastery of Annaya, Fr. Antonios Al-bani, on November 1/1853, at the age of twenty. At that time, the solemn vows were pronounced only one time, while celebrating.

### **11-We will meet again in heaven (Mk 3: 31-35)**

Birgitta went again to visit her son in the convent of Annaya after his solemn vows. She requested to see him urgently, but he didn't confront her, instead he talked some few words with her, from inside while she stayed outside. She told him: "Thus, you deprive me from seeing you, my son?" She was astonished and admonished from his behavior. He replied: "**If I don't see you now, we'll meet again in heaven.**" Sad and moved to tears, the mother went back home. Sharbel has done so according to the novice policy: do not speak with non-monks of his family and others. As for the females, the novice should do his best with the superior, not to force him to meet them, and if he was obliged to do so, he must strive not to look at their faces and talk briefly with them; observing the monastic rules, a monk should be away from women even the relative ones. ( 6)

(6- Qoraali, the founder of the Order of St. Sharbel, explained: It is known that many of the hermits saddened their parents and relatives because they didn't allow them to talk with them, to see them, or to spend time together; as it is well known from the biography of Fr. Simeon the Pillar, and Fr. Benyamin and his brothers, and many others.)

### **12 - I give you rest (Mt 11/28)**

He was tightly bound to his oath and his responsibilities. We couldn't give him even the slightest criticism, about what he did in his entire life. His work, his behavior and his appearance were all phenomenal which imposed respect and reverence. He had never known an air of lassitude even at the end of his life, quite the contrary; he was growing more and more in righteousness, devotion and piety. He practiced all the virtues in a way that surpassed everyone and every monk, constantly and consistently without any weakness or fragility; promptly and willingly. He had no more thoughts than to think about God, no more tongue than to praise God, no more voice than to bless God. He was an example in the observance of the rules and the performance of his duties, to the point if someone

is asked to perform a difficult job, he replied: "Do you think I am Fr. Sharbel to ask me to do all of these? I cannot live like Fr. Sharbel or work like him."

When the lay people, saw Fr. Sharbel in this state; constantly kneeling in continuous silence, in uninterrupted prayer and total devotion during the Mass; doing the hardest job like the least of the servant, dressing despicably, neglecting the worldly matter, they said: "Congrats to him, this monk has lived as the past Saints and hermits of whom we've read in the book of martyrology, he strengthened our belief and we blamed ourselves for our commitment to this perishable world."

### **13 -Alishaa the hermit ... a spiritual father for Sharbel**

Fr. Alishaa "the Saint", discovered the Charisma of Sharbel, since he had met him in the novitiate, in the monastery of Annaya ... Sharbel used to visit Alishaa frequently in his hermitage, and he took him as his spiritual father, early in his monastic life. After his solemn vows, it was decided to keep Sharbel in the convent; so he remained three years in Annaya. Alishaa benefited from the presence of Sharbel near him, and he took a personal initiative to give him linguistic and theological lessons, on Sundays and Holidays. After Rome had appointed the monastic authority in 1856, St. Al-Hardini Nehemtallah assigned as a general counsel. Therefore, Alishaa asked his brother to send Sharbel to the Monastery of Kfifane to study and become a priest. He saw in him, in spirit, a Holy priest.

### **14 - Sharbel...student of St. Nehemtallah Al-Hardini**

His superiors sent him to the Theological Institute at Saint Cyprien in Kfifane to complete the necessary studies for the priesthood. At that time, the principal of the Institute was father Nehemtallah Al-Kafri, a man of goodness and knowledge. In this atmosphere of learning and sanctity, brother Sharbel found what he was looking for.

He accomplished, by his efforts and diligence the greatest part of his studies in moral theology, besides the fundamentals of Syriac and Arabic languages, and a harvest of another good part of the monastic virtues and of Christian perfection. When Fr. Al-Kafri was absent, Saint Nehemtallah Al-Hardini replaced him in teaching. Sharbel was one of the best and the most talented students, smart and diligent, skillful in moral theology, and excellent in his other theological studies. His superiors and teachers showed full appreciation when it came to his person; praising his virtues and his monastic ideal behavior, so that he never had to

be admonished or punished. He was a good model when he prayed, kneeling, on the same spot. There were neither pews in church, nor kneelers. His kneeling showed his perfect devotion, so that other students felt a deep respect when they saw him in this position, which led them to call him a "Saint".

Al-Hardini said: "I have a Holy student, who is brother Sharbel from Bqaakafra." When he died on 12/14/1858, Sharbel was present.

### **15-A pious mother**

Some women in Bqaakafra worked on spinning "cocoons worm" to weave silk shirts, between them Brigitta the mother of Fr. Sharbel. If she hears the bell ring for the vigil Sunday, she would abandon her work to attend the prayer, and did not return to it, till Monday. Brigitta used to fast every day until noon; she retained this purpose until the end of her life; refraining from eating meat by applying a vow that she had promised. She used to go to the convent of the Carmelite Fathers in Becharre to confess. Once, she told her confessor about her vow of daily fasting and abstinence from eating meat for life; he allowed her to fast but forbade her to abstain completely from eating meat saying: "You are obliged to taste the dish that you prepare with meat for your family, because you do not make two kinds of food, so you have to eat what you cook, but I request that you pray the rosary every day, instead of eating greasy food.

### **16- To serve not to be served**

After the success of Sharbel in his studies, he was ordained a priest on July 23, 1859, by laying on the hands of Bishop Joseph Al-Marid. Later his niece, Wardeh, came accompanied by some relatives to congratulate him and urge him to go to his village to celebrate a Mass there, he replied: "**The monk who entered the convent then go back to his village should repeat his novitiate.**" In fact, since his departure from Bqaakafra to the Order, he never returned there.

### **17-In the convent of Saint Yaaqoub Al-Hosson**

Sharbel was sent to the convent of Saint Yaaqoub Al-Hosson in the town of Batroun, where he spent a period of time entirely dedicated to the ascetic life, abstinence and prayer. On 10/30/1859, the monastic community of Bqaakafra, elected Brother Youhanna of Bkaakafra, as a delegate for the General Synod. Shortly after few months, Alishaa asked again for Sharbel to come back to Annaya to develop his talents, watch over him and accompany him.

## **18 - In the Convent of Annaya**

In 1820, the Order built some cells and a chapel (7) in the place (Al-Hara), where the threshing was located. In 1828, the decision was taken to build the monastery of Annaya. But actually, the work began, on May 8, 1839 with the establishment of the wells, the cellars and the basement. (8) On October 20, 1841, the work was completed despite the damage caused by the army of Ibrahim Basha, the Shiite (9) resistance and the spread of smallpox disease. Thus, Sharbel was transferred to Annaya by the obligation of obedience. His name was already in Annaya, in the local councils for the election of the delegates for the years 1868 1871 1874. Sharbel also worked with the novices, between the years 1869 and 1874, 1895 and 1898.

(7) Shipley explained: the monks moved to the house of Annaya where they temporary lived.

(8) Fr. Abdulla Al-Khabaz (known by Al-Hajjar) built the church and the basements completely.

While Father Saba al-Akouri built the rooms on the north aisle with two rooms on the sea side.

The rest of the rooms on the sea side were built by Fr. Roukouz Meshemsh with other few small rooms to the south.

(9) 3 monks died from the smallpox disease; Father Emanuel from Kartaba on 11/15/1841; brother Germanos from Amshit on 12/15/1841; brother Samuel from Tannourine on 01/8/1842; and the Shiite killed brother Skandar from Tarteg on 09/23/1842. )

## **19 - Miracle of 1865**

In 1865, the locusts invaded the district of Batroun, yet the government took no action against it. The monks tried in vain to drive them out, but they did not succeed. Fr. Roukoz Meshmesh, the Superior of the convent, ordered Fr. Sharbel to bless the water and sprinkle the properties of the convent, to prevent the locusts from destroying the crops and the trees. Sharbel walked through the field sprinkled it with holy water; turning to the locusts, he said: "Blessed are you, eat from what is wild and not what is edible." Thus, God preserved the crops and the mulberry of the monastery from the damage caused by the locusts.

## **Third: Sharbel, the Hermit**

### **1 - The establishment of Sharbel's hermitage**

In 1798, the sons of Abu Ramia Boutros and his brothers from Ehmej, purchased the land called Al-Mourouj (the meadows) from the family Melhem, according to a deed of sale, from the dignitary (Sheikh) Hassan Melhem who gave them the convent of the “Transfiguration”, located on Mount Tabour, which the Shiites called "the prophet", "Rass". Abu Ramia family, in turn, gave the land to their brother Youssef, (10) and helped him, to build the church of St. Peter and Paul, assisted by the villagers. Youssef abandoned the world, joined the Order of the Worshippers, and received from the hands of the Patriarch Youhanna Al-Hélou the monastic habit. Four years later, Daoud joined this Order and was ordained a priest. In 1814 both entered the Lebanese-Maronite Order and left their possessions to the Order. From the village of Ehmej, Brother Michael and father Simon were also with them. In 1828, the monastery of Saints Peter and Paul was converted into a hermitage.

[10] (He is the one who established the Order of the Worshippers, before he came to an agreement with the Lebanese Maronite Order and joined them.)

### **2 - The description of the hermitage**

The hermitage is located on a hillside, at an altitude of 1378m. It has only one floor down, consisted of two sections, east and west, each consists of three cells, and their roofs covered with wooden beams .The ceiling of the church enclosed by a vault structure. The altar next to the eastern wall is dedicated on the name of the Apostles Peter and Paul, the patron saints of the hermitage. The ground of the church is paved with tiles from simple stones. In the west wall is the actual entrance to the hermitage, where the faithful can

enter directly from outside the hermitage to attend the mass. The corridor which separate the cells from the church, ended in the north with a hallway opened by an arch. The hermitage is surrounded by a high wall of two to three meters height, and exposed to storms and thunderbolts. Few hermitages on such level, on the mountaintops of Lebanon, are inhabited.

### **3- Its first hermit**

The first hermit, from our Order, who entered this hermitage, was the man of God, Fr. Al-Hardini Alishaa; after obtaining the permission from the Superior General Fr. Ignatius Bleibel, on November 29, 1829. At first, he remained at the hermitage of Kozhaya for about a year and a half, and then he transferred to the hermitage of Saint Maron Annaya. He had a passion for manual labor: it was he, who paved the hermitage, carrying the plates on his back from a great distance. It is he, too, who planted the vineyard to the east of the hermitage, after cutting the trees. He also dug and plowed the soil. God performed miracles through his intercession.

### **4 - View of the two masters of Sharbel about the anchoritic life**

Once St. Nehemtallah Al-Hardini came to visit his brother, the hermit Alishaa, in the monastery of Annaya (1847- 1850). Alishaa invited him to enter the hermitage to be in peace and tranquility, he said: "It is more advantageous and more convenient for you to abandon the Convent life, and live in this hermitage with me, where you'll spend the rest of your life in stillness and tranquility away from the noise, to pray with a spirit of calm and serenity. Let us spend our lives together and live in peace."

Nehemtallah replied:"Those who strive in the community with people gain the greatest reward and the highest merit. This is where; we must endure tolerance and patience, break our will and accept the weakness of the weak.

The spiritual fathers consider the common life as a perpetual martyrdom, for the monk, cannot do what he pleases, which is suitable to his temper and his life, rather he must be careful that he does not violate or offend his brethren. He also must observe his behavior in order to give them no doubt on him; this is the duty of a monk, dear brother. However, the hermit lives alone, he is spared from the temptations of the outside, he spends his time in prayer and in the vineyard, and he lives as he wants, while in the convent the monk applies to the vow of obedience. In the hermitage there is no tempter or humiliation while with the community they are always existed. Then, at the convent, we have to

live among our brothers, and endure with patience and firmness what attacked us from ridiculousness and despicableness. In this way we increase our recompenses and we expiate for our sins, and live the words of the Lord: "Those enduring to the end shall be saved."(Matthew 24/13). Also, in the monastery who practiced the virtue, set a good example to others. So I can say, each person has his vocation, because everyone is unique; one lives for prayer, other for life in the community, as for me, this is my vocation, which I have followed for a long time.”

### **5- The status of the Order before Sharbel’s entry to the hermitage**

The Parties started in the Order, after the general Synod on 1832, during which the Maronite Patriarch intervened to appoint the man of God, Fr. Houlaihel Mubarak as a Superior General, and later, the affiliation to the village communities started to grow. Despite the minimal observance to the monastic spirit, this approach to membership in the region had increased. The convents of Jbeil and the North remained in common between the monks of the two regions, till the appointment of Fr. Ephrem Geagea as Superior General in 1862.

### **6 - The policy of the Superior General, Ephrem Geagea**

The Superior General Geagea was a supporter of regionalization in the Order... He proceeded to transfer almost all the monks of the North from the region of Jbeil. He founded the convent of Saint Semaan Al Qarn and the school of Ban in the North. He abandoned the siege of superiorship General in Tamiche convent, to reside mostly in the convent of Kozhaya and of St. Semaan Al Qarn.

### **7 - The convent of Annaya until the entry of Sharbel into the Hermitage**

The monks of Jbeil, especially those of Meshmesh, took over the ministries of Annaya convent and began to minimize the hermit Alishaa Al-Hardini, who was almost a superior in his hermitage and an excellent administrator. The Maronite Patriarch proposed his name to be a Superior General in 1856 as a solution to the conflict between the two hostile camps in the Order in that time, because he was considered one of the most famous monks in knowledge, virtue and administration. He invested the profits of the hermitage in the purchase of fifty lots, and other seven properties, between the years 1833 and 1870, in addition of some lands that were sold after his death. After 1870, when he bought the last land, a fight broke out between him and the Superior of the convent of Annaya Fr. Roukoz Meshmesh, then the misunderstanding perpetuated to Fr. Abdel Massih supported by fathers Roukoz and Antoun Meshmesh. They sent a band to hit brother

Abdallah Al-Bani who was serving the hermit Alishaa. As a result of this accident, the Superior General had to intervene, so the hermit left the administration of the estate entirely. The monks, however, were eager to assimilate everything and had sent out Fr. Antoun Meshmesh to take away "the goats from their shepherd." The hermit then wrote a letter to the Patriarch, in which he asked, by the name of Christ, to help him.

### **8- Alishaa asked for Sharbel with the audacity of the Saints**

The membership of the region had sorted the monks of the Order into five major groups; each consisted of a small team that linked with the kinship, and particularly, the affiliation to the village (11) and to personal interests. Fr. Alishaa, "the "Saint", loved his Order, regretted what was happening, and worked for the benefit of the convent of Annaya and the Order, that's why he did not withdraw to the North to escape persecution but rather, he asked for Fr. Sharbel from the Superior General, Ephrem Geagea, who respected him for his virtues, his good management and because he was the brother of the "Saint of Kfifane". Fr. Geagea granted his request, by keeping Sharbel with him and not transferring him to the North. Alishaa, also, sent the same request to the superior of the convent, Fr. Roukoz Meshmesh who at first refused and then, after the miracle of the lamp that Sharbel performed, in July 1869, he accepted his request. Fr. Sharbel officially inherited Alishaa, on the eve of his death and his funeral ... so that, in one day, they could both be two universal and important saints.

[11] (St. Basil said: It's not fair to have in the monastery some brothers linked by the agreement of four by four, three by three, and two by two, because the one who loves a brother more than the others, he shows that the perfect love is not on him. )

### **9- Water in the lantern (Mt 25:1-13)**

When Sharbel was at the convent during the triennium of Fr. Roukoz Meshmesh he worked in the field as one of the lowest servants. One night, he was watching the goats, and it was harvest time, while in the convent there was a group of thirty reapers having their dinner, the servants bustled to serve the tables, the dispenser (12) was eager to serve the reapers; this was when Fr. Sharbel came and asked, before the whole crowd to fill his lantern oil. The dispenser scolded him and said, "Why didn't you come on the day time?" He replied: "**I was in the field.**" The dispenser replied: "As a punishment, I will

not give you oil for tonight, go away." He obeyed and returned to his cell. The servant, however, placed a bench transversely to block his way, so Fr. Sharbel stumbled and fell to the ground, without complaining. Saba, who was only 13 years, and was a servant in the convent, went up to him and asked him for the lantern, pretending that he wants to fill it with oil, but in reality he poured water into it, from a metal container where they put the ashes. Fr. Sharbel took the lamp and lit it and it was lit. Meanwhile, in the absence of Fr. Sharbel, the use of oil had been prohibited; it was a strict order from the superior, to all the monks not to light their lanterns after the bell rings for sleep. That night, the superior woke up because he needed something, as he was leaving, he saw a light and went straight to see from where it came, it was from the cell of Fr. Sharbel. He told him: "Didn't you hear the bell? "Why haven't you turned off your lantern? Haven't you taken the vow of poverty!?" He immediately knelt down and begged forgiveness and said: **"I came back from the field and tried to finish my prayer, and I am not aware of this ban."** Saba who was close to the cell said to the Superior: "I really wanted to fill the lantern of Fr. Sharbel with oil but the dispenser refused; on my return I saw the metal tube, and I filled the lamp with water. The Superior opened the lamp and made sure it was water. Then he could not restrain his feelings, went and told all the brothers in the monastery, and this fact spread in the convent. After this event, in the morning, the Superior called Fr. Sharbel and said: "If you want to serve the hermits, I give you permission." Fr. Sharbel replied: **"There is a big difference between my desire and the Superior orders, I made a vow and I do not work due to my will because my will doesn't belong to me anymore, but if you order me, I will obey and go."** The Superior replied: "Go". Fr. Sharbel knelt asking his blessing, so he recited a prayer and blessed him. He rubbed up expressing his gratitude, hastened and gathered his spiritual and prayer books, his mat and blanket, tied them up with a cord, put the burden on his back, entered the church to visit the Blessed Sacrament and walked toward the hermitage.

(12) The dispenser is the father responsible for the supplies of the convent.

## **10- Why the hermitage?**

Fr. Sharbel felt a strong desire to withdraw from the world, this impulse was even more apparent after his ordination, because he didn't request to be freed from manual labor, that he had performed before his ordination.

His presence in this convent far from the villages in the wilderness didn't happen out of his own request, but by an order from above. Therefore, he submitted to the same discipline as all the monks, who went to the field work after the prayer service in choir and meditation, as the ancient monks did. But since in recent times, it was less common to see monks working in the field, because the parishes needed its priests. The attendance of Fr. Sharbel in the convent and in the field was a very rare matter that reflected his belief in this statement.

His commitment to silence and his preference to avoid, not only people but also his fellow monks, and his passion for absolute poverty and the harsh and strange mortification that he applied; all of these made his Superiors met his desires without asking. So they kept him in the monastery and didn't entrust him with the pastoral ministry in parishes, not to disturb him in his sublime thoughts, so he could be a model in prayer, in the Mass, at work and in theological dispute, and sometimes being available as a confessor for men. Then, he was sent to the hermitage after realizing that he was already living as a hermit. His anchorite life in the hermitage wasn't other than a continuation of his priesthood life since the novitiate.... Therefore, there was no difference between his life in the convent and that in the hermitage, so they truly called him the miracle of the hermits. His entry to the hermitage was in obedience to his Superiors and not due to his request because he had no particular inclination. His merit of being in the hermitage wasn't greater than that of the monastery. On the other hand, his fellow brothers could no longer endure his holiness, because by his example, monks and hermits, conservative or not, felt rebuked. Then, if someone craved to eat a grape and saw Fr. Sharbel, he would drop it at once, feeling ashamed.

## **11 - Servant of Alishaa**

The hermit Alisha Al-Hardini requested Fr. Sharbel to come to the hermitage, he immediately accepted. Fr. Sharbel was serving the hermits and particularly, Fr. Alisha; he used to bring to the monastery his eating, his drinking and serving his Mass. Sometimes, he celebrated Mass in the convent,

because he had no one in the hermitage to serve his Mass. He remained diligent on this plan, for six years.

### **12-He blessed the water jar**

Before the appointment of Fr. Semaan Ehmj to the Order, before 1871, the locusts came to his area. The residents of Ehmj asked Father Sharbel to bless their water, to sparkle it in their vineyards and fields in order to remove the harm of the locusts. After the water was blessed, Fr. Semaan personally carried it, so they sprayed their vineyard near the hermitage

### **13- Alishaa recommended Sharbel ... to be his successor**

After 44 years and a half, in the hermitage of Annaya, Fr. Alishaa died on February 13, 1875 at the age of 76, bearing the last sacraments. He remained conscious till the last moment of his life. He was buried in a wooden coffin on Sunday, February 14 at 8 am and placed in the cemetery of St. Maron monastery. Many people attended his funeral. The following day, the head of the convent, Fr. Elias Meshmesh ordered that Fr. Sharbel officially becoming a hermit together with Fr. Libaos Al-Ramaty.

### **14 - Sharbel abandoned the economic method of Alishaa**

The hermits forbid the cutting of the logs from the hermitage woods because of its nearby to the monastery, preferring to go further in uncontrolled areas; Fr. Sharbel thwarted this custom of predecessors, leaving this issue to the good knowledge and the wisdom of the Superior. Thus, throughout his life, he submitted to the blind obedience. Also on the issue of collecting the vows income and other offerings, they were collected by others, for the benefit of the convent's properties; Fr. Sharbel delivered them to the servant, then to the Superior to do what is appropriate, without giving any opinion.

### **15 - A moon among the stars**

His life in the hermitage wasn't different from that in the convent, except that he was following the rules of the hermits. He never failed any duty even the smallest responsibility of the hermit. He had the opportunity to meet his eager

desire to go further in asceticism and mortification as well as having one meal per day. He even exceeded the rule, by more asceticism and wore sackcloth and a girdle of iron thorny directly on his flesh and skin. I have never seen in my life, any hermit that can be equalized to him in the virtue and the observance of the rule, even among the most devoted monks. He surpassed all hermits, for he was between them like the moon among the stars. His life was angelic and divine. His personality was embodied by; purity, sincerity, living faith, hope, love for God and neighbor.

### **16 - Servant of the hermits (John 13/14)**

Fr. Makarios Meshmesh entered the hermitage of Annaya on April 25/1880. Fr. Sharbel used to go frequently to the convent to bring for the two hermits, Fathers Makarios Meshmesh and Libaos Al-Ramaty their food and drinks for a week; he put the stuff in a bag made of a goatskin and carried it on his back. He considered himself a servant to his companion, Fr. Makarios Meshmesh, the hermit.

### **17 - Come back to the hermitage!**

Fr. Sharbel was responsible to watch over the field planted with cucumbers. One morning, Fr. Makarios found that the land was swept by the foxes so he blamed Fr. Sharbel for his negligence, Fr. Sharbel said: "**I saw the young foxes were hungry, I felt sorry for them and I let them eat.**" Fr. Makarios replied angrily: "Go and sleep in the convent". He arrived there so late walked into his cell; there stood the empty lantern, which it hadn't been used for years. He went to the kitchen to fill it with oil, the cook replied: "The dispenser went, and I have no oil". He asked him to give him at least a bit of it. The cook took the lantern, filled it with water instead of oil and gave it back to him, and behold it was burning, even longer than if it had been filled with oil. After two hours of absence the dispenser, Brother Francis Meshmesh came, he entered the cell of Fr. Sharbel to find the lighted lantern, he approached it, examined it and found nothing but water, and he was shocked, and didn't dare to ask him anything. He told his brother, the Superior Elias Meshmesh, he examined the lantern himself and found water in it. After the miracle of the lamp, the head of the convent ordered Fr. Sharbel to return to the hermitage after he had been expelled by Fr. Makarios.

## **Chapter II: the efforts of life**

### **A: A portrait of Fr. Sharbel**

#### **I-Description**

He was 160 cm tall (5ft-3 ); slim and slender body, straight back, long and thin fingers, proportional neck and mouth, long refined nose, long hair according to the tradition of the hermits, thin arms as a thumb.

His face was round and fine, overflowing with bright light, marked by the severity of God, and drew all hearts to it. His forehead was wrinkled, brimming with gaiety, reported by the gentleness, tranquility and serenity of the heart.

His face reflected the devotion and the love of God at all time, especially during prayer. A heavenly light illuminated his face, because the Lord has become his strength, his wealth and his permanent joy. His face was pale, light brown, tanned from the sun. Due to the many mortification and the long vigil nights of prayers, he became very slim, just skin and bones, but he used to walk quickly even in his old age. He was very ardent in all his affairs.

His beard was short and thin inclined to be blond in origin, and had Gray hair in the middle and at the top sides; and he rarely washed it, so it became twisted from the lack of washing and care. His hair in his majority kept black, almost until his death.

#### **II-Stories and Events**

##### **1 - Pale**

When Fr. Moubarak visited Sharbel's hermitage for the first time, he summoned all the hermits; Fr. Sharbel came and sat opposite to him, his eyes downcast, his hands crossed on his knee; he did not raise his eyes to look at him, nor at the brother who accompanied him; he did not speak to them, nor asked any question, but he was answering briefly and meekly to their questions. Six years later when they came for the second visit, he behaved like the first time - in his presence, his attitude, his way to sit down and talk; they noticed no change, only that he was pale. He was so colorless, and if his interlocutor did not notice a twinkle in his eyes, he would believe he was dead. His body melted like a candle in the Love of God, so that he became skinny, thin and pale.

## **2 - His daily schedule**

When the bell rings early in the morning, we see Fr. Sharbel kneeling straight next to the door, behind everyone, he remains in this position, holding his book in his hand; the other hand rests on his chest, and his face turns toward the ground.

After the early mass, he goes to the field, without a grace of period or distraction, with a rope and a pickax, until sunset. But he doesn't go due to his own desire but according to the order of his superior or by the order of the landowner. He used to go, walking to his work, in the near or far field, or in the vineyard, carrying his Rosary and praying, looking neither right nor left, speaking with no one. If someone tells him; "Praise be God", he would answer: "God bless you." When he arrives to the place of his work, he at once, takes his pickax, and begins to work with a big desire and lot of energy, like a wage-earner with a large payment that increases, if he increases his work. He doesn't care, if the head of the work is a priest, a brother or an employee, they all represent the authority, which comes from God. He works with all his strength, a constant continuous hard work, without taking a break or raising his head from the ground.

He puts all his energy into this work so that the sweat drips from his forehead and from his clothes. He never raises the hood to wipe his sweat but it was always tied.

Sometimes, he builds partition walls, gathers the stones aside by his hands, cut the grass to isolate the ground in front of the sewer. His hands chunked and became so dry from the hard work.

In the days of intense heat at the time of harvest, like in the days of winter, he doesn't raise the hood from his eyes, and when the other brethren were sitting to rest, drinking cold water, and hanging out together, he was sitting aside and alone; he does not speak or drink, as if he was waiting impatiently to return to his job. If it hasn't been for obedience to the command, he wouldn't have rested.

When the bell rings for prayers, he retires to a hiding place, kneeling on the stones, arms outstretched in prayer, after this pause, he resumes his job, always in perfect silence.

If the head of the field delayed to invite Fr. Sharbel and the monks to eat at noon, he would not afflict, nor say we are hungry or tired; these words have never come to his mind, he has never uttered them; if the stones in the field and the trees speak, Fr. Sharbel speaks.

The only sound around him was the sound of the hatchet when they came upon the stones or the echo of the stones that he picked for the construction of the enclosing wall or when he threw a pile of stones. The silence was his closest friend and his intimate companion.

The monks and the workers revered him and respected his virtues and avoided to talk useless speech with him, no one dared to joke around him, or talked with him about the incidents occurring in the world, as he was not interested in them, nor care for what was happening in the country, or in the matters relating to the Order's management, but his main concern, in all, was only God, leaving everything to the Divine Providence.

He remains in the field until the sunset, and if the supervisor kept working to a late hour, Fr. Sharbel remains working in the same energy which he began the work, rather his enthusiasm increases with more work. He never pointed out to the field's supervisor that the time is already over; primarily, he never objected anything.

In the evening, he was gathering grass and wood to form a large bundle and carries it on his back and returns to the convent bending under the weight, holding the rosary in his hand and praying.

The days when it was snowing and raining, and that on Sundays and holidays in the summer, he never leaves the Church or his cell.

### **3 - How does he eat?**

Fr. Elias Ehmej witnessed: In the evening, at the time of eating, his companion called him, he came, his arms folded, head bowed, eyes lowered to the ground, while his hood was up to his eyes. He remained upright till his companion told him to sit. So he sat down on the floor after praying, pulled a foot above the other, the hem of his habits covered his feet; still with arms crossed, as mentioned above, waited for his companion to tell him: "Eat."

Then he put his plate of clay before him, made the sign of Cross carefully and reverently as if he was in the church then he began to eat, silently, quietly and decently. After eating, one of his two companions ordered him to wash the dishes; he rose immediately, prayed and performed the order.

I have heard that he was drinking the water of the dishes (13) which I haven't seen it because he didn't make his mortification to show off, but rather he did his best to keep it hidden; but sometimes we maneuvered to steal a glance to some of his gestures... and if it happened that something fell from the dish of a companion inattentively, or few crumbs were on the ground, Sharbel took advantage to pick them up and eat them even with the dust.

(13- He drinks the dish water, as the mother eats after her child!! The era of Sharbel, was the era of poverty, the era of ignorance, regarding our evolving era. The homes were from soil; without bathrooms, no water, no electricity and no gas

... The utensils of the kitchen were from pottery; the plates, the cookers ... while the spoons were from wood ... There were no soap for washing ... the yesterday soap... was the water of ash. Usually, they washed the dishes with clear water; most of the food consisted of grains and vegetables cooked with oil. Cooking was usually in a very big pot and laundry was done on the fire wood...)

#### **4 - The secret of the existence of Lebanon**

Nakhle Shaker Kanaan said on 1897: I've known Fr. Sharbel since the summer of 1897 when I was 24 years old. At that time we used to visit some friends every summer in a region of a high mountain. There were no big hotels, no cars, and no paved roads. We used horses and donkeys for transportation. That year, my friend, Shoukri Beik Arqash returned from Paris, after earning a graduate degree in law. With him, I decided to go on excursion to Mayrouba to visit the dignitary Beshara Al-Khazen ... then we headed to the high mountain of Al-Akoura and Laqlouq. While we were at that mountain, we went to see the hermit, who was already famous for his virtues and holiness in the region. We went down to Ouwaïny ... and then we went to the hermitage of Saints Peter and Paul, we paused there to rest under an oak tree. There were already people camped for several days waiting to get the blessing of the hermit. While our muleteer was preparing the meal, a tall, thin monk came from the field, holding a sickle and a load of grass, he greeted us with bowed head, we asked him for permission to sit down and eat, with kindness and joy, he agreed. Then he started to serve us, offering some grapes and water, without keeping our company. We invited him to dine with us, but he excused himself cautiously and discreetly, and he stammered: **"Thank you, I already ate at the monastery."** From his conversation with Shoukri Beik, I still remember these words: **"It is God, who created us, he takes care of us: God is omnipotent; we live well without any merit from our part. God be with you"**. As we were describing in detail, the beauty of the vast landscapes laying at our feet, from the mountains to the sea, the **hermit replied: "This is God's gift to the Lebanese; this site is a heavenly gift, it's located here so we will be able to praise His Holy name. Everything we possess belongs to God."** He didn't agree to receive from us any gift or present. Sharbel was listening to the speech of Mr. Arqash on the works of hermits and devotees in France, and then he said: **"France is the eldest daughter of the Church."**

At this moment the bell of the monastery of Saint Maron rang, announcing the Angelus, I asked him to recite the prayer of the proclamation. **He did this, followed by the Litany of the Virgin and the cult of the veneration of Mary.** We knelt in reverence, repeating the prayer after him; he sang softly,

lowered to the ground, his head wrapped in his hood, and his eyes closed like an angel in human form, transported by the Spirit into the sky...

When we left the hermitage, he stood up with incomparable modesty and delicacy; his eyes directed to a world beyond the cosmos, hands crossed on his chest, muttering the words: "**God be with you.**" I remember Shoukri kept talking about the hermit and said: "These pious hermits on the tops of the mountains are the secret of the existence of Lebanon by their purity and their righteousness.

### **5 - Sharbel behaves with simplicity**

Moussa Moussa witnessed: One day I accompanied him while he was carrying on his back thorny shrubs to build a fence around the vineyard. He saw on the ground a small envelope of cigarette paper, with a picture of a knight on it, after a few steps he turned back and pick it up. When he reached the hermitage, he deposited the envelope along with other images and knelt to pray. I told him: "What are you doing ? He replied: "**It's St. George, and I am praying before his image.**" I replied, laughing: "This is an envelope of cigarette paper." He gave it to me, and I threw it away.

## **B: Sharbel, the Apostle** (Mk 4:18; Mt 10)

### **1-Definition**

Fr. Sharbel was neither a parish priest nor a missionary, but whenever the opportunity arose to serve souls, he responded joyfully. Sometimes, he heard the confessions of those who asked him, from his fellow monks, priests, or other people; his advices were so useful and extremely salutary.

When he was called to visit the sick and the sorrowful, he was doing his best to console them and invite them to surrender to the Will of God; at the same time he was praying for them and for their patients. He was also praying for the benefactors and sinners, and carried their concerns in his masses. He did not preach, but he was ready to lavish his advices and guidelines to those who requested them. If the superior ordered him to go and celebrate the mass for the farmers on Sundays and Holidays, he would obey and the return to the monastery without talking with anyone. He willingly participated in the funerals, in the neighboring villages, responding to the vow of obedience, he walked directly into the church; but once people noticed his arrival they rushed toward him to bless the

water for them; while the superior of the convent and the other priests went first to the house of the deceased, and then returned with the body to church. After the funeral, he quickly went back to the hermitage.

## **II-Stories and Events**

### **1 - Joyful serenity**

The priest Ramyah witnessed: One day the hermit, Fr. Makarios, called me and in that time I was still a layman, a resident of Al-Ouwaini near the hermitage. When I arrived, I saw a man from Bqaakafra, the brother of Fr. Sharbel, accompanied by his wife. They came to visit the hermitage and baptize their child. Fr. Sharbel talked for only three minutes with his brother, systematically refusing to communicate with his wife, yet the latter was all content despite the refusal of the hermit, for all relatives of Fr. Sharbel and his family were Holy, sought holiness and followed his example. The child who I was the godfather was baptized by Fr. Makarios in the absence of Fr. Sharbel. After a long period, the woman returned to visit the hermitage, through the road to Al-Ouwaini she saw me after I have become a priest, and said: "Your godson died, he told me before his death, take me to my uncle, Fr. Sharbel, to see him". When she saw that I was sad and cried over the death of her child, she told me: "He is blessed, he is in heaven." She said this without shedding a tear.

### **2 - He refused to baptize**

Eid Nakad witnessed: Once, my mother took my brother Boutros to be baptized by his uncle, the hermit, Sharbel. He didn't meet her face to face; he only said a few words from behind the closed door of the hermitage, while she was standing there, without being able to see him. He also refused to baptize the child, who received his baptism at the hands of another hermit, a companion of Fr. Sharbel. Besides, he didn't allow my mother, the daughter of his brother, to enter the church and attend the holy mass. She followed the Mass then, through an opening in the closed door of the church.

### **3 - Baptizing them (Mt 28:19)**

We have only two baptismal certificates from the hands of Sharbel: "I, **Fr. Sharbel of Bqaakafra**, have baptized Michael, son of Raphael Rizqallah Al-

Shababi, on December 8, 1873. Also Boutros son of Shallita, from Bqaakafra, his godfather is Al-Khoury Michael of Shakhnaya, had received the Holy Baptism from my hands, on September 7, 1887. **Written, by Fr. Sharbel, the Hermit.**

#### **4 - Heal the sick (Mt 10:8)**

Once the Patriarch Boulos Massaad gave an order that they should send Fr. Sharbel to Ftouh- Kesserwan, in Ghadress, to pray and bless the sick sons of the dignitary, Salloum Al-Dahdah. This latter, had five boys of which three died of tuberculosis and the two survivors were also afflicted.

The superior, sent Fr. Sharbel to spend some time with them to pray for the children to heal. He went there, accompanied by Abdallah Youssef Aoun. They remained there about a month, until the two patients got healed. Upon his arrival, Fr. Ramyah came to the hermitage, and asked him on purpose: "How are you? What have you seen on the road?" He replied: "I went from here to there and I returned from there to here again."

#### **5 - To convert to God (Is. 20:21)**

One year, during the Holy Week, Fr. Elias Meshmesh, the superior of the convent of Saint Maron Annaya, sent Fr. Sharbel to Kfarbaal, to the farmer-partners of the convent, to help them fulfill their religious obligations during Lenten season, because their pastor did not have enough theological knowledge. Fr. Sharbel accepted gladly, and spent a whole week with them.

#### **6 - He asked us to copy amulets**

Youssef Khalifeh witnessed: Fr. Sharbel asked me and my brother Mikhael, who became a priest, to come to the hermitage on Sundays to copy the charms of Saints Anthony and Cyprian to offer them to those who asked him, so they put them at their houses as a blessing. I continued to attend for four years; I was at that time about 18 years old.

#### **7 - My food, you do not know (Jn 4:32)**

Once he accompanied the monks to attend a funeral in the village of Meshmesh. After the funeral, the relatives of the deceased invited the fathers for lunch, except Fr. Sharbel, because they knew he would refuse and preferred to go back to the convent.

### 8 - Young man, arise! (Lk 7:14)

Fr. Elias Ehmej witnessed: My father was afflicted with typhoid, and was treated by doctors, known by their medical knowledge, but do not have any degree. His illness was so aggravated that they have lost all hope of cure and stopped the treatment; he lost consciousness and entered in agony. His relatives and brothers appealed to the Superior, Fr. Elias Meshmesh, to order Fr. Sharbel to come and pray beside the patient. He responded to the superior and came to our home during the night, many people were already gathered in the house. Once he entered inside, he called three times my father by name saying, "Risha" my father opened his eyes, Fr. Sharbel told him: "**Do not be afraid.**" He loved my father because he was a deacon and sometimes served in his masses. He prayed and blessed the water, and then he sprayed it on my father and gave him to drink. On leaving, he said: "**There is nothing more to fear.**" In fact, my father regained consciousness, he ate and drank. Shortly afterwards, he had completely recovered and was able to leave his bed.

### 9 - Give him something to eat (Mk 5:43)

Skandar Beik Al-Khoury witnessed: Once, my uncle, the doctor, Najib Beik Al-Khoury, was sick and about to die. My grandfather was also a doctor, and believed that my uncle was in a critical situation and that there would be no chance of recovery. My grandmother then, sent someone to Fr. Sharbel asking him to bless him, hoping he would be healed. Fr. Sharbel told the envoy that **he would come at night.** The messenger told him that the illness had been very critical and he should come immediately. He then said: "**I will go immediately, but I do not want people to see me**". Because of his humility, he didn't want to attract people's attention to him.

When he arrived to their house, the fever was already very high and the patient lost consciousness, he had the typhoid. After praying Fr. Sharbel took a handkerchief soaked in holy water, and passed it on his forehead. The patient immediately opened his eyes, after several days of unconsciousness, and uttered two words: "Fr. Sharbel". His mother said: "Kiss Fr. Sharbel's hand", he did. Fr. Sharbel addressed those present, saying: "**Praise God, the patient is cured, give him to eat.**" They hesitated since the patient was suffering from typhoid, after which people believed that food could cause the patient's death, but Fr. Sharbel insisted **to feed him** and then he left. They offered him a meal he ate and recovered. A short time later, his father, my grandfather, came back home and they told him what Fr. Sharbel had done. He repeated: "More likely,

he has no chance of life, since he ate." But the child was healed, grew up and became a doctor himself, and lived to the age of 85. He had treated Fr. Sharbel several times during his lifetime.

### **10 -Talitha, arise (Mk 5:41)**

Another time, Fr. Sharbel was summoned to bless Jibrael Gerges, from Ehmej, who was suffering from a serious illness. By the order of the superior, he went to spend a night with him in prayer. God healed the patient through the prayer of Fr. Sharbel.

### **11 -To pray for them (Mk 6:5)**

Once the locusts invaded the region, among other area also it attacked Ehmej. The rural guards came to the convent asking the superior to send them Fr. Sharbel to pray for locusts to go away. He blessed the water, sprinkled it on the grasshoppers so they retired. At the same time, there were in the village some patients in one house suffering from typhoid fever, they asked Fr. Sharbel to come and bless them, he replied that he couldn't go without the permission of his guardian, because the superior has entrusted him to the guard, the field guard replied: "How can I give you order and you're a monk?" Fr. Sharbel said: "The superior has entrusted me to you and I obey you. I go to places where you lead me." So the guard ordered him to go and pray for the patients.

### **12 - Lazarus is dead! (Jn 11:14)**

Skandar Beik Al-Khoury witnessed: my paternal grandfather, who practiced the profession of physician (according to popular treatments without permission), was called to Amshit to treat a patient, who was the only son of a dignitary family of Amshit called Jibrael Sleiman Abbas. My grandfather went to Amshit and spent four or five days trying to heal the sick, using all means to cure him. As he despaired of his recovery, he sent a messenger to his son, my father, to tell him: "Go to the hermitage of Saints Peter and Paul and ask the hermit, Fr. Sharbel to accompany you to Amshit to pray for the patient." My father acted immediately and arrived to the hermitage in the afternoon; he asked Fr. Sharbel to go with him to Amshit and explained the mission he had to accomplish. At first he hesitated, then he accepted in one condition that they must take the permission from the superior, who was at that time, Fr. Elias Meshmesh. After the approval of the superior, Fr. Sharbel prepared his lantern to light the way, because he won't leave his hermitage until nightfall to see no

one and is seen by anyone. That was his habit throughout his life as a hermit. He preferred to walk telling his companions; Fr. Maron Meshmesh, Brother Elias Mahrini and the muleteer: **"I can't ride on the donkey, I'm scared to fall, and I am not accustomed to ride on it."** After a long journey, he said: **"Let us be obedient to the order given."** Arriving at a location above Mahrin, Fr. Sharbel stopped and seemed amazed. My father, who rode his horse about twenty meters ahead of him asked: "What's wrong?" **"Let us hurry!"** he answered, and then he added: **"Listen! Listen! They said he died!"** My father stopped his horse and said: "With whom are you talking, Fr. Sharbel?" He repeated: **"They said he died"**. My father replied: "Why do you say that? What are you talking about?" At this moment he turned to my father and told him: **"Recite the Angelus, let's pray for the man because he died!"** and he knelt and prayed. Then my father, disconcerted, made the sign of the cross, dismounted his horse approached Fr. Sharbel, with extreme reverence, and begged him many times to continue his march, after he looked at his watch and marked the time when Sharbel said the words indicated above. He repeated: **"It is useless to go there. It is no longer necessary to continue the way because the mission which the superior has ordered is terminated, the patient died"**.

But since my grandfather was insisted that the presence of Fr. Sharbel in Amshit was very important and because my father didn't believe that the patient died, so he insisted to continue the way. Then Fr. Maron told Fr. Sharbel: "Let's continue our walk in obedience to the superior orders". After walking about one hour and a half, they heard screams and wailing cries from less than half a mile from the house of the sick person, the patient had actually died. At that moment, my father began to question Fr. Sharbel on his ability to know the patient's death in advance, while they were at least one and a half hour afar from Amshit, where they could not hear a sound or see the town, but Fr. Sharbel didn't say a word and he continued his prayer. Arrived at home, my father inquired about the time of his death, which coincided with the moment when Fr. Sharbel stopped on his way to say: **"They said he died!"** Then my father told them what happened on the road and they were astonished and regretted not having called the hermit earlier. This news spread in Amshit and its regions. Following this event, the people of Houjoula, Bachtilda and Aalmat, all Shiite Muslims, came to Fr. Sharbel to receive his blessing; brought with them their patients, and asked him for healing. As for Fr. Sharbel, I never heard that he mentioned this event or others very similar, that happened through his intercession, and which the people had spread.

### **13- The patient died!**

Youssef, the son of Elias Antoun, from the village of Meshmesh was suffering from a serious illness. The patient's parents asked the superior of the convent to send Fr. Sharbel to pray for him, he went by the obligation of obedience; arriving in the middle of the road, he paused silently about five minutes, and then he told the messenger: "**I am going back to the hermitage; it's useless to go to Meshmesh because the patient has just died**". Thus, the patient died at the same time when Fr. Sharbel turned back to the hermitage.

### **14 - The Shiite Muslims rushed (Jn 4: 39-42)**

Once the locusts invaded the fields of the village of Tourzaya; divided into two parts one inhabited by Christians, the other by Shiite Muslims. The Christians and the farmers of the convent came to Fr. Sharbel and said: "Please, Fr. Sharbel help us." He sent them to the superior who ordered him to accompany the residents. Then he blessed the water and sprinkled it, assisted by another monk. The locust left the lands and property of the Christians and went to the properties of Shiite Muslims, who rushed to Fr. Sharbel asking him to drive away the locusts from their fields. So he continued to spray their properties with holy water. The grasshoppers abandoned the entire area which was sprinkled with holy water.

## **C: Work and Prayer**

### **I-Introduction**

These are some of the monks' regulations, which were followed by Sharbel: The monk must be silent, quiet and dynamic in his work. He does not seek out the easy work and the pleasant things, leaving the less agreeable to others. Rather, he should choose the unpleasant work, leaving the pleasant one to others; this must be done in all humility. Also the monk must subject himself to the lowest jobs in the monastery and its menial needs, **to free himself from the egoism, without which hell wouldn't exist.**

So Sharbel had no ministry in the convent other than the Mass, the prayer and the work in the field. He devoted himself, to pick up stones, to build walls to

support plots. Before he entered the hermitage, he helped the goatherd to pasture the goats and take care of them. He also worked earnestly and lovingly, with the brothers and the servants in the field and the vine, as if he was sentenced to forced labor, although he was a righteous priest. He never looked around or took a break unless to make the sign of the Cross repeatedly; while working, he prayed constantly. If he wanted to pass some free time, he would collect stones in the vineyard.

He never apologized from working in the field, neither in cold nor in heat, rather he remained in the field till his brother told him to stop working, or till the bell rang for prayer, then he asks permission to leave to church for the Liturgy of the Hours, or he would kneel down on the stones and pray. When they ordered him to carry a load of thorny bushes or other objects, he contributed more than he could, without saying a word about it, whether it would be difficult or easy.

He never complained or got angry, but he always stayed in the same mood; he never took a break, instead he hated to rest; he didn't like to sleep but loved the mortification and the work. All his monastic life was a constant prayer, work and silence. If the servant of the monastery asked him, for example, to take the plow to another place, he would do it without hesitation.

### **1- He carried it on his back**

Fr. Hassrouni witnessed: Sharbel did not come out of the church unless he summoned by his companion Fr. Makarios; either to sleep or to flatten the rooftops and plow them ... And when the snow accumulated the monks went with the workers to cut the branches of the oak from the hermitage's woodland to feed their goats. After the goats stripped the leaves from the branches the hermits took the ropes and brought the branches into the hermitage and the vineyard; so Fr. Makarios packed the bundle and Fr. Sharbel carried it on his back.

### **2 - He went to church to pray (Mt 14:23)**

Semaan Ghana witnessed: In the year 1880, Fr. Elias Meshmesh called me to build a furnace at the convent of Saint Maron Annaya. When I asked him for some workers to help me in the construction, among them he sent Fr. Sharbel, he worked with me for six days, during which he was a model of perfection. At the beginning of the work he asked me: "**What should I bring to you, Master?**" I replied: "Stones, small sharpening stones and clay". He started to hand them to me with lot of diligence and energy; thereby lifting the heavy stones on his chest to put them still higher on the scaffold; as for the

small sharp stones, he was dragging them by his hands, so that the blood was flowing under his nails. I told him: "No! no! My master, be careful, don't wear yourself out, go slowly." He said nothing to me, but continued his arduous work. At this rate, he spent with me a whole week without uttering a single word, or asking any question-but this: "**What can I do for you?**" I felt sorry for him and I did my best to facilitate his work. During our breaks, he always ran to church to pray.

### **3 - Straight to church**

As the bread was baked at night, in exchange between the monks, Fr. Sharbel also was doing this service like the other brothers. So he comes from the hermitage to the monastery in the evening, goes straight to church and stays there until midnight till the dough is fermented. Then the brother responsible for baking calls him to help his fellow brothers, and he doesn't leave them until the bread finished. Then he returns to the hermitage, where he celebrates the Holy Mass.

### **4 - He didn't leave any opportunity**

He worked with the monks in the fields, before he entered to the hermitage, so when he brought for them the meals from the monastery, he gave the utensils to the cook to fill them, and went to Church to be alone before the Blessed Sacrament; seizing every opportunity to go either before the Blessed Sacrament, or to work.

### **5- He remained silent (Mt 5:11-12 & 41)**

Fr. Ephrem Nakad witnessed: Most of the monks in the monastery were from Meshmesh only Fr. Sharbel was from the area of Jebbeh (North). Whatever they gave him to work, he did it quietly and never said no to anybody nor complained; none of them had pity on him, nor he had pity on himself. The chef, Francis, who was the brother of the superior ordered him to do the hard work and abused him. Fr. Sharbel obeyed him as he obeyed his superior, even though Sharbel was a priest and the latter, a deacon.

When he returned from the field, his back curved, often laden with a heavy bundle of wood, Brother Francis ordered him to provide water or to perform some other tasks. Once, he told him to water the plants with a bucket; he carried, the whole day, so much water that the skin of his hands was completely scraped.

### **6 - The stones touched his skin**

Fr. Ephrem Nakad witnessed: One day in the field, I was putting a load of stones directly on his back; he wasn't using a protective cloth on his back. He continued his work until his habit and his shirt were torn and that the stones touched his skin. I pitied him especially because he was a priest. He went to the supervisor and told him gently and softly: "**Look at my habit**". The Superior then ordered for him, a new one.

### **7 - What do you want me to do?**

He was a monk of work, prayer and silence; Youssef Suleiman witnessed: we, the farmer-members who worked with the monks in the field, we don't remember that we have ever heard him uttered a word except, "**What do you want me to do?**" He used to say this term, with a soft voice, while standing in front of the headman, arms folded and head bowed.

### **8 - He makes the sign of the Cross**

Fr. Ephrem Nakad witnessed: He went with us, the novices, to the field as one of us; I was cultivating on the ox and he was plowing behind me, stopping from time to time to make the sign of the cross, due to the novice regulation; whenever you start a job, make the sign of the Cross and offer this work to God, saying: "**My Lord and my God, I'm giving you my heart and my soul with this work; my God give me strength to do it according to Thy Will and to glorify Thy Name.**" Maintaining a deep silence; he talked neither to me nor to others; if he is asked about something, he would answer only with yes or no, or with some brief and precise words, as usual.

## **D: The poverty of Sharbel (Mk 10:21)**

### **I-Introduction**

The rule of the monks said: “The monk must have no personal possessions”. So his hands had never kept money like silver or gold; to observe the vow of poverty, he used the simplest of the things and never threw anything, small or large, even a stem of vegetable; if he saw a grape from a vine or a piece of bread on the road, he would pick them up and put them in the kitchen. He was as poor as a beggar, even a poor man wouldn't have accepted his food, his bed and his clothes; he considered all the things of the world like dust trampled under the feet.

The real poverty, however, was his dispassionate and plain appearance, although he was very wealthy of the divine gifts and of the highest virtues. He as well, was detached from his parents; that he never visited them his whole life; he never spoke or asked about them; when his brother visited him once or twice a year, he met him for a short time and due to the order of his companion. He was divested from his will; not only in matters concerning the rule, but in all things, as if he was stripped of his will. Despite his intelligence he never showed it, neither in words nor in writing; he never uttered with words like; this is for me, this is for us or for the convent.

He worked with all his strength in every task, and prayed in the church with extreme fervent; when his companion ordered him to leave this work for another one, he directly obeys; as a shadow walking beside his source; and this was the ultimate self-renunciation. Rich with love for God, his heart was not related to anything in this world at all; as though he did not exist in this world, but in the world of God. Due to the monks regulation; he wasted no time in idleness; as often as he could he prayed for the poor and the dead; avoiding laziness for not falling into the traps of the devil. So he was very attentive to the time; and he didn't leave, even the slightest opportunity, without a useful task for the Order and a good profit for eternal life; knowing for sure that the time was given to us to be holy; when he had no work to do, he devoted himself to prayer and meditation.

## **II-Stories and Events**

### **1 - Take this!**

When he attended a funeral and they gave him money, he handed it to the superior immediately after his arrival to the monastery, saying this quote: "**Take this**", "this" was either a pound or an Ottoman piaster. In general, the priests were given three Ottoman piaster (=5 pennies), Fr. Sharbel was given a pound (=20to25 pennies), yet he couldn't distinguish the currency. If he did not find the superior in his room, he would put the money on a tray of pasture under his bed.

### **2 - Take this devil away from me!**

Once, Fr. Sharbel accompanied the monks of the convent at a funeral. Each of them received three Ottoman pilasters. After returning to the monastery, Fr. Sharbel went directly to give them to the superior who told him: "keep them with you, Perhaps you'll need to buy a handkerchief or other things." He obeyed the orders of the superiors. But at night, unable to keep them, he carried them to the superior saying: "**Take them; I don't want to keep this devil with me.**"

### **3 - Give them to Fr. Makarios**

Fr. Hassrouni witnessed: I was at the convent of St. Antonios Kozhaya, in July 1898, and Fr. Antonios Alwen, who had pronounced his vows recently, was there in that time. After I left the convent, I told one of my relatives about the virtues of Fr. Sharbel. The latter, gave me a quarter of Ottoman pound to send it to Fr. Sharbel, to say a Mass for his intention. I took the alms and came to the hermitage, when I met Fr. Sharbel, I said: "Please take this money to say a Mass for Brother Antonios Aito. He said: "**Give it to Fr. Makarios.**" I replied persistently: "He beseeched me to hand it to you, so I can't give it to another person!" He stretched out his hand, closed his eyes looking at the ground, so I placed the money into the palm of his hand. As soon as it touched his hand, he walked towards Fr. Makarios, called him with the most unusual voice: "**Fr. Makarios! Fr. Makarios! Take this money.**" His hand still stretched away from him, as if he was carrying a scorpion, and he gave him the sum of money without knowing how much it was.

#### 4 - At dawn

Fr. Ignatius Meshmesh witnessed: Once he came to me in the morning, I was at that time the Superior of the convent, he gave me money and told me that some visitors gave him four Ottoman piaster, and told him :**" Buy with this money, your personal necessity."** He told me how the enemy tempted him the whole night and urged him to keep the money for himself and that he had overcome him by the grace of God. I told him: "Do you need anything?" He said: **"If you want, I need some tissues to use them as towels."** I gave him four black handkerchiefs.

#### 5 - Don't let me see the money (Mk 10: 23-25)

Hawshab Nakad witnessed: The mother of Wardeh, who is the niece of Fr. Sharbel, owned a silver helmet that women put on their heads for good-looking. After her death, her daughter Wardeh sold it at 300 dollars, the equivalent of two Ottoman piasters gold. She brought the money to her uncle, Fr. Sharbel, asking him to offer Masses for the repose of the soul of her mother. He refused to take the money, addressing his niece from inside the cell, without seeing her face and saying to her: "Give the money to the Father Superior." She replied: "I want to give it to you, so that you offer the masses." He replied: **"I mark it in my notebook, and I offer masses, but the money I don't take. Go and give it to the superior and don't let me see it."** So she obeyed him.

#### 8 - Put the vow money on the shelf

Fr. Nehemtallah Nehme witnessed: Once two of his secular brothers visited him and offered him some Turkish money, but he refused. After much effort to convince him and after insisting that this money is a vow to the hermitage, he accepted saying: **"Put the money on the shelf!** Without looking at the money. One day I visited him at the hermitage, he told me: **"My two brothers came to visit me and left this sum of money to the hermitage. It is on the shelf, take it."** I took it and counted eight Ottoman piasters.

# **E-The clothing of Sharbel**

## **I-Introduction**

The monk's regulation required that: "The clothing, mattress and blanket must be suitable to the monk's vow of poverty." At this level, he dressed as the lowest of the poor and the smallest of the novices. He had never worn a new habit, but he was humbly seeking to use the clothes left behind by his brethren, the cast-off ones. He used to wear a monastic habit, worn, patched, woven from thick threads, faded, reddish since it lost its color. However, it was always clean, because he washed it with his hands; he even patched it without much care, by making every five centimeters a stitch. In the summer and winter he wore the same habit, and kept it until it gets worn, so he was given another one.

His belt, like other monks, was from leather, but scratched by stones and bushes; his trousers were black, his shirt woven from the calico, his vest cut from an old monk's habit. On the top he put on his monastic habit; he never wore socks, despite the freezing cold. He put the cape in the Church and outside the chapel, and took it off while working...

He always wore his hood in summer and in winter, day and night, except for the Masses, according to the liturgy; the hood covered his whole head, his eyes as his ears, also a part of the cheeks and neck. His shoes were worn and patched, known as the old monastic shoes. His hand-towels were made from calico, known as napkins.

## **II-Stories and Events**

### **1 - No red stripes**

Fr. Sharbel asked the shoemaker who added red stripes on the shoes, according to the monastic habit at that time, to eliminate them from his shoes.

### **2 - To patch them**

Fr. Francis Al-Sirini witnessed: I had been entrusted the wardrobe for some time in the monastery of Saint Maron, during the triennium of Fr. Ignatius Meshmesh who ordered me to go to the hermitage, to check the clothes of the hermits and see what they need. I went into the cell of Fr. Sharbel, in which I have found nothing that could be worn, so I ordered him to get rid of these shabby clothes, then I started to tear them in front of him, he asked me to leave them for him so he can patch them and keeps them, as a sign of poverty.

Then the superior told me to prepare two new clothes for him.; as I gave them to him, he apologized for wearing the new cloak, and asked me to beg the superior to send him an old one, suitable to the nature of his work; also he asked not to send him shirts since he instead wore the Cilice and a vest made from a monastic old habit to hide the Cilice underneath.

### **3 -I put it on the ground under my sleeping mat.**

Fr. Hananya Al-Jaji witnessed: I went one day to visit him, and I found him washing his clothes, rubbing them under his feet, seeing the Cilice shirt in the laundry, I told him:" What's this? "He replied: "I put it on the ground under my sleeping mat", trying to hide his virtue before me.

### **4- Give me the clothes that fit my life!**

Once he came to Fr. Rookie Meshmesh wearing very shabby clothes, and said: "**Let me live as I dress, or dress me as I live.**" I think he meant: Either send me to the hermitage which suits the dress I wear, or please give me a better coat to wear when I go with you. The superior entered directly into his cell, took away his habit, and clothed him with it, then he told him: "You can wear it", but it was large.

### **5 - Why do you neglect yourself?**

Moussa Moussa witnessed: Once, I saw him wearing torn shoes, I told him: "Why do you neglect yourself like that? You must order suitable shoes, because your feet are like those of a camel!" He did not answer.

## **F: His mat, his sleeping and the furniture of his cell**

### **I-Introduction**

#### **1 - The monastic cell of Sharbel**

It is located in the western part of the convent; its length from the east corridor to west wall is 325cm; its width from north to south is 225cm; its height is 300cm; the roof is made of simple wood, mixed with logs and soil. It has a window in the west wall, and the ground is covered with stone. The door

to the east is overlooking the door and the window of the church and facing the main altar.

## **2 - His cell at the hermitage**

Its length from east to west reaches 3m; its width from north to south is 210cm; its height is 240cm. The window to the south consists of simple wood and two shutters always closed with a black curtain, where nobody could see him from outside, and he couldn't see through it except the mountain of Ehmej and the rugged hills. In the eastern wall, an opening is recessed, resemble to a cabinet where he put his lantern oil. Its ground is paved with stones from the mountain; its walls are made of stones and plastered inside with clay. The roof is very simply made of wood. The door had a worthless wooden bar, and provided from outside with a handle made of wood.

His cell was almost empty, always opened, blackened with smoke; and had a bed of wood under which he placed a wicker tray where he deposited his spiritual and theological books; also there was a pitcher of drinking water. No one was allowed to enter his cell except rarely, or secretly without his permission.

## **3 - His mat**

His mat was filled with gall and oak leaves and with barks. It was wrapped in a sort of carpet woven from goat hair. The whole thing was covered with an old felting. His pillow was a piece of wood wrapped with a black piece of cloth. At this very hard bed with no soft mattress and no blanket, he slept in summer and in winter; this shabby bed was laid over two planks, raised two margins above the ground and connected with a piece of blanket. Most often he slept on the ground.

## **4 - His Sleeping**

He never stayed up at night with the monks; his sleeping was after the Compline and other prayer, about half past eight; he woke up at midnight for the prayer service, according to the hermit's rule, after which he never went back to sleep, except sometimes to rest for an hour, then resumed the meditation and prayer. He never slept during the day, and never played games (playing card, etc.) in his life.

## **II-Stories and Events**

### **1-Exhausted from sleepiness (Mk 4:38)**

Fr. Elias Ehmej witnessed: I realized that he was exhausted by the constant long vigils; sometimes, while he was kneeling upright on the floor, sleep overcame him; he bent his head to one side, his body bent more forward so that it touched the ground. Then suddenly he sat up quickly; overcoming his physical weakness, looking up and sighing from the depths of his heart. Nobody had ever seen him, resting during the day, closing his eyes on the shadow of a tree.

### **2 - The woolen pillow (Mt 8:20)**

His cell had no lock or key; once, while Fr. Sharbel was working in the field, Brother Boutros Al-Fraidiss took advantage to enter his cell; he took the pillow, consisted from a piece of wood, threw it away and replaced it with a woolen cushion. When Fr. Sharbel came back to his cell and noticed the change in his pillow, he went to Brother Boutros, **begging him to take the woolen pillow and bring back his piece of wood; he insisted, until his wish was fulfilled.**

## **G: Sharbel's food**

### **A-Introduction**

#### **1 - In the Convent**

When Fr. Sharbel, was in the monastery, he ate with his brothers in the refectory twice a day; he never complained if the food was delayed, and he never asked the chef for a special meal, or disgusted other food, but rather he requested the waste of the food and the crumbs, because of his humility and his satisfaction from the minimum necessary. His meals consisted from some pieces of burnt and undercooked bread, or the leftovers in a cooking pan. During the meal he ate slowly and carefully; didn't speak to anyone as if he was in the church; lowering his eyes as if he was meditating. He never said: "I do not eat this dish because I'm sick." He never spoke about food or said this is delicious or tasteless, or this is sweet or salty. He often washed the dishes and kitchen utensils, and drank the rinse water. He used clay pots and forks made of wood. He never ate outside the convent except in the field at the time of work; he used to eat the leftovers of his

brothers, as well as the leftovers of the workers who helped the monks in tilling the soil. Moreover, he never ate anything more than the main dish; nor food, or drinks or fruits; he took no alcoholic beverage or coffee, and kept no food with him, in his cell. Therefore, he ate for necessity only, and not for pleasure; he was in this world without belonging to it, detached from everything that exists; all his desires and his feelings were directed toward God.

## **2 -In the Hermitage**

He ate only once a day, after the prayer service in the afternoon. His food was consisted from salad with olives and potato skins; which he washed, cooked and then ate. When he came to the monastery to get supplies, he began to choose for himself the moldy bread, that often had being thrown to the dogs, and offered his companion the good bread and the good food; while eating the leftovers from the day before. He never ate meat, his food was always prepared with oil, except during major festivities like Christmas, Resurrection, St. Anthony feast day, Saints Peter and Paul the patrons of the hermitage, then the food was served with butter. The hermitage had a vineyard, where the hermits worked; they picked up fruits, grapes, figs and pears... then, they conveyed the fruits to the monastery, and offered them to the visitors. Fr. Sharbel assumed most of the work of picking fruit depriving himself from them, refraining from taking refreshment. He didn't eat unless his companion told him to eat; then he ate only what Fr. Makarios offered him. In addition, he filled the jar for his companions, from the source of Annaya, a half hour away, while he drank from the hermitage's Well, only during his one meal.

## **II-Stories and events**

### **1 - The bread is on the window (Jn 4: 31-34)**

Fr. Ephrem Nakad witnessed: When we came back late at night from the field, Brother Francis gave him for dinner only four slices of bread, which he put under his armpit, entered the church and placed them in front of the window. Then he knelt down to pray and stayed there for a long time, more than one and a half hour and sometimes fell asleep. When we came at midnight, Brother Francis entered the church to ring the bell, announcing the prayer service, he found that the breads were always before the window and brought them back to the pantry. Thus Fr. Sharbel had forgotten his hunger before God. I cannot say if he abandoned the bread on purpose or he forgot it, however he had left it so many times. He often

had only one meal per day, despite his exhausting work. He wasn't left without work for a minute; they didn't let him stay in the church, following the desire of his heart to pray there.

## **2- He ate no grapes and drank no water**

Fr. Ephrem added: At the time of our novitiate we came to the monastery to help with the harvest; thirsty as we were, we set forth on the grapes to quench our thirst; calling, in vain, Fr. Sharbel to join us, he turned his back and went away.

Fr. Hananya Al-Jaji continued: Sometimes, I was with him in cultivation, he was helping us; he never drank water in spite of the high temperature, while we kept drinking because of the heat and the fatigue, also he never got refreshments in summer.

## **3 - To visit the Holy Eucharist**

Semaan Gata witnessed: Since I was assigned to work in the pantry, in the convent, the Superior had allowed me to eat in the refectory with the monks. Fr. Sharbel came only once a day to get three thick slices of bread cut them into small pieces and mixed with his food. Once his neighbor had finished his eating, he took his plate to wash it, then he poured the rinsed water into his plate and drank it in order to castigate himself and for mortification. While we had our siesta after lunch, Fr. Sharbel always went to church to pray before the Blessed Sacrament; the same thing he did during the breakfast, as he ate only once a day.

## **4 - Bulgur with butter**

Shibley Shibley witnessed: If by chance, he ate in at the monastery, in winter time, he took the last place at the table. I remember when they wanted to be decent with the Superior in the monastery; they cooked him a dish of crushed wheat with butter. When it happened that Fr. Sharbel was in the convent on a rainy day, the Fr. Superior tried, in vain, to invite him to his table, so he told me: "Take a bit of this dish, of Bulgur to Fr. Sharbel." I took it, and put it before him, but he didn't touch it.

## **5 - Without oil**

Gerges Sassine witnessed: Once I saw him carrying some edible plants and wild herbs for cattle only, I warned him saying: "Master, these herbs are not

edible!" He replied: **"It doesn't matter."** Then he chopped it all together, mixed with some salt without oil. Meanwhile, Fr. Makarios arrived and as usual, he began to prepare the meal; he asked Fr. Sharbel: "Have you added any oil?" He replied: **"No, it doesn't matter, we can eat without oil."** It was during Lent, so he ate the grass that cattle eat.

### **6 - Two days without food (Lk 4:4, Mk 8:2)**

Maron Abbud Witnessed: When Fr. Sharbel was in the convent, it happened that I helped the monks in the field, and he was working with us, he ate only when the head of the field told him to eat, applying the law of the novice: "Do not eat every day without the permission of the person in charge, then take what he gives you, withdraw alone and eat." Fr. Boulos Al-Sebrene added: Quite often, when Fr. Makarios came to the monastery to meet some of the work by the obligation of obedience, we insisted that he remain with us, however, he replied: "I want to go back to the hermitage to feed Fr. Sharbel." Once I asked him: "He doesn't know how to eat by himself that you have to leave every time to feed him?" He replied: "He won't eat under any circumstances if I do not call him and bring him food by hands", if we leave him two days without calling him to eat, he wouldn't ask for food nor eat by himself.; Fr. Ignatius Meshmesh confirmed: "This is a well-known incident."

### **7 - The burnt bread**

When Fr. Makarios went down to the convent to help in baking bread, he picked up the burnt or undercooked bread, saying: "This is for my Master!" meaning Fr. Sharbel, who himself did the same thing whenever he came to the convent; seeking for mortification. Also Shibley Shibley witnessed: He asked me to gather the burnt bread for him to store them for later.

### **8 –Three grapes**

Brother Francis Kartaba witnessed: I saw him eating purslane salad, contained lot of dried stems, full of seeds, and had only few leaves. He dipped a piece of bread in his wooden plate picked up all the burnt crumbs, before he took another loaf. Once I saw him eating from this salad only, another time he was eating crushed wheat, Bulgur, cooked with tomatoes. In summer, when he finished his food, his companion ordered him to eat grapes; he ate only three or four grapes.

### **9 - The stems of purslane and parsley**

Fr. Alwen said: Once I was with my fellow novices working around the hermitage, we had the idea to prepare "tabboule"; so we plucked the parsley and purslane and threw away the stems. Fr. Sharbel picked them up, chopped and mixed them with oil and salt and began to eat; this happened at my sight.

### **10 - Willingly**

Fr. Makarios told him: "My brother there is no more food for you, except this little bit that I left for the cat on her plate, because I've forgotten you." He replied: **"Father, I do not mind. I will willingly eat the portion reserved for the smallest animal."**

### **11 - An oxidized metal box**

Fr. Boulos Al-Sebrene witnessed: Once, I went to the hermitage, I saw Fr. Sharbel after dinner, he got up took the plate of his companions and his old wooden plate, washed them, poured the rinsed water into a small oxidized metal box and carried it to his cell. I asked Fr. Makarios, his companion: "What does Fr. Sharbel do with this dishwater?" He replied: "He will drink it, he always does this." I wondered how he could live in this state and this kind of food.

### **12 - Moved to tears**

Fr. Semaan Abi-Beshara witnessed: Once, I sat down at lunch with Fr. Sharbel and his companion Fr. Makarios, the food was consisted of potatoes stew. I saw Fr. Sharbel took the burnt bread, and the crumbs, put them carefully in his wooden bowl. I took pity on him and moved to tears, then I said to myself; while this hermit undergoes arduous austerities, we the monks choose the tasty dishes and the comfortable bed.

### **13- He didn't taste a single grape**

Fr. Boulos Al-Sebrene testified: When the Superior of St. Maron monastery, sent me to pick up grapes from the hermitage's vineyard, Fr. Makarios ordered Fr. Sharbel to accompany me and pick up grapes for me. I never saw him tasted a single grape. When I found him alone in the hermitage, I asked him to help me to

pick up some grapes; he gave me no answer and waited for the order of his companion.

#### **14 - Nobody asked me**

While the monks were working in the vineyards, with other workers, they had lunch together and forgot to call Fr. Sharbel, also the next day he ate nothing. Having realized this matter, the Superior called him and said: "Have you eaten today?" He replied: "**No**". The superior continued: "and yesterday, did you eat?" He replied: "**No**." He asked him: "Why?" Sharbel said: "**Nobody asked me**." The Superior ordered to bring him food right away, and asked the monks: "Why haven't you called him to eat?" They answered: "We forgot."

#### **15-Go and pray**

Fr. Nehemtallah Meshmesh testified: One day I was present at the time of their meal and I asked Fr. Sharbel to eat, he answered: "**I do not eat as I wish**", he was waiting for the order of his companion. Fr. Boulos Al-Sebrene added: When they finished eating, Fr. Sharbel folded his arms, bowed his head and asked his companion: "**Father, what do you want me to do now?**" He replied: "Go and pray."

#### **17 -The provisions abounded (Mk 6:30-44)**

Youssef Khalifeh witnessed: When the provisions of the monastery had gone low, a monk came to inform the Superior about this matter, he called Fr. Sharbel and asked him to spray the storage box with holy water and pray, he obeyed and it overflowed with wheat. In another year, it happened that the provisions were finished, the Superior summoned Fr. Sharbel, the hermit, who prayed, blessed and the provisions increased. This phenomenal event occurred many times; the oil barrels were empty, by the prayers of Sharbel they got filled again.

# H: The Sobriety of Sharbel

## I-Introduction

He lived soberly in the situation in which he was found, seeking only to please God. Wherever his superiors sent him, he found peace and joy; he didn't mind if he swept, cooked, dug or did other work, if in all these services he could please God. His companion took care of him spontaneously, and supplied him with the necessary; he gave up even on everyday necessities and ordinary things, accepting the poorest and the most difficult ones. Pure as a child, he fled the snobbery, the disdain and flattery. With his colleagues, he was lenient and righteousness; he was never unjust towards others except himself, applying the arduous austerities. He never boasted of a case and did nothing on his own initiative; neither at work nor in praying for long hours before the Holy Eucharist; returning all these to his vow of obedience. He was stable in his sobriety, diligent in his mortification; happy to fulfill it until the last breath of his life. He never complained during his life; he was of the utmost modesty in eating, drinking, and in clothing. He interfered with no one and took no initiative in relations with others, except whatever the vow of obedience ordered.

## II-Stories and Events

### 1-Oh! Superior General

During his term as Superior General, Fr. Mubarak Al-Matni visited the convent of Annaya. He took the opportunity to have lunch with the monastic students; they prepared the meal for him near the hermitage. Fr. Sharbel, the hermit, came to greet him, so the Superior General told him: "Fr Sharbel, you will be with us today for lunch, we will offer you a very good meal." Fr. Sharbel replied: "**We pronounced the vow of obedience in difficult things, and this is very easy! Obedience in this matter is very good.**" Fr. General believed that Fr. Sharbel is going to eat what will be presented to him at the table. At lunchtime, the Superior General called Fr. Sharbel; he came with folded arms, so the Superior asked him: "Would you have lunch with us?" Perplexed, the hermit began to rub his hands, and then replied softly with reverence: "**Father General! Father General!**" On one hand, he didn't want to oppose his order, rather his desire; on the other hand, he didn't want to eat the food prepared for the Superior General and his companions. The Father General noticed his hesitation and let him have his way, so he came back to his hermitage.

## **2 -Look what your deacon is giving me!**

Shibley Shibley witnessed: Handkerchiefs were presented to the hermitage as votive offerings. Once, Fr. Sharbel brought a lot to the Superior who told him: "Give them to the deacon." He gave them to me, while looking at the Superior and saying: "**Master, can you give me a handkerchief, to wipe my hands with it?**" He replied: "They were all with you, why didn't you take for them? He said: "**I do not take anything without your permission.**" The Superior told me: "Give him one." I chose for him a new one. He smiled and told the superior: "**Look what you deacon is giving me!**" He replied: "Choose what you want." He took the most unpretentious ones.

## **I- The intelligence of Sharbel**

### **I-Introduction**

He had the appearance of stupidity and naiveness, but in reality, he was perceptive, intelligent and honest, unequivocally and frankly talking; when asked he answered clearly and concisely, pretending to be stupid and apathetic. He never uttered except with the necessary words that could strengthen the brotherhood and serve the salvation the soul.

His conversations always focused on theological subjects; motivating all his works for the eternal salvation; his opinion on theological matters was prudent... He was quick-witted, in spite of his absolute silence.

As for his ingenuity, it was reflected in the precision of his work, putting everything in its proper place; in spite of his excellent understanding and the strength of his knowledge he made himself a slave to all. In his mortification and the mastery of his instincts, he reached a level that is found in the Psalm of the prophet David: "I became as a beast before you, but I am each day with you." He was humble, in his heart and his intention, with only one goal: God. He wasn't stupid and dispassionate, but he was gifted with the wisdom of the Saints. He didn't commit a single mistake, that his superiors and his colleagues could blame him for, because he offered no opportunity for them to find any blemish in his behavior. His remarkably accurate attention to the regulations shows that he had perfectly understood their meaning.

His "Spirit word" was sublime, because he was heading towards perfection by the ideal way from which he never moved away a step. In his lifestyle, he put everything in its proper place, not uttering a single word inadequate. His wisdom protected him from detestable superstition and exaggeration. He was a knowledgeable man, who had completed his studies in Kfifane, even though he was from outer appearance as a naive person.

As for the frequent and increased austerities and the oppression of his body; they caused him no disease, which proves that they were exercised wisely. He was a serious and discreet person, balanced in his behavior which imposed his respect and his esteem to all those who knew him; he had never been "a stumbling block" for anyone rather they all considered him a Saint and asked for his blessing. He was wise, not by the wisdom of this world, but by a supernatural wisdom... Superiors and monks were often advised to follow his example.

## **II-Stories and Events**

### **1 - Ask and you will be given (Mt 7:7)**

Fr. Youssef Ehmej witnessed: Fr. Sharbel had an inflamed and iron Will that made him the master of his inclinations and his emotions; he told me: **"My brother, life is illusory, God knows our whole being, those who ask for his grace with confidence, will not be disappointed. Ask him to give you all what you need."** During the whole time I've spent at Saint Maron, neither I nor the superiors or monks, recognized any mistake in his conduct. He desired to be asked to serve, not only by the superiors and brethren, but also by the workers of the convent and the servants; for example, if someone asked him to convey the plowing machine elsewhere, he would carry it immediately. I myself witnessed numerous incidents of this kind. I never heard that anyone had complained about him or accused him for any reason; his superiors and his brethren respected and appreciated him and asked for his prayers in sickness and in sorrow. His piety left a great influence on his fellow man.

### **2 -We have no thieves**

Once, a man came to the convent on Sunday to attend the Mass where the farmer-members and other people gathered all Sundays and holidays; he left his stick near the door and entered the church. At that time Fr. Sharbel was not yet in the hermitage. After the Mass, the man couldn't find his stick, he yelled, raising his

voice and cursed. Fr. Sharbel left the church and said softly and sweetly: **"My brother, my brother no one yells in the convent."** The man replied angrily: "They stole my stick, are there thieves in the monastery?" Smiling, Fr. Sharbel replied calmly: **"No my brother, we have no thieves. Look at this basin stone, at the entrance of the monastery, it stands here since it was built, nobody stole it."** Ashamed, the man silenced and all those present laughed because the basin was a large stone, weighing over a ton, more than twenty people wouldn't be able to move it.

### **3 - An ingenious Master**

It was accustomed among the monks or peasants, when a clumsy or stupid brother helped them, to go and complain to the Superior, saying: "Please, Father Superior, don't send us this or that brother because he is in his work more of a hindrance than useful. As for Sharbel, nobody ever complained about him, or about incompetence in his work; his intelligence was remarkable in all his work; his wisdom was reflected in its greatest splendor, through the transparency of his consciousness that reached the peak of the sublimity in his virtues, leaving no way to be said that he had the slightest hallucination or the minimum illusion. His whole behavior was an expression of wisdom. It is true that he had no professional education, but he was ingenious in spiritual subjects, where the monks of the Order, the most known for their knowledge and experience, were failed.

## **J-The library and the culture of Sharbel**

### **I-Introduction**

#### **1 - His books**

He derived his meditations from the following books: "Flash in Mind", Preparing for Death of Saint Alphonsus Ligoury, Confessions of Saint Augustine, The Christian Perfection, Moral theology, Imitation of Christ, a book that he was very passionate of reading it. He also read many other books: The theological books, Monks' Garden, Biography of St. Anthony the Great, The Monastic Lamp, Spiritual interpretation, The Holy Scriptures. There was nothing in his room, except the regular mat, and his prayer and meditations' books.

Also from the books that he read: the Ladder of virtues, of John Climacus; Anchoritic, of St. Basil, St. Ephrem Memri, Excerpts of St. Isaac the Syriac of

Nivine, Memri of spiritual Sage in the monastic life, of John Daliyati; Contempt the vanity of the world, the Master Didoxe Stalleh, from St. Francis Order, and for Fr. John Eusebius Nirmubarak the Jesuit, The Balance of time and the trap for the eternity of man. Also, The Glories of Mary by St. Alphonsus Ligoury, the Martyrology, the novice regulations, Rules and Constitutions of 1732.

And transcripts found in the library of the monastery Annaya: Part eight of the Science of theology in legislation, the biography of the saints, of Jesus and Mary and the Synod, Daily practice in the eternal truths, Monastic discussion; topics came under the form of ask and answer, and sermons about the Virgin Mary, the interpretation of the Breviary, and untitled book about the explanation in honor of the name of Jesus, and on the cautiousness from the wicked, also mentioned the death, the judgment and purgatory, and the Magnificat of Virgin Mary, and the Hell and the Confession, and another untitled book, meditation on the passion of Christ, and The spiritual war, and the History of Times or the history of the Muslim by Patriarch Estephen Al-Douaihi, and the Divan of the Maronite Bishop Germanos Farhat Halabi.

## **2 - His education**

Fr. Sharbel was a man of pure holiness, we took him as naive, but in the spiritual level, he was expert and well-educated, smart, fluent in moral theology and the principles of the Syriac language, which he translate into Arabic, in addition to his knowledge in Arabic language. He was judicious and convincing in his answers; because in moral theology and spiritual things, he belonged to the school of the famous Fr. Al-Kafri. In the theological discussions with the priests, he spoke voluntarily about spiritual topics, especially regards the soul and the sacrament of reconciliation, in which he talked freely from the fullness of his heart inflamed with spiritual and divine matters.

## **II-Stories and Events**

### **1-Religious discussions**

Fr. Alouan witnessed: During his presence at the convent, he was helping in the bakery, all day long, while discussing about theological issues that were of great benefit. He was more relevant in his answers than others; where the accuracy of knowledge, breathed with the sweetness of the expression and combined with the virtue of humility. In this also, he did not answer if he hadn't been asked to reply. He exchanged with us, religious discussions that demonstrated the depth of

his faith; quoting verses from the Holy Bible and from the Scriptures, asking us to find another verse which must begin with the last letter of his quote, then he explained its meaning.

## **2 - Read this chapter**

Fr. Andari testified: I have personally met Fr. Sharbel in September 1898, in the hermitage of Saints Peter and Paul, on the occasion of my visit to the monastery of Saint Maron Annaya few months after my solemn vows; I was accompanied by Fr. Ibrahim Al-Haqlani "[14]," my classmate, who later died in the reputation of sanctity. Upon our arrival, we entered the chapel of the hermitage, where Fr. Sharbel was kneeling upright on a piece of log, with reverence, without moving. We visited the Holy Sacrament and prayed for a moment, while staring at him, still persisting in the same attitude. Then we went into a narrow hallway that had a simple stone-built oven; there we saw the other hermit Fr. Makarios Sawma from Meshmesh, cooking in a pot made of clay. The hermits ate only once a day, in the afternoon; the dish consisted of a seasoning of lentils, chick peas, beans, cracked wheat, and other grains, a kind of soup called "Makhlouta".

He welcomed us, with a glowing face and a smile that shows his pure heart, like the heart of a child. We sat on two curved stones which were at the bottom of a stony arch; after he chopped the onion, he called Fr. Sharbel, we saluted him he replied in a soft voice, barely audible, looking at the ground, uttering a single word: "Peace." Then, Fr. Makarios gave him a metal pan in which he put a little oil and the chopped onions, saying: "Take and fry the onions." He took them without looking at us. Fr. Makarios brought a tray made of wicker on which he placed two plates, a little bread and purslane, parsley, some bread, known as "the loaves of monks", some of which were in pieces, others burned, then he told Fr. Sharbel: "pluck off the leaves of purslane." Then, he took the frying pan, poured the contents into the clay pot, and then filled the two plates, while Fr. Sharbel still plucking the purslane, putting the leaves on a plate and the stems in the corner of the tray.

Fr. Makarios invited us to eat but we apologized and thanked him, he turned to Fr. Sharbel and said: "Eat." Fr. Sharbel prayed and then began to eat carefully, sitting on the floor, legs crossed, looking straight ahead him, in silence. He ate the stems of purslane that others don't eat; he did not eat the leaves seasoned with salt and oil.

Fr. Makarios went to the vineyard, and brought us grapes of the highest quality. Meanwhile Fr. Sharbel finished his meal, residing in the same position, arms crossed, head bowed, waiting for the order; so his companion told him: "Go, visit the Blessed Sacrament and then come back to do the dishes." At sunset we

said goodbye, collected and very excited, we went back to the convent amazed at what we had seen.

In the summer of 1898, I spent the holiday at the convent of Annaya in the company of the brothers scholastic. One day, around 9:00am, we went to visit the hermits, we found Fr. Sharbel in church, kneeling straight on the same piece of wood, at the same place, as we saw him the first time last year.

While I was praying before the Blessed Sacrament, I turned my eyes towards him I saw him motionless as a statue, a rosary in his hand, eyes fixed on the altar, I felt he was in total ecstasy; he didn't even pay attention to us. After we prayed, we looked at him, hoping that he would look back, but he remained motionless and did not look towards us. We then walked into the courtyard of the church on the west side; while we were discussing and yelling. Fr. Sharbel opened the door and stood in silence; watching us, arms crossed, with a smile on his brilliant face, as if he wanted to tell us; do not make noise, not to disturb my prayer in my solitude. We have taken in such veneration, went up to him and asked for his blessing and the kissing of his hand. Whenever someone approached him to greet him, he bent his right knee slightly, bent his body, then he quickly touched with the tip of his fingers each of us, preventing us from kissing his hand. He greeted us with a smile, repeating a single word in a whisper: "Peace". We stood for one minute in front of him, in reverence, he closed the door and returned to his prayer, we withdrew into the woods, west of the hermitage, tiptoeing, whispering, not to disturb his prayer in solitude. We were filled with joy and reverence for seeing him; but then I left my brethren and returned alone to church, to see him again and talk to him, but I didn't find him, I went into the hallway, he was not there, I looked all over the hermitage, I didn't see him. Then I went up to the roof, and saw him sitting on a roller, near the church wall, as if he was avoiding me, holding the biography of Saint Anthony the Great. When I approached him, he handed the book to me saying: "Read this chapter." I read it standing in front of him while he was listening; as soon as I finished reading, he took the book, and without saying a word he disappeared into the church. I thought, he had just given me this passage, in order to avoid a conversation with me.

( [14]He frequently visited the patients infected with smallpox disease, to console them and give them the sacraments. He got this contagious disease and died in 1906.)

### **3- Professor in Theology**

He probably founded the school of Annaya, where Fr. Antonius Meshmesh taught. Also Fr. Youssef the son of Fr. Youssef Saad Al-Marouni from Meshmesh, who was born in 1876, and was a neighbor of the monastery of Saint Maron Annaya; he studied theology at the hand of Fr. Antonius Meshmesh in the monastery itself, and pronounced his solemn vows in May 31, 1898. **Sharbel, himself, was teaching the priesthood students** in the monastery of Saint Maron Annaya.

### **4 - Never tired of reading the Bible**

"**La Croix**" newspaper wrote: Sharbel is a saint according to the Gospel; Christ was his only teacher, Sharbel consulted Him and listened to Him. He was never tired of reading the Bible and reflecting on the life of Christ. Sharbel is a living example for the Gospel; he followed Jesus Christ and practiced the virtues due to the disciple of Christ as: obedience, mortification, humility, love and prayer; that grew up by the pure water of the Gospel.

## **K-The Confession of Sharbel**

### **I-Introduction**

#### **1 -Revealing thoughts**

Sharbel revealed his thoughts daily in accordance to the law : "Outside the confession, the novice must reveal his thoughts to his superior or his novice master, every night if possible; he kneels before his spiritual father, with humility and reverence, uncovering his head, kissing the ground... and saying respectfully: **Father, my heart is far from God ... I am fully flawed and unworthy servant before God ...** then he externalizes his thoughts, both good and bad ... asking his spiritual father his advices and guidelines that he must keep.

#### **2 - The weekly confession**

He hated the sin and the causes that lead to it, even he hated to mention it. All those who knew him, testified that he did not voluntarily committed a venial sin. What was known to all, that in his life he had never thwarted the Ten Commandments and those of the church; rather he suffered when someone trespassed. However, every night he examined his conscience on all the acts of the

day, as the wise merchant; to discern whether he was a winner or a loser, in the first case, he gives thanks to God, seeking more graces in order to increase his efforts in work and thereby increase his gain and his merit. In the second case, although the loss was minimal, he takes the resolution to heal the existing weakness. He confessed continuously, once a week, whether in his secular life or in his monastic and priesthood life. He was smart and wise, without being scrupulous, for he knew the true spirit very well and never rejected any good advice throughout his life.

In the convent of Kfifane, he had two spiritual fathers: Fr. Nehemtallah Al-Kafri, who was later elected as a Superior General, and St. Al-Hardini Nehemtallah, also early in his anchoritic life, Fr. Alishaa was his spiritual father. After the death of Alishaa, Fr. Libaos Al-Ramaty became his companion, later he transferred to the convent of Qattara. Finally, Fr. Makarios Meshmesh accompanied him till he died.

### **3-Serving the faithful**

He got permission from the Patriarch Boulos Massaad, to practice the sacrament of reconciliation... on February 20, 1863. But he heard only the confession when his superior told him, because he was not appointed for the pastoral ministry. Those who had come to him in order to confess and to listen to his guideline, they testified and praised his zeal for their own good, and the effective influence of his advices on their soul; as it penetrates deep into the heart, and leaves a spiritual influence in the spirit. So they have all praised his insight and his wise advices, for the construction of the others and their progress in their spiritual life; and if necessary, he was not holding, his advices from those who associated with him.

He loved a lot the souls, and suffered for the perished ones; so he prayed for the sinners, and gave them wholesome advice at confession, he strongly admonished them for their sins, and gave them a strict penance. He heard the confessions of women, only when the Superior ordered him.

## **II-Stories and Events**

### **1 - Pour the hope in his heart**

His example had a great influence over others, monks and laity: working his best to sow the seeds of hope in their hearts. If a monk fell seriously ill, he would ask the superior to send Fr. Sharbel to provide him with the last rites; confession and holy communion ... to comfort him and pour into his heart the hope and the expectation that he could depart from this world in the hope of the

resurrection; so he came and spent the night at the bedside of the patient, sat on a chair, and did not leave him, except to recite the prayer service. When the Superior ordered him to go and pray for a patient, he went willingly and with joy.

## **2 - Alone among the monks**

According to the calendar of Annaya: Brother Sarkis Ehmej died a natural death, provided with the last rites in the presence of Fr. Youssef Issa and **Fr. Sharbel from Bqaakafra**, on March 14, 1874.

## **3 - A wise counselor**

Fr. Youssef Ehmej witnessed: He was smart and wise in his spiritual speech. I remember that he once told me: "**Never speak a word that could cause a sin, if it is beneficial say it, or don't.**"

## **4-I felt a deep reverence after his advice**

Fr. Tabet Mubarak testified: When Fr. Sharbel left the church to return to his cell, I stopped him, begging him to hear my confession he came back and told me "**Follow me.**" After the confession, I looked over inside the church where I saw cracks in the ceiling and in the walls, that can cause the collapse of the stony roof, so I told him: "Father, you spend all night in this chapel, this hermitage is exposed to lightning, a thunder is sufficient to cause its collapse over you, why don't you renovate it?" He replied: "**Don't care**". I said: "I will tell the Father Superior to restore it." He answered: "**No! Don't tell him, my son, where I could find a more sacred place than this altar, to die over it?**"

I felt a deep reverence because of his response, the same feeling I had after listening to his advices during the confession. Then he went back to his cell, and we left.

## **5 - He met the qualifications of the confessor**

Fr. Ramyah testified: He was intelligent and very competent; he delighted the hearts of those who confessed to him, by his advice and guidance. I myself have been several times in his confessional, and now I wish with all my heart, that I get the chance to find a priest like him to confess to him throughout my life; because Fr. Sharbel had a unique ingenious memory, in which one might think that he had an access even to the invisible world; as he remembered, even after a long time, the situations that were presented to him by his parishioners.

Although he was knowledgeable and accurate in guiding the souls, prescribing the medicine according to the disease without mercy; he was

capable to attract the heart of the confessor, despite the apparent severity of his exhortations to the sin committed, and the severe compensation he imposed. His personality combined all the qualities of the Confessor; he was very relevant in his advice, his questions and his admonitions; a judge perceiving in his spiritual theology an excellent knowledge; a clever doctor who gave the right treatment; a loving father who opened his arms to the sinner, and gave him the passion for repentance and confession.

## **6 - Very Impressive**

Skandar Beik Khoury witnessed: He listened to the confessions of men, only to those who asked him; he usually sent them to his companion in the hermitage. His instructions were very impressive, to all those who heard him in the confessional, as my father told me; who, himself, in age of twenty-five, had confessed to him, about seven or eight times.

## **L: Servant for everybody (Mt 20/28)**

### **I-Introduction**

The law orders: "The gestures and works of the monks must be low and with degrading, regarding to his brethren." So, when Sharbel obeyed this rule, his surroundings, the secular and especially the monastic order, didn't understand him; some people disrespected him for his despicable clothes, and some of the monks laughed at his naiveté and even some of them used to mock him for his arduous austerities, including the one that put him water in the lantern. They talked with him with anger and scolded him, to the extent that Sharbel who was known by his utmost patience and his ultimate silence, he once said to the hermit Makarios: **"If I am stupid, be patient with me, for the sake of Christ."**

He embodied the example of Christian by his humility, trying to conceal his virtues and his good deeds. He felt sad and began to tremble when others praised him. He was the reflection of modesty, held aloof from people and brothers, preferring hiding, isolation and silence; he was human, apparently, living in heaven, actually.

When he is informed about something even if he wasn't at fault; he would kneel down with folded arms, asking for forgiveness, bowing his head towards the ground, and did not get up till he is ordered, due to the novice's regulation:

" If the novice is admonished, he must Kneel down silently and quickly with folded arms, without trying to justify himself and do not get up until the Superior orders him, so he receives his blessing and goes to work."

He was so meek and humble, more humble than a lamb, and more pleasant than a spirit flowing in the body, yet he was the **humility itself**, never talked about himself, as if he was dead from this world.

He humbled himself till he faded, petered out completely if he could; he appeared without a will, and somehow with no mind and no senses; despicable in his clothes, in his food, in his sleep, in his kneeling, in his mat, in his cell, in his hard work, totally forgetting himself.

He willingly accepted the contempt of others; rather he felt happy if someone insulted him; he wasn't embarrassed from his despicable habit, neither from his poor food, nor from his miserable cell.

He always looked for the smallest service, the least position. We heard him once saying: **I do not deserve to be among my brothers, or to achieve their dignity, because I am inferior to everyone**; his words are the evidence of his deep humility. He considered himself entirely lower than all the monks, claiming every pettiness and lowliness for him, forgetting himself totally. He behaved as if he was a servant for all who worked with him in the field; choosing, willingly, the modest services, such sweeping and washing the dishes; therefore, these services weren't accounted for ordained priests. When the monks tried to kiss his hands and receive his blessing, he was doing his best to stop them.

## **II-Stories and Events**

### **1 - Stranger**

Fr. Maron Karam explained: The monk of the region, became dependent on his district, and couldn't be transferred without the permission of the superior; so the monk who was outside his region, considered himself a stranger, and some of the monks told the alien one: "What have brought you here? No bread remained in your country?" Therefore, Fr. Sharbel was a stranger in the province; he was the only one in the convent, who came from northern Lebanon, from the region of Jebbeh. Yet he obeyed, in an exemplary manner, all those who lived in the monastery; monks and laymen gave him orders, to make fun of him or to joke, and he never rejected any order. Nobody defended nor respected him, except the Superior who became angry on those who tortured Sharbel or mocked from him. As for Fr. Sharbel, he devoted himself to work, prayer and obedience, without indignation against his mockers, he rarely spoke, only when he answered a question. In this context St.

Therese cried out: "What contempt, on the strange shore, didn't you endure for me? I want to disappear from the earth and be the last in everything, for You, O Jesus."

## 2 - God give me strength to obey [15]

Hanna Al-Houssaini witnessed: When my uncle, Abdel Ahad Al-Houssaini, was superior of the convent of Kartaba, I was a deacon serving there. One day we came to St. Maron monastery where the monks in Annaya and the workers were busy preparing a furnace. Fr. Sharbel was taking care of the firewood, it was then, when Fr. Hanna Roukoz Meshmesh turned to him and joked in front of all present: "We all decided to throw you into the furnace for the lack of branches, because the human body, fueling more than logs, and his flesh fed well the furnace, so the stone will soon burn." As soon as, Fr. Sharbel heard this, he knelt down and said: **God give me strength to obey**, which means I am ready to sacrifice my life, to obey. Deeply moved, Fr. Elias Meshmesh, reprimanded him saying: "Shame on you! Why are you joking like that with Fr. Sharbel? Don't you know that the Spirit of God is upon him? May God grant us the blessing of his intercessory prayers." Then Fr. Roukoz asked forgiveness from Fr. Sharbel who replied: **God forgives everyone.**

[15] According to the hermit, Fr. Youhanna Al-khawand, this expression means, it is impossible! Used by the monks when they were asked to do something impossible! )

## 3 - I am a great sinner

Nobody was aware of his presence, because he was attached to the life of isolation. When the visitors asked for his blessing and his prayers, he gave them his blessing without looking at them, saying: "**Ask the Lord to give you according to your faith.**" If someone told him: You are a saint, he got disturbed and said, "**I am a great sinner.**" At the Hermitage, he performed the lowest and the most humble works. Though he was the Superior in the hermitage, he imposed himself to the obedience of his companion Fr. Makarios, who was younger than him; he was the one who washed the dishes and swept the floor. If it happened that the superior admonished a monk in his presence, or warned him for something, even if he wasn't at fault, he would kneel, according to the monks' custom, seeking forgiveness and never got up until the superior asked him.

#### **4 -The cat's leftovers**

Fr. Bernardes Ehmej testified: I am telling you a story that I saw with my own eyes and I was deeply touched; I always remember this scene with great emotion, respect and wonder. Fr. Sharbel was eating with his companion at my presence; their dish was composed of cracked wheat cooked with chard leaves. After having finished, Fr. Makarios wiped the pan with a piece of bread and threw it for the cat, but the cat wasn't hungry, so she licked the remaining meal without eating the bread. Meanwhile, Fr. Sharbel, who was washing the dishes, came back and found the bread on a floor, he picked it up, passed it over his head and after shaking the dust, he made the sign of the cross and ate it, without noticing my presence, because he never raised his eyes. At that moment, I became aware that he never looked at anyone, because he repeatedly asked, "**Who are you?**" Although I answered him, he was asking me the same question in the second day, because he never raised his eyes and looked at me.

#### **5 -His homeland is in heaven! (Phil 3/20)**

Fr. Youssef Ehmej witnessed: He liked to be despised by all. Throughout his life, he kept his eyes lowered and he looked neither to his brethren nor to the natural landscape. One day I was with Fr. Nehemtallah Meshmesh, holding binoculars, looking towards Beirut; Fr. Sharbel came along, carrying a rope to tie a load of wood, I told him: Take this telescope you can see Beirut very close to you. He replied; "**No, why should I care, about these things?**" Then he went to his work. Fr. Roukouz Meshmesh added, so I told him follow me to the roof of the hermitage, he obeyed. I gave him the binoculars, to see Beirut, he replied: **Watch, by yourself!** and he went back.

#### **6 - Do not put him to the test**

Hanna Al-Houssaini testified: I heard Fr. Elias Meshmesh warning the visitors of the convent not to put Fr. Sharbel to the test, neither verbally nor otherwise, saying: "This is a man of faith, the Spirit of God is upon him, so respect him." Fr. Elias liked and esteemed him, for his unique virtues. He once said to me: Many times, I tried to dissuade Fr. Sharbel from practicing the arduous work in the field, and to give him an easier job in the convent, for the rest of his body, but he was immediately finishing the work in the monastery, and going to the field.

## 7 - Insults

### - **Blessed are you if they insult you and persecute you** (Mt 5:11)

Once he was reciting the prayer service, when Fr. Ignatius Meshmesh called him and told him rigorously: "Leave the prayer and come here." He obeyed respectfully. He endured the insults and the ridicules of others, sometimes with humbleness, sometimes with patience and joy. For whoever humbles himself will be exalted, and the humble of heart will find rest for his soul, and he of whom they say all evil against him, his reward will be great in heaven; so Sharbel rejoiced and was glad.

### - **Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven** (Mt 5:11)

Francis Kartaba witnessed: As we collected the grapes in the vineyard of the hermitage, the superior asked me to fill the jug from the well of the hermitage. When I got there, I quickly tied the rope to the handle of the jug and carelessly threw it into the well, without realizing that Fr. Sharbel was behind me watching me, so he said: "**My brother, St. Anthony chose the discernment, and you're throwing the jag quickly, taking a risk to break it, and then it will be against poverty.**" "I replied emphatically: "Go to your church! You're living in the hermitage, pretending to be a saint!" He answered politely and gently, head bowed: "**Forgive me, my brother, for the sake of Christ.**" Then he went to church and I went to the vineyard.

### -**For in the same way they persecuted the prophets before you** (Mt 5:11)

Brother Boutros Meshmesh witnessed: One day, while I was plowing in the vineyards of the hermitage with some other workers, I saw Fr. Sharbel in the process of raising the vines while the cow was crossing; it happened that the cow trampled over the vine and broke it, then, Fr. Makarios told him: "What are you doing?! Here is a broken vine because of your negligence." Immediately, Fr. Sharbel knelt down, arms folded, and said: **Forgive me for the sake of Christ!** Praying and asking forgiveness for his sin.

## **M: No one could hear his voice (Mt 12:19)**

### **I-Introduction**

The law requires: "The monk must keep the tranquility." So he spoke very rarely. We didn't hear his voice except in reading the Bible, the words of consecration and in unison prayers. He embodied the Rule; he didn't converse with men, women or monks. At work he spoke with no one; he sought no superfluous words with a visitor or a muleteer, nor passed the time gossiping, or asked about a particular person, but if you asked him, he would answer politely, calmly and briefly. He spent the evening in silent, but he was available to speak when asked about spiritual or theological issue, so there he voluntarily abounded in his answers.

His life resembled that of cloistered silence; his speech was dedicated to talk with God, and concentrated for silence, isolation and meditation; he was a monk of work, prayer, and contemplative silence that one might think he was from another world. At church as in the hermitage, he was like an angel; no one could hear his voice.

### **II- Stories and events**

#### **1 - If necessary**

Fr. Elias Ehmej testified: Our rule requires mandatory silence after Compline, in the refectory and in the church. During these hours, if the monks talked with Fr. Sharbel, he answered only when necessary. The brethren followed his example, and presented him as an ideal for novices, in his lifetime and after his death. From all the monks, none could match his adherence to the rule.

#### **2 - I have strayed from the path.**

Fr. Ephrem Nakad witnessed: Once he went to Meshmesh to a funeral and didn't come back till evening, I asked him why he came so late, he replied: **I have strayed from the path, the fog was too dense and I found myself in Houjoula, then I gradually found the way and reached the monastery.** I replied: "Haven't you met anybody?" He said: "I met, many." I asked again: "Why didn't you ask for the direction?" He didn't say a word. In fact, he wouldn't have asked anyone, even if he had lost his way.

How strange he was in his condition! No anchorite or hermit had lived as he did; neither before nor after him. I haven't met a person like him, among the monks, laity, priests and bishops. God is wonderful in his saints! The case of this monk is very amazing!

### **3 - Do you practice your spiritual obligations?**

Once, his brother came from Bqaakafra to visit him and rang the bell. Fr. Sharbel came to see who was ringing, the visitor replied: "I am the brother of the hermit, Sharbel." he said: "**Just a moment, till I ask the hermit, if he wants to open the door.**" He went to his companion and told him: "**My brother is at the door, do you allow me to open it?**" He replied: "Of course, welcome him." During their meeting, he simply repeated the same thing: "**How are you? Is everything all right? Do you practice your spiritual obligations; you and your family?**" Shortly afterwards, he dismissed him.

### **4 - As Saint Nester**

Fr. Ephrem Nakad testified: He was like St. Nester who, when he entered the convent found a donkey near the gate, so he said to himself: "Nester, Nester, you and that donkey are alike, if he can speak, then you can talk in the convent." From my personal experience with Fr. Sharbel, I found him intelligent, knowledgeable in moral theology, passionate for learning. However, he behaved like Saint Nester: a donkey in his silence, a philosopher in his prayer and his lifestyle, a hermit in the convent.

### **5 - Listening to the Beloved one (Lk10:39)**

Although Fr. Sharbel had been neither stupid, nor melancholic, nor from those who hate the contact with people; he promised that his mouth doesn't utter a word, except to praise God in resonant prayer, or to respond to the neighbor in a spiritual matter. Therefore, he spoke very little and rarely took the initiative in conversation, but his speech was almost always an answer. So he was distinguished among the hermits, not only in his observance to the hermit's rules, but also by his constant silence and his continuous work. He seemed like a quiet contemplative monk rather than a Lebanese monk; all other hermits were astonished from his great perpetual silence.

### **6- He didn't answer me**

Moussa Moussa testified: When I helped him to pull the thorny bushes and the tree stumps, he didn't utter a word and remained silence. When I was bored of silence in the field, I talked to him, but he didn't answer me.

### **7-Nothing can entertain him**

Moussa Moussa witnessed: I befriended several monks and hermits, all venerable, but no one was like Fr. Sharbel. The other hermits, the living or the

dead, spoke with us when we visited them; seeking entertaining news, and looking at our faces. On the other hand, Fr. Sharbel spoke to no one, sought no distractions, and not even looked at the face of a living creature.

### **8- The people thought he was dumb**

Fr. Sharbel was an angel in human body, a philosopher without a philosophy, an ideal of holiness and perfection. He had a tongue, but people thought he was dumb, as if he is a little child in his mother's arms, with one difference, that we couldn't hear his voice.

### **9- He rarely spoke**

Fr. Alouan witnessed: During the period I've spent at St. Maron, I saw in him only a silent man, who lived in isolation, not only from people but also from the monks. He didn't talk in front of me, so I can tell you stories about his life, and he never engaged in anything that I could describe how he was dealing with people. He worked four or five hours with the novices and remained silent, while they were talking around him.

## **N: Rejoice in my sufferings (Col 1:24)**

### **I-Introduction**

This what the law requires: "The monk must give thanks to God for the disease more than the health, confident that it's a test from the Lord for his own good." Fr. Sharbel suffered from horrible stomach pains, worsened during the snow season, yet he never complained or asked for treatment. Although he endured this chronic colic, especially in winter, he never told anyone about his condition, nor asked for a doctor neither put heaters in winter, though the cold, in the hermitage of Saint Maron, was severe. He never said I am sick, but endured his sufferings with remarkable patience, imitating the humility and patience of Christ, concealing his troubles from others with discretion; what happened to him either from God or men, he accepted with patience and serenity. He didn't take a medicine or painkiller, even when the pain became unbearable, but he kept repeating: "The will of God be done." He wore the same habit in summer and winter, and did not approach the fire like other hermits; instead, he spent his time praying in the church, mostly kneeling on the bare ground.

His whole life was molded with mortification, so his pure body got used to it, and it became a shelter for him, where he relaxed after long years of ascetic practice; he always wore the Cilice directly on the flesh and not over a flannel. Boutros Moussa wondered how he could bear it, especially during the summer; he also put a thorny belt of iron applied on the flesh.

## **II-Stories and Events**

### **1- He captivated my heart**

Fr. Hassrouni testified: Once, while we were plowing the vineyards of the hermitage; me, Brother Elias Al-Mahrini, as the head of the field, the worker Suleiman Al-Manzili, Fr. Sharbel and his companion at the hermitage, Fr. Makarios; I noticed that Fr. Sharbel began to cling onto himself, bending his back, his hands clutching his hips, groaning from a severe pain. I asked Fr. Makarios: "What's wrong with the hermit? I see him in pain!" He replied: "He has a severe renal colic." I replied: "Then, let him rest, and ask a worker to replace him." Fr. Makarios replied: "He wants to abuse himself, in such pain and hard work." In the afternoon, Fr. Makarios went to bring the lunch, while Fr. Sharbel kept running behind three pairs of cattle, in spite of his unbearable pain; then, he saw the cattle in front of me, about to trip over the vine, he ran and saved it; his groaning increased which meant he had even more pain. I told him: "Go slowly, Master I can stop the cattle." He replied in a low, intermittent voice that captivated my heart: **"My master, it will be damage, on my conscience, against poverty"**, and he continued his work all the day despite his pain.

### **2 -My eyes bathed with tears**

Fr. Hassrouni witnessed: In May 1897, we were plowing the vineyard of the hermitage, when we started breakfast, Fr. Sharbel continued to rebuild the walls that surrounded the vine, I asked his companion, Fr. Makarios, to call him for breakfast, he replied: "He eats in the afternoon." At lunchtime, he continued his work on the walls, so I asked Fr. Makarios, out of compassion for his frail health, to order him to come and eat with us, but his companion replied, saying: "He will eat it later." In the evening, we brought the cattle to graze in the woods, a moment later, I returned to the hermitage to drink, and then I saw Fr. Sharbel eating the stems of purslane that he had picked up from the ground; my eyes bathed with tears from this impressive scene, and I blamed Fr. Makarios, saying: "Have mercy on the hermit; how do you let him eat the stems of purslane after his hard work, and his painful illness." He replied: "He

is happy with what he eats, leave him alone." Then I told myself: "How far we are from the virtues of this father? He really embodied all the virtues of the hermits in Sketis (upper of Egypt) and far exceeds what is written in the book "Garden of the monks" and the book "The Christian Perfection".

### **3 - I was deeply moved by compassion.**

Fr. Hassrouni witnessed: I saw him once, transporting woods on his back from the depths of the forest to the vineyard; he was carrying a very heavy bundle and ascending to the hermitage, I was deeply moved to pity, for this old man who was over sixty-five. I blamed his companion, Fr. Makarios, who rapidly disposed of it, saying: "He wants to subdue himself."

### **4 - Rice and butter in the hermitage!**

Once Fr. Makarios said: "You endure a pain in the kidneys let me prepare a rice soup with butter for you; he replied in a low voice: "**Rice and butter in the hermitage? No, thanks**"

### **5 -For the sake of Jesus Passion**

Moussa Moussa witnessed: When I asked him why he had a small branch of the vine tied around his head and a goat skin around his wrist, he sometimes replied:" **I have a headache; I put them for the sake of Jesus Passion!**"

### **6 - No one was aware of his suffering**

The hermits were prepared a meal from wild legumes, it seemed that one of these herbs was harmful; Fr. Sharbel ate and fell sick without complaining, and nobody was aware of his sickness and his pain.

### **7 - He stepped on the thorny bushes barefooted**

Moussa Moussa testified: When he was in the hermitage, I saw him in torn clothes, carrying a burden of thorny shrubs, stepping on it bare feet when he tied it with a rope, so his feet bled because of the thorns.

### **8 - The wool socks**

Once, the Superior gave him the instruction to wear socks, knitted on our country with thick wool threads, to protect his feet from moisture, because he

was suffering from stomach pains. He wore them only a single time, out of obedience, then he never put them during his lifelong.

### **9 - He warmed up for a short time**

When it was very cold in winter, Fr. Makarios called him to come to the kitchen to warm himself. Fr. Sharbel obeyed and went there for a short time, and then he retired to sleep in his cell; while his companion was sleeping beside the fire, because of the bitter cold inside the hermitage.

### **11-I shouldn't savor the sweets**

Once, Fr. Makarios proposed to make him a hot drink with bitter herbs, as a sedative for the pain he endured, **he agreed in one condition, that he didn't put sugar.** Fr. Makarios replied: "But the herbs are very bitter, and it's impossible to drink it!" Fr. Sharbel answered: "**I shouldn't savor the sweets, and my Lord Jesus drank vinegar on the cross, when he was at the peak of his thirst and suffering.**"

## **O: Everlasting peace (Jn14:27)**

### **I-Introduction**

His courage was exceptional because it came from heaven and not from earth; in all time we could see him amiable and cheerful, as if everything was going well. He never grumbled about someone, or complained about a work, in summer or winter. When lightning struck the rod of the hermitage, he wasn't moving from his spot in the church where he was praying. He endured all the difficulties, putting in front of him his supernatural goal. He was suffering from colic, that sometimes assaulted him during the hours of manual labor, but he never groaned rather he was repeating; **O Jesus! O Blessed Virgin!** When his companion, Fr. Makarios told him to go to rest and pray before the Blessed Sacrament, he always obeyed. If he was called, he stood and saluted with the usual greeting: **Praised be God;** he stayed upright, arms crossed, till they order him to sit. He was serene, serious, good-tempered, and gentle as a dove, rather he was the docility, the kindness and the tenderness; anyone who looked at him, spontaneously would love him; if someone annoyed him, he bore it with patience and kindness.

## **II- Stories and events**

### **1- His heart and his mind are in heaven (Mt 6/19-21)**

He did not speak of earthly things, nor asked about the income of the hermitage from the vows offerings, or wished that the monastery will be richer, nor he was proud of the richness of the convent in its territories or otherwise. He spoke neither about family nor relatives or cared about their loss or wealth, he never asked about them or about money, or livelihood. He underwent no work for the sake of gratitude, and didn't expect any help from anyone. He never looked for compensation from the part of the superiors if he had been asked to provide a service; his relationship with them was brief; if commanded he obeyed without the slightest hesitation. He wasn't to be carried away by emotions of sadness, or happiness; if a disaster happened to the convent, or to one of his fellow he didn't grieve; nor he rejoiced if one of his brethren got a rank in the priesthood, or any other gratifying things; he always kept the same mood in all situations, confident in God, repeating the phrase: **God provides, this is the Will of God.** He prayed for a plenty harvest season, but he showed no affection for a good or bad one, saying: **The Divine Providence provides.** He always said: **Thy Will be done, what we have in this world? We are but pilgrims to Eternity.** In a word, his heart and his thoughts were directed towards heaven.

### **2 - Pray for him**

He showed a strong faith in God; so when the parent of a sick person came to beg him, asking him to pray for the healing of their patient, he sometimes replies: **Your patient is in a good health, pray for him,** as if the will of God inspired him to say these words of consolation. Other time, he replies: **Plead and pray for him,** and he prays with them and urges them to trust in God. On other occasion, he consoles them by advising them **to have patience and surrender to God's Divine will.** Each time they mentioned to him about a patient, or needy or a person in difficulty, he says: **God provides, let's depend on Him,** and if someone asked him for a help, he would **convince him to turn to God and plead Him for the grace desired.**

### **6 - The scattering of ashes**

The hermits celebrated their masses separately, so Fr. Sharbel served the masses of his companions, Fr. Makarios Meshmesh and Fr. Semaan Ehmej;

however each undertook to serve his mass every other day, because of to the bitter cold in winter. Once, it was very cold and the snow accumulated very thick, Fr. Sharbel served the two masses of his two companions, then they went after the masses to warm up near the fire, while Fr. Sharbel was preparing to celebrate his mass. The two hermits, after getting warm, surrendered to sleep, and suddenly the stove bumped against the wall, leaving the embers and ashes scattered over them so they woke up frightened, went directly to church, found Fr. Sharbel already dressed for mass, standing before the altar, waiting that someone would come to serve his mass. Upon their arrival, he showed no disappointment, nor said a word; they considered that the incident of embers was a warning for them to go and serve the Mass.

#### **4- He worked for the monks' comfort**

He was concerned only about the comfort of the monks and the welfare of the convent; for he was convinced that with this contribute; he praises God and works for the salvation of his soul. If he felt that one of his brothers, who had been ordered to perform a job as baking bread, was tired and he needed to rest or he should do other duty, Fr. Sharbel would ask permission from his companion to replace him and did the job with pleasure even until midnight. He never left his brethren till the mission is accomplished. To anyone who asked him for a service, he replied: **I am at your service, my brother.**

### **P: No one could take away his joy (Jn 16:22)**

#### **I-Introduction**

He was always gentle and cheerful, happy in God, pleased in his condition, he neither grumbled nor complained about anything, sober, patient, joyful; he knew nor boredom neither weariness, nor sadness neither anxiety or fear; he practiced the austerities, spontaneously, easily and happily, until the last day of his life. He was joyful in all his work and always happy; practicing it constantly and persistently; neither he hesitated on doing it nor grumbled.

He considered himself a servant for all others; obeying with joy and lot of energy not only what his superiors ordered, but also what the others asked him, including novices and servants. He considered himself lucky, for each service he could provide for others; he served with content the laborers who worked in the

field of the monastery, or in the vineyard of the hermitage. He completely accomplished all services required from him, and was pleased to take over a brother in a hard work.

When the superior ordered him to go and pray for the patients, he went willingly and with joy, and prayed for them asking God for their recovery and health. He had a zeal for the salvation of souls, receiving kindly those who wanted to confess, doing his best to bring them to conversion. If he was told about an unusual or funny event, he would reply only briefly and with an amiable smile.

When he was lecturing about theological subjects, he spoke in a friendly way, pursuant the rule: "the novice should speak with kindness to all people."

His gaiety transferred to his surrounding; Bro. Boutros Meshmesh witnessed: "I felt great pleasure when I was serving his Mass." Bro. Elias Al-Mahrini affirmed: I participated with him in reciting the rosary; he was kneeling and praying with enjoyment and warmth; which radiating from him and filling me. Fr. Hassrouni added: in reciting the rosary with him, I felt when I was close to him, with an unusual ardor invaded my soul, and with unknown pleasure, and Fr. Nehemtallah Meshmesh explained: Silent as he was, he urged everyone to be silence, imposing decency in the speech; everyone was happy to work with him. He put no value to any interest that distracted him, or interfered in his love for God, joyfully fulfilling all his obligations. He found no pleasure, or comfort or gaiety, except in the mass and in prayer; in them he found full satisfaction.

## II-Stories and Events

### 1 - More pleasant than the pleasure itself

Al-Tannouri witnessed: After my arrival to the hermitage, I showed Fr. Sharbel the permission, sent to him, from the Superior General, to lecture me the retreat that was to precede my priestly ordination, he told me: :"**You are a master of Israel,(Jn3/9) and you need someone like Fr. Sharbel to lecture you in your spiritual retreat? But I am at your disposal in anything you want.**" When the retreat came to an end, I hoped that it lasted more than one week. When I heard his words, **I felt as if I tasted a very delicious food and honey, because his words pierced the rocks, and relented the iron, they were more pleasant than the pleasure itself!** That's why I decided to spend my vacation every year with him in the hermitage until the end of his life. So I spent four years in a row with him, and each time he welcomed me with an angelic smile.

## 2 - He replied smiling

Fr. Alouan testified: Quite often, he accompanied us in the sowing of wheat, at the request of the head of the field, and the approval of the superior of the convent. One day, everyone, novices and laborers, after finished seeding a field above the fountain, we had to go to another one, and then we had to move all equipment and items necessary; me and the laborers, we were dealing with oxen and ploughs, while the other novices, with Fr. Sharbel and the remaining workers had to carry other cultivation equipment. Since we knew how obedient Fr. Sharbel was, we decided to put his virtue to test; so we gathered the entire field's utensils that we had; the hoes, the water jar, the jug, the seed's basket and the food's bucket.

For fun, I asked Fr. Sharbel to carry all these objects, he replied: **"I am at your disposal."** I began to put the objects in his back, piece after piece, waiting for him to say, that's enough, but he hadn't shown neither reluctance nor he complained; accepting all of these willingly. He put the picks on one shoulder, hung the basket on the other one, the water jar in one hand and the bucket on his elbow; the jug remained, so I told him: Carry it. He replied, **"How I carry it?"** I told him: hang it on your finger, he obeyed. Few other items remained on the ground that he couldn't carry, so he told me: **put over my body, put more.** The novices laughed, seeing us laughing, he looked at us and said smilingly: **"Woe to those who overwhelmed people with heavy burdens, while not bothering themselves, to move one of their fingers."** Then he left with his burden satisfied and happy, and we took the other utensils.

## 3 - With joy and pleasure

Fr. Sharbel had given up his own will completely, even he abandoned it with disregard, pursuant to Christ's words: "He who doesn't forsake everything and deny himself for my sake, doesn't deserve to be my disciple." This means a true and total obedience; that's why his obedience was blind; as a little child obeys his parents; he always rushed to accomplish the order without questioning or denial, rather with joy and gaiety. When he finished a work he stood up, arms crossed and said: **My father or my brother, my work is done, what do you want me to do now?**

## 4- He used to say in jest

"**La Croix**" newspaper wrote: Sharbel requested the hard work, from his superior; he transported the stones and plowed the fallow land without the help of

an animal. His hourly rate wasn't less than ten hours a day, bearing the summer heat and the winter cold. His hands became chapped, his ankles and his armpits were ripped by the thorns, and he used to say in jest: **I must become tough....**

## **Q: Amazing love** (Jn 1:13)

### **I-Introduction**

He expressed what he had in his heart, saying: **My God, my heart belongs to you;** he offered this heart for Him entirely without ever being touched one day by an earthly love; his soul kindled with the fire of God's love ... The time he had spent before the Blessed Sacrament was the best time for him; no wonder, because the lover has a passion to be with his beloved and cherished in his attendance; for the heart of man is where his treasure lies; that's what the book of Proverbs mentioned.

He chose the love for God over his body, sacrificing everything for God's Love; that love drove him to a point that he liked to be despised and treated as if he was nothing. Throughout his life he was never interested in acquiring the satisfaction of a superior or the friendship of a fellow brother; he did nothing for his own sake, but he offered himself entirely to God.

He served his neighbor through his prayers, without ever being concerned to be praised; he never complained to the superior about one of his brethren or about a worker, but he was kind with everybody; he replaced his brethren in the hard work to allow them to rest, performing the most menial jobs and carrying wood without being in charge by the superior order, but driven by his love for them.

Pursuant the novice's regulation: "He came to love God and the neighbor and not to hate them; he came to suffer and be despised, not to be praised and to rest; he came to serve not to be served." He prayed for the conversion of sinners and the return of the perishable ones to the right path. Sometimes, especially on Sundays and holidays, he was delaying his Mass, so the shepherds who came from far away, could participate in the Eucharist.

## II-Stories and Events

### 1 - The family of Sharbel (Mt 12:46-50)

Once, his brother and his sister came to visit him at the hermitage; his companion, Fr. Makarios, told him about their arrival, he replied: **You are my brother and my sister, offer them food and drinks, then dismiss them to return to the village, and tell them that I am praying for them to be Saved and to be delivered from the snares of this world.** He didn't meet them.

### 2 - Do you want to have lunch?

Fr. Mubarak Massaad came to visit the hermitage at lunchtime, so Fr. Sharbel and his companion asked him: **Do you want to have lunch?** He agreed, but the meal was just enough for two persons. Thus Fr. Sharbel discreetly withdrew, leaving for the visitor his portion. He ate the leftovers in the bottom of the pot, though the hermits eat only one meal per day.

### 3 - Work for food that endures to eternal life (Jn 6, 27)

Fr. Sharbel prayed a lot for the conversion of sinners, and for the sick; giving beneficial advices depending on the circumstances. I still remember the words he once told me: **Do not worry about the things of this world, but about the eternal life and the Doomsday, for the one who will judge us, knows everything and doesn't need anyone to tell him.** He had a great compassion for the souls in purgatory, especially those who have nobody to pray for them, he prayed for them and invited others to pray for them.

### 4 - Out of pity for her

Fr. Elias Ehmej testified: Once during my childhood, I accompanied my mother, in November to attend the Mass at the hermitage. On our way, it rained incessantly that we were all soaked in water. When we reached the hermitage, I entered and prepared the supplies for the Liturgy to serve the Mass for Fr. Sharbel. He looked at me and saw me drenched with water from head to toe so he asked me **to go to the kitchen to dry my clothes,** I didn't accepted, he took pity on me, and brought me a pair of his shoes but I didn't use it because it was large. At the beginning of the Mass he turned to us with the incense, so he saw my mother standing at the door outside and participating in the Mass, bathed in water; he took pity on her, and **asked**

**me to bring her inside to continue her mass at the back of the church;** I called her and she came in. This was strange because he had never allowed women to enter the church, but he had compassion on her because of the bitter cold and the stormy wind and he let her enter.

### **5 - His love towards his brethren**

One of his most unique virtues was his love for his brethren, he denigrated no person, but he performed his duties devoutly. He was strict on himself mild with others; he spent a long period of his monastic life at St. Maron monastery in Annaya, loved by all the monastic folk with all its diversity and variety; he was remarkable for his impartiality and discreetness with others, and his rashness for help in every unfinished work at the convent. The superior of the convent at that time, Fr. Antonios Meshmesh said: "I have in the convent two excellent monks, not only the best in our Order, but also in all the existing orders in the Church, and they are: Fr. Sharbel and brother Elias Al-Mahrini."

### **7 - Like a mother who cares for her baby**

Fr. Ephrem Nakad witnessed: In the past it was accustomed that when a monk was getting old or sick and he had a monk at the monastery from his relatives or from his village, the latter undertook to serve him. In the monastery of Saint Maron there were many monks, and if one of them got sick or aged and he had a monk to take care of him, Fr. Sharbel would only visit him as the other monks.

As a mother who takes care for her child, he devoted himself, day and night to serve the sick and elderly, with no relatives or friends from their village. I remember there was at St. Maron monastery a monk named Moussa Ehmej, who was sick, old and disabled, and he had nobody from his village except Fr. Alishaa; already old and senile. Since Fr. Moussa got sick, Fr. Sharbel was responsible for his service, and was sleeping on the floor beside him, in the night. One day he came out of the cell of the patient and went directly to church to celebrate the Holy Mass; I noticed that his habit was covered with spit on his back. I called him saying: "It is shameful to celebrate mass with this habit", so he changed it. Indeed, the patient was spitting all night without noticing that Fr. Sharbel was sleeping on the floor beside him.

### **7- Sharbel "the passionate lover"**

His heart was in love with Jesus and felt no attraction to live without him, so he kept repeating: **"God is my love, and that's enough for me."** He felt neither pleasure nor joy or rest except in the church before the Blessed Sacrament. In the days of snow and cold, when it was impossible to work outside and there was nothing to do inside the convent; he spent his time conversing with God in his prolonged visits to the Blessed Sacrament. **He, who loves, always thinks of his beloved and would like to extend his presence with him.** Fr. Sharbel liked to stay so long meditating in the Eucharist; rather all his life was absorbed by God, because he was always thinking of Him. When someone spoke with him, he was like awakened from a deep sleep, because even in his hard manual work, he was always immersed in meditation in God.

### **8- Unlimited love**

Fr. Ephrem Nakad witnessed: He showed us, me and the novices from his village, no special affection and refrained to contact us. Once the superior of the convent, Fr. Elias Meshmesh asked him: "Fr. Sharbel, don't you feel more affection to the novices who are from your hometown, than others, because it is a natural inclination in men." He replied softly as usual: **I don't incline to them, neither inward nor outward, because all the brothers are equal to me.**

### **9- He didn't concern about us**

Fr. Raphael Nakad witnessed: I went with Fr. Ephrem, both from Bqaakafra, to the convent of Annaya to make our entry into the Order, believing that we'll be happy and lucky to have Fr. Sharbel with us, so he would look after us, and be a good company for us. Yet the opposite happened: he didn't concern about us nor communicated with us; he showed us no particular affection, even though we came from his hometown.

### **10- He wept over a Shiite (Lk 19:41)**

Once Fr. Youssef Beiruty, entered the hermitage and found Fr. Sharbel crying bitterly, striking his head with his hands with great regret, he asked him why he is weeping, but he didn't answer; he insisted in asking him second and third time, then he said: **"I'll tell you, but it must remain confidential, you don't tell anyone until after my death."** Today a man

from Almatte (Shiite) died, his soul went to hell. A moment later a gunshot was heard from Almatte, and news of the death of a rich man who was in America, was spread.

#### **14 - Even animals**

##### **-They will pick up snakes with their hands (Mk 16:18)**

Antonios Nehme testified: During the period of cultivation and pruning the vineyards, I went with all the monastic folk, monks and workers, to the hermitage to work in its vineyards. Suddenly, we saw a fearsome snake, we rushed to kill it but we couldn't; the viper applied on the ground, uttering a terrible and awful hissing; ones raising its head, other time its tail; unable to find a way out, and overwhelmed with fear, I shouted: "Where is Fr. Sharbel? Call him." We couldn't see him, because he was working alone in a slope of the vineyard; as soon as he heard he came; when he stood in front of it, the snake froze in its place, he said: **Don't touch it;** each one had something in his hand: one stone, the other a pickax, a third a sting ... holding out his hand, he turned to the viper and said: **"Go out of here"**, so it crept in front of him, and he kept waving his hand until it disappeared, then he returned to work. We thanked God for saving us from this danger. Fr. Sharbel was used not to killing any animal, nor a poisonous insect, not an ant or a scorpion; because of his sensitive heart, and because he believed they are creatures of God and that God alone could have their lives.

##### **-The child plays with the viper (Isa 11:8)**

Gerges Sassine witnessed: Once we were plowing a vineyard near the hermitage at dinner time, we called Fr. Sharbel to eat with the hermits; a large snake appeared and glided into the wall, we rushed ready to demolish the wall to kill it: he stopped us, saying: **I don't allow you to kill it, all creations venomous or not, were created by God for a useful purpose; so we mustn't kill it.** Then he called out saying: **Go out! O blessed!** It emerged from the wall, passed us and went through the door of the vineyard; we were about eight workers, together with the hermits.

### **- The wolf lives with the lamb (Isa 11:16)**

Fr. Semaan Abi Beshara witnessed: when I was a student, I spent a summer at the monastery of "Our Lady of Maifouq" where I had to share the room with Brother Bartholomew of Aito; I saw on the mattress and the bed lot of bugs, thin and lean, they walked on my face and hands but did not bite me; I was surprised and I asked brother Bartholomew about this strange phenomenon, he replied: "Don't you see water in that bottle, Fr. Sharbel had blessed it ? Since I sprayed my room with the water, the bedbugs have become thinner and unable to sting."

### **- Poor thing!**

Fr. Gerges Sassine witnessed: There was a hive of bees near the hermitage, some of them fell into a basin which was designed for watering; Fr. Sharbel arrived and began to remove the bees, one by one with his fingertips and put them in the sun to dry. One of them stung him, he pulled out the bee stinger from his finger, then put the bee in the sun to dry and fly away, I told him: "My master, the bee will die without its sting." he replied: **"It's true, poor thing."** Then he went to church.

## **R: The freedom of Sharbel and his audacity**

### **I-Introduction**

He wasn't interested in anything in this world, or concerned about the specific matters; rather he applied with care to fulfill his obligations, and never sought to gain the consent of anyone in particular. In the observance of the divine truth, he was of extraordinary boldness, without fear or favor, vis-à-vis to others. He recognized no value to the dignity; but he was pleased with the insults, indifferent to be praised or be despised, and famous in saying these words: **"The gifted person, is not the one who praises himself, or who is praised by people, but the one to whom the Lord gives his grace."** If a bishop or a dignitary visited the monastery, he wouldn't come to meet them. In fact, he lived on earth, but his thoughts and his heart were in heaven; inattentive to what was happening around him, as if he lived in exile on earth; knowing that he belonged to the heavenly homeland.

## II-Stories and Events

### 1 - He wasn't attached to anything

His heart wasn't attached to anything; not even to his personal devotions or spiritual obligations; following the command of obedience, he would abandon his prayer services or any spiritual exercise, and maybe with joy. I remember for example; one night, while he was praying with his companion in the church of the hermitage, a messenger came and told him: "The superior is looking for you." He did not hesitate at all; he stopped his prayer in unison, and went to the convent at night. The superior asked him to bless the water and sprinkle it in the goats, because they were diagnosed with gallbladder. Once the herd sprinkled with holy water, they recovered. Then he went back to the hermitage, after he took permission from the superior, because the latter, insisted on him to stay overnight at the convent.

### 2 - From where the sin can enter your soul?

He worked silently in baking while the others sometimes joked; despise his continuous silence, he didn't let any adequate opportunity passed without giving a spiritual lesson, sealed with a profound wisdom not to hurt his neighbor; his responses were unique, though insightful in understanding, not only in the Order's situations but also elsewhere.

Once in winter, while he was helping the monks in the bakery, the pastor Youhanna Shehade from Meshmesh, came to the convent; he was the patriarchal vicar of the region of Jbeil, an honorable person from a dignified family, very rich, famous for his relationships with major people of his country, proud of himself, fat, leading an easy life, not fully applicable with the simplicity of those days, and the situation of the priesthood; his position was taken into consideration in all the region of Kesserwan, Jbeil and Batroun.

When he came to the convent, he was wearing over his cassock, a thick fur coat worn only by the princes and the nobles; he walked into the bakery, talked with the monks; a conversation took place about the sin and its causes; he congratulated the monks because they were far from the motives of the sin. Meanwhile, Fr. Sharbel remained silent, as usual, listening to the dialogue, his hands bore witness of his hard work, and his muteness pronounced the the most expressive advices and preaching. Suddenly all turned to Fr. Sharbel, because they heard him talking, not according to his custom, glancing over the priest Youhanna, and a small smile on his lips: **And you! From where the sin can enter your soul? It couldn't reach you with this thick fur!** All laughed, exchanging

winks, because they saw in those words, a significant moral, and a subtle, wise lesson to the mentioned priest. Also, this meeting was a proof that Fr. Sharbel in his retirement from the world, his silence and his abstention from any conversation beyond the monastic matters; he had understood from just a hint, or from a small word, what was happening among his contemporaries; as if he wasn't satisfied with the priest opulence, that was clear in wearing the fur, so he gave him this hint.

### **3-This is to be announced where the day is a holiday**

The debt was accumulated on the monastery of Annaya, when Fr. Roukoz Meshmesh was the superior (1865-1871), so they made the novices and the farmer-members work on Sundays and holidays to support the monastery's economy. Once, the superior, Fr. Roukoz Meshmesh, asked Fr. Sharbel to celebrate the solemn Mass, he obeyed immediately; he is well-known in obeying in everything but sin; in this mass he should announce, that a holy day of obligation, is coming next week; but, he ended his mass without announcing the holiday. At the end of the mass the superior told him: "You haven't announced the Ascension for next Thursday! Don't you know that it's a holiday? Announce it tomorrow", since the farmers were coming to the Mass. Fr. Sharbel replied kindly and humbly: "**My master, somewhere else is a holiday, those who do not take off on Sundays or holidays, the feast do not be announced for them, this is done where the day is a holiday.**" He was referring to the decision of the Superior, who made the novices work on Sundays and holidays so that they could fulfill the various tasks in the monastery, because this year the economy was bad. Fr. Sharbel didn't take part in this work, yet no one dared to call him to work during these holy days, out of respect for his virtue and his holiness. Therefore, he replied with this speech in the church to defend the canon and the divine law, without being afraid of anyone; thus the superior had grasped the intention of Fr. Sharbel and realized his mistake; his words reported in a very gentle way, were considered a critical sermon to the superior, who understood the meaning very well, after which he declined to make the novices and the laborers work on Sundays and holidays. The monastic folk considered that this observation was from God's voice, and rejoiced in it.

# **S: A rightful worshiper**

## **I-Introduction**

- **Toward his Lord:** He practiced to perfection the rites of worship, required from a creature to the Creator; he was profoundly committed to God's commandments. His heart and his hands were always lifted up to God and testified the adequate reverence, with perseverance unto death.

- **Towards his fellow men:** He hurt no one, neither violated the right of a person, nor bothered anyone; rather he considered himself a servant to all, and a faithful servant to His Lord. He carefully watched his solemn vows, which imposed the respect of all his brethren. When he descended from the hermitage to the monastery, and they gathered to greet him, and kissed his hand, he treated them courteously; he venerated them with great kindness. He never hurt anyone; neither face to face nor from a distance, neither in their properties nor in their reputation.

## **II-Stories and Events**

### **1 - At church until everyone left**

After Compline, he entered his cell, pretending to sleep when the monks slept, but in reality he slept very little; as many testified, his room was lighted, while he was sitting or kneeling praying in his books. He spent most of his night in prayer, and was often seen at church, during the night, while all the monks slept. He was entrusted to ring the midnight bell for prayer, so he came before the monks to church; after praying the monks went back to sleep until the bell rang for Lauds. Having completed the night prayer, Fr. Sharbel withheld from sleeping, like the rest of his fellow monks; but he continued to pray with the light of the Eucharist in the church, immersed in meditation, till dawn appeared and the monks gathered for Lauds, then he stayed in the church until everyone left.

### **2- Pray for the novices**

In 1888, the superior of the convent of the novices in Naama, visited the hermits, in the hermitage of Saint Maron, included Fr. Sharbel who was sitting with his companions to eat. When he returned to Naama, he said that he asked the hermit to pray for the novices.

### **3- When I was ordained I died from this world (Mt 6:24)**

Alishaa Nakad witnessed: When my grandfather, Hanna Zaarour, the brother of Fr. Sharbel, passed away in January/25/1898; since he had no children except my mother and the girl wasn't allowed to inherit from her father, except half of his legacy, so the relatives of her father claimed that the second half is theirs, considering that the brother of the deceased, is a monk and a hermit, who under the Order's Law, does not inherit nor give inheritance. My mother said: Indeed, my uncle Fr. Sharbel is the one who inherit the second half; so she came to the monastery of Saint Maron Annaya, to tell him about the death of her father, and ask him to give her a cession of the legacy of his brother and her father. I accompanied her during spring, as we reached the hermitage of Saints Peter and Paul, Fr. Sharbel was told that my mother came to meet him, he didn't accept to see her, but he entered the church and closed the door. My mother stood at the door of the church from outside, while he was inside the church near the locked door, and he asked her, what does she want from him? She told him about the death of her father, and asked him to give her a cession of his share. She recounted to him that her father's relatives claimed half of the inheritance. He told her in my hearing: **"O my niece! I have no concern left for this world! My brother died few months ago, but I have been died from this world, since I have pronounced my solemn vows in the monastery of Saint Maron Annaya forty-five years ago, and the dead person, do not inherit or give inheritance! And this is the case of each monk, so you don't have any business with me. I cannot give up on something I do not own."** So we went back with no result. Fr. Skandar Beik Khoury commented on this incident: This phrase became a verse in that region, ran through the town, as a sign of Fr. Sharbel's impartiality, his justice and his sincere priesthood spirit.

### **4- He prayed for the souls in Purgatory**

Brother Elias Al-Mahrini witnessed: Fr. Sharbel was multiplying the signs of the Cross ...so I asked him: "My master, Fr. Sharbel, why do you multiply the signs of the cross today, unlike your habit? Is it derives great benefit in doing so? With beaming face, he replied: **"Today is the Holy Souls' Friday; the sign of the cross holds a great treasure of indulgences that could be transferred to help the poor suffering souls in purgatory, precisely those to whom nobody remembers; every time you make the sign of the cross with faith and you are in the state of grace, you obtain an indulgence. When you walk into or out the church, anointing your forehead with holy water, making the sign of the cross and you are in the**

state of grace, you obtain for every time an indulgence. Every time you say, "O Mary!" you also obtain an indulgence. If, for example, you make the sign of the cross twenty times a day, you obtain many indulgences; if you offer these indulgences for the repose of one or more souls suffering in Purgatory, you will profoundly relieve their pain, and you will obtain abundant compensations for your deed! Does it cost you any fatigue or effort? Of course not!

The man works in his property, irrigates it from the sweats of his hard work, and waits a year or more to get some harvest, if the harvest is plentiful, he will be overjoyed; It's better for him to invoke the Virgin name, calling her with reverence: "O Mary!" hundred times a day, so he will obtain many indulgences, without tiring, without disturbance, and then he can continue his usual work. He even gets profit from it and derives benefit for the repose of the souls in purgatory and shortens the time of their suffering. He also finds behind this great name, a barrier against any satanic temptation. If the man get used to make the sign of the cross and to call the Virgin name, he would decline any sort of temptation, because the sign of the cross is a way to expel the demons, and the name of the Virgin to subjugate and defeat them into the abyss of their destruction.

If you see me grasping a permanent devotion for the souls in purgatory, that's because in doing so, as if I owe God, for the Bible says who gives to the poor, lends to God; who does not neglect a reward for a glass of cold water given in his name, how could He neglect the reward of a benefactor to a beloved soul who suffers;, and thus you shorten the days of its expiation in purgatory, then its salvation is guaranteed

## **T: A loyalty to the Beloved One**

### **I-Introduction**

Fr. Sharbel had an angelic chastity as shown through his mortification and his disinterestedness in regard of eating, drinking and clothing; as for his threadbare habit, it's a striking testimony that spoke of his chastity; he even hated every comfort in life. He practiced the asceticism to the point that he became like a shadow, skinny and thin, nothing left in his body more than skin and bones, so many people said; this is not the life of a human being, rather it's the life of an earthly angel, who mortified his human nature.

He hadn't raised his eyes toward a person, whoever the person might be, but he always kept his eyes lowered to the ground, avoiding any contact with people, devoting himself fully to the Creator; if he had to speak with a man, it was only for few minutes, though he lowered his eyes, even if the man was a monk. He looked down in an attitude of meditation inside and outside the church; he didn't look at a woman, pursuant the rule: "The monk must completely suppresses his senses"; there were no women in the hermitage or its surroundings at all; he stayed away from them, despite the decency and simplicity of their clothes, especially at that time; if he met some women on the main road, when he was heading to the field or the vineyard, or carrying water from the fountain to the convent; he would immediately change his way, and this became very well-known in the neighborhood, even the women when they saw him from afar they changed their way, out of respect for him.

## **II-Stories and Events**

### **1- The Sunday Mass**

He never allowed the women to enter the church of the hermitage, unless he knew that they couldn't attend Sunday Mass anywhere else, then he allowed them to access to the corridor beside the church. On the other hand, when some visitors came to the church of the hermitage, in the company of women, he withdrew into his cell and didn't leave it until all had gone.

### **2- Use of masculine gender**

Maron Abbud witnessed: I know that when some women came to ask for holy water, or other services, he called them from the window of his cell by the masculine gender: "What do you want? After knowing the reason for the visit, he sent them to his companion. Gerges Sassine added: Once I went to the hermitage where I saw a woman standing outside the fence, I asked her: "Who are you?" She replied: "A woman from Bqaakafra, the sister of Fr. Sharbel, please tell him I want to see him." I went in and told him, he replied: "**Go and tell Fr. Makarios**", so he ordered him to meet her. He stood behind the closed door and said: "**How are you?**" Then he retired to church, but I didn't understand why he addressed her in the masculine gender.

### **3- Where is the Bey's daughter?**

My mother, whose father Mr. Rashid Beik Al-Khoury was the prefect of that region, told me that she once went with her friends, relatives to us, to visit

the hermitage, and Fr. Sharbel knew about them from his companion. After visiting the church, they went to the square in front of the hermitage to rest and have lunch, and then they heard knocking from inside the closed door and calling: "**Where is the Bey's daughter?**" My mother replied: "It's me, what do you want?" He opened a small window in the middle of the door, stretched out his hand outside the window, without seeing her and gave her a plate of honey; this was the only time that she heard the voice of Fr. Sharbel, despite her frequent visits to the hermitage.

#### **4- He blessed them**

Once I was in the hermitage where a group of men and women were in church, Fr. Makarios came and asked the women to leave because Fr. Sharbel wanted to celebrate the Eucharist. On leaving, the ladies asked for the blessing of Fr. Sharbel, they stood outside the church, bowed their heads, covered with a sheet, the hermit stretched his hand out the window and blessed them, then he celebrated the Holy Mass.

#### **5- The body is like a donkey**

The monks heard him always repeating these words: "This body is like a donkey; if you satiate him, he will become ungrateful, and if you starve him, he will be humble.

#### **6- Put the bottle down and walk away**

When women came to the hermitage asking for holy water, and Fr. Sharbel was alone at the hermitage, he talked with them from inside, saying: **Put the bottle down and walk away.** Then he took the bottle and filled it with holy water, put it back in its place and disappeared. When a woman unexpectedly encountered him on the way, he drew back and took a different path, wandering among the thorns.

#### **7- Until he is gone**

Fr. Hassrouni witnessed: The women felt a great esteem toward Fr. Sharbel, so that when they knew, in advance, that they were in a place where he might pass, they retreated until he is gone; I saw this with my own eyes. I remember one time I was plowing, with the head of the field Brother Elias Al-Mahrini, and the worker Suleiman Al-Manzili, south-west of the convent, when we saw some women returning from the convent after Mass, and then they quickly ran away to hide behind rocks and trees; I asked Brother Elias why they ran away, he replied: "Maybe they saw Fr. Sharbel coming from the hermitage to the convent." I asked: "Why they feared him?" He replied: "The

ladies knew that the hermit avoids seeing women so they hide, out of respect for him." Indeed, a moment later, we saw Fr. Sharbel approached the convent, after he disappeared, the women continued their way to their houses.

### **8- A temptation had harassed me**

Once, Fr. Sharbel stayed in the convent of Annaya-Laqlouq to celebrate the Mass, for the head of the fieldwork, Brother Boulos Meshmesh; while this brother was plowing the ground he heard Fr. Sharbel, who was a little further, screaming and asking for help like a little child; he left his work, ran to see what happened to him, found him safe, so he asked him: "What's wrong?" He replied: "**Nothing.**" As soon as the brother resumed his work, he heard him screaming again, he approached him and said: "Are you crazy?" Why are you screaming? Tell me! How can I help you!? What's going on?" He answered calmly and in a low voice: "**A temptation had harassed me, forgive me, and pray for me.**"

### **9 - Why this "crank"?**

Fr. Elias Ehmej testified: His love for God had wiped out from his heart any other earthly love, even the love of the parents; he belonged to the Almighty and devoted himself for His love, so he emptied his heart from the love of his relatives. As I passed the Summer at St. Maron monastery in Annaya, with my master Fr. Nehemtallah Al-Kafri; once I went to visit the hermits, arriving near the shrine, I found a number of women waiting, they greeted me and told me: "We have been waiting here for a long time, we came from Bqaakafra, which is a day walk from here, to see Fr. Sharbel who refused to meet us." I replied: "Who are you?" They said: "This is his sister, and we accompany her. We beg you to persuade him to allow his sister, to kiss his hand, because since so long she hasn't seen him, and she misses him so much." I was very touched so I hastened the pace to Fr. Sharbel who was in church; I begged him to have mercy on his poor sister, who came from afar, to quench her affection, even with a single glance, to her brother. He replied: "**No, I don't go out**"; then, I came back saying: "Your sister is asking you, to stretch out your hand from the window, so she will kiss it, after that she promised to leave." He said: "**I don't stretch out my hand from the window**"; a third time, I told him: "Your sister asks you to hold this handkerchief in your hand and pass it on the image of Saints Peter and Paul, so it will be a blessing and a remembrance for her." He replied: "**Do it yourself and give her the handkerchief.**" I continued: "Why this 'crank'? why this strange behavior?"

He didn't answer; so I put the handkerchief on the end of a long stick, passing it over the portrait, placed very high, and gave it to his sister, who returned to her town Bqaakafra, sad with tears in her eyes. I myself was very surprised by this harsh behavior and did not understand its meaning. After he left the church, I argued with him, saying: "You shouldn't have sent your poor sister inconsolable, where is the tenderness, where is the compassion?" He gave me no answer. As I understood from his silence, that he had no place in his heart for earthly love, his heart beat only for the Love of God.

### **10- Even his niece**

Eid Nakad witnessed: When I was ten years old, I accompanied my mother Wardeh, the niece of Fr. Sharbel, to visit the hermitage, and I was sick; he took me by the hand and led me inside the hermitage; he didn't meet my mother and her sick friend, who came to be healed; rather he talked to them from behind the door. Another time my mother went to the hermitage to visit her uncle, the hermit, he spoke briefly with her from inside the hermitage and didn't see her. She insisted to participate in his Mass, he allowed her to attend the mass through an opening in the church's door; Wardeh said that when he raised the cup for blessing, he lifted his eyes up to avoid seeing her.

## **U: Prisoner [\[15\]](#) of the Beloved**

### **I-Introduction**

He did nothing on his own initiative, but in obedience to the authority that represents God, and to deserve the reward entitled for the obedient person, pursuant the law: "The monk must consider his superior as Christ." Therefore his obedience was strangely astonishing, taking a practice not to start a work before receiving an order; this obedience was literally blind; as the stick obeys the blind. If the supervisor called him for any matter, he would instantly abandon his work and obey without delay for a moment. I do not remember ever having seen Fr. Sharbel showing any aversion or anxiety when he received an unusual order, rather he was always in the same condition. He never apologized, neither for healthy reason nor for other reason, even in matters in which was clear to everyone that he should be absolved from doing them. He did not submit by stupidity or habit, but by the spirit of devotion and virtue. The vow of obedience was embodied in front of him, in all his life, practicing it

as a vow and a virtue; as if it had been his dearest wish to submit even his blood pressure to the obligation of obedience; he excelled to his respect for God, whatever happened in the church, he wouldn't turn right or left. As for his respect for the authority, it was one of his ultimate goals; he was careful in preserving the ritual of the Church, and its Sacraments; in a daily basis, he celebrated, with his companion in the hermitage, all the religious processions.

([\[15\]](#) The basis motive for the life of Sharbel is love. He obeyed his Beloved Jesus, and all who represented Him, so he was captured by His Love. He had a deaf ear, and a mute tongue to the world, he listened only to the Beloved one. He lived away from women ... and from the beauty of the nature, to be faithful to his lover.)

## **II-Stories and Events**

### **1 - Well done**

Fr. Ignatius Meshmesh witnessed: Once he put his dalmatic and began the Mass, and because all fathers had already celebrated their masses, the superior stopped him, saying: "Wait, because some people are on their way to participate in the Eucharist." He complied, and remained standing at the altar about an hour, and then he called me to serve the mass, and asked me **if the people who would participate in the Eucharist have already arrived**, I replied: "Allow me to notify the superior and ask his permission." He replied: "**Well done.**" He stood up until the superior came and told him to continue the Holy Mass.

### **2 – Ask Fr. Makarios**

Fr. Nehemtallah Meshmesh witnessed: When we asked him for a meal, he replied: "**I don't know, go and ask Fr. Makarios**". If we wanted to eat grapes, he also sent us to his companion; if a worker asked him for a bunch of grapes, he would reply "**I don't know, ask Fr. Makarios.**" He never gave even a grape leaf from the convent's property of his own accord, and never asked permission from his superior to give something to someone.

### **3 - He kept lifting his pick**

Tannouri witnessed: Before my ordination, I made a retreat in the monastery of Saint Maron in Annaya. Once, while I was standing at the edge of the hermitage, I saw Fr. Sharbel plowing in the vineyard, I felt sorry for him, and

asked Fr. Makarios, who was preparing lunch near me, to call him to rest and eat. When the food got ready, his companion called him: "Fr. Sharbel", but he didn't respond, so he called him a second time, this time louder; when he heard he was lifting up his pick, so he kept on lifting it waiting for the order; then when he asked him again to come for lunch, he put down his pick and came.

#### **4- He obeyed even the novices**

While the novices were working and the bell rang for prayer, they stopped and prayed without calling Fr. Sharbel who continued his work; they asked him why he didn't pray with them, he replied: "**You didn't order me.**" They thought he was making fun of them and got angry. The second day, they didn't call him to pray, so he continued his work, then they realized that Fr. Sharbel doesn't do anything without being ordered. In fact, the third day, when they ordered him to participate in prayer, he left his work and obeyed.

#### **5- As a joke**

One day, Fr. Sharbel told his companion, Fr. Makarios: "**In the convent, they need wood, and here we have no more, where should I go to get wood?**" He replied angrily for the purpose of kidding with him; go to the forest of "Mihal", which take three hours walking from the hermitage. Fr. Sharbel then went to the hill above, cut woods and carried them to the hermitage; he reached in the evening exhausted, bathed in sweat and the burden on his back, so Fr. Makarios asked him: "From where did you get the wood? Why are you so late, and very tired?" He answered him: "**From the mountain of Mihal, as you commanded me.**" Fr. Makarios replied: "Why have you gone there, and the hermitage is surrounded by wood." He answered: "**Haven't you asked me to go to Mihal? You commanded and I obeyed.**" Fr. Makarios was very surprised at the trouble he bore!

#### **6- He doesn't ask about the purpose**

Mr. Rashid Al-Khoury, the prefect of the region, requested Fr. Sharbel to come to Ehmej to bless the water and sprinkle the places where locusts, at that time, were intensely spread, because the hermit was well-known that, with his prayers, he could drive away the grasshoppers. On this, the superior ordered him to go; without knowing the purpose of this order and with no objection, he

headed toward Ehmej; once he reached there, Mr. Rashid Beik asked him to bless the water, with the attendance of all the villagers; he blessed it and turned back to the hermitage. At the harvest time, as many as hundred people from the village of Ehmj mowed the crops of the monastery, free of charge, out of gratitude for Fr. Sharbel.

## **V: His hope is a yearning for the Beloved One**

### **I-Introduction**

His hope in God was firm, he looked at life in all its dimensions as scarp, and his only concern was Christ. When changes occurred in the Order he expressed neither joy nor disorder, nor he asked if an acquaintance in the priesthood, was ranked in his position so he can depend on him.; he didn't distress because of the changes in the hierarchy of superiors and officials, or the removal of those who showed kindness toward him; whatever was happening in the Order, didn't affect in his spiritual life or in his services; he was interested in the affairs of the monastery, only as much as the vows of obedience ordered him to do so; he showed no joy for material progress in the convent, or sadness for a loss.

He lived in the monastery and the hermitage as if he did not exist; all his thoughts were turned to God; all his interests were devoted for the salvation of souls and his own salvation; his only concern was to please God; for the sake of this goal, he endured all the difficulties and the hardships, and bore the extreme severity which he imposed upon himself.

### **II-Stories and Events**

#### **1 - More competent than me**

He never counted on men... I remember once he was surprised at a remark that the consultant wanted to appoint him for the superiority, he said: "**In the Order many are more qualified and suitable than me. It's a noble gesture from the Order to accept a lazy one like me.**"

## **2 - Work for the glory of God**

Fr. Alouan witnessed: He performed his work to glorify God and obtain eternal happiness; he kept saying: "**Work for the glory of God, and your reward will be eternal happiness.**" This hope, led him to despise the things of this mortal life and practice mortification and asceticism; also he kept repeating this sentence: **This life is perishable, it cannot offer anything.**

## **3 - The lights of heaven are more beautiful**

One evening a monk told him: "Look at the city of Beirut, how it shines with lights." Without turning around, he answered: "**The lights of heaven are better and more beautiful.**" Then he returned to his cell.

## **4 - Such things I do not know.**

Once, his brother visited him to tell him about the situation in their home and how was the harvest in this year, Fr. Sharbel replied: "**These things I do not know and I do not want to hear about it.**" After these words he took his ax and went towards the vineyard. He was a man who lived only physically in this world, and because his heart and his mind were in heaven, he wasn't influenced by joy or by sadness.

## **W: A refuge for the faithful and the poor (Lk18:3)**

### **I-Introduction**

People were flocking to him, leading their children bottles of water at hands, to pray for the kids, and bless the water so they could take it home; to heal their sick, keep away disasters from them, protect their livestock and their properties from diseases and epidemics, increase production and fertility in their crops, and to sprinkle it in their houses. He welcomed them with tenderness, compassion and sympathy, moved by their plight and prayed for them; when he blessed the water, a strange power was emanating from it; he

never took any reward for it, nor accepted any offering, but he was doing all that for the love of God.

The sick, disabled, afflicted, suffering flooded from all sides, seeking the grace of God by his intercession, because they believed in his goodness and his powerful prayer. Many Muslim women, from the vicinity of the monastery, put their children at the door of Sharbel's hermitage asking for healing and blessing; he never let down those who were seeking spiritual help; if someone visited him in the hermitage, he would leave it astonished by his holiness, influenced by his piety, comforted and happy by meeting him.

## **II-Stories and Events**

### **1 - Silently**

Youssef Suleiman witnessed: We all believe that he is a saint to whom we take refuge in case of illness and distress; there are many who bear his name, as we call after the name of Saints. I personally believe that Sharbel is a great saint in heaven; he intercedes for us silently without realizing his blessings, just as he did when he was still alive.

### **2 - All represent the image of Christ**

Fr. Sharbel didn't deal with people, but his love for them was known from his prayers for the sick, travelers and the needy, and for all who asked for his prayer. His heart was touched by pity and he interceded fervently to the Lord to have compassion on his sick servants. As for his relations with his brethren in the convent, in the hermitage, and with his acquaintance, it was clear for all that his heart embraced all of them, equally without distinction; all represent the image of Christ, so he respected them all.

### **3 - He offered him something to eat**

He was compassionate and kind to the poor, the sick and those who are suffering; when they came to the hermitage, in cold days of winter, he brought them close to the fire to get dry; he loved all people, rich and poor. Even though, he didn't deal with the visitors except in spiritual matters, because such responsibilities were entrusted to his companions; if it happened that someone, poor or hungry, visited him in the absence of his companion, he would give him his own small portion of food, while he remains without food. This compassion towards the poor was within the limits of his capabilities; so if a poor man came to the hermitage, **he would ask his companion to offer him**

**something to eat.** In winter when it was cold, he allowed the men to enter the hermitage so they could warm themselves by the fire.

#### **4 - I'm just a sinful man**

For the people who asked for his prayer, he was replying: **I'm but a sinful man, may the prayers of the saints meet your demands.**" When someone asked him for a spiritual grace, he always answered: **"I am the least of people, just a sinful man."** When someone told him, you are a saint, he didn't answer, but he trembled, shook his head and frowned; he considered himself the least of people and the greatest sinner.

#### **5- Have faith in God**

When he was asked for prayer, he said quietly: **"The prayer of the saints is with you depend on God and he will take care of you"**, then he walked away from them. When visitors asked him for his prayers and his blessing, he did so, without looking at them and **said: "Ask the Lord to give you according to your faith."**

#### **6- "You can be a saint!"**

When someone asked him to pray for him, he replied: **" You also pray, what is the difference between you and me? God listens to you as much as he listens to me."** When someone told him you are a saint, he replied: **" We are alike, what prevent you from being a saint?"**

#### **7 - He heals by his prayer**

Whenever Mr. Rashid Al-Khoury, prefect of Ehmej, fell ill, he called Fr. Sharbel to pray for his recovery because he believed in his holiness; and this was the case for all the inhabitants of the surroundings who solicited his prayers in case of illness and distress. His devotion exerted a great influence on everyone; he healed from all sickness by his prayer. Usually, when someone fell sick in Ehmej, people hurried to Fr. Sharbel requesting holy water from him. Many were asking of his prayers; and by his prayers the diseases and the misfortunes disappear. Patients who couldn't go to the hermitage, they procured holy water from him, and obtained recovery; every patient sprinkles or drinks from this holy water, recovers from his illness.

## **X: His passion for prayer**

### **I-Introduction**

#### **1 - In confidential conversation with the Beloved**

The law orders: "He must go before the brothers to church and be the last one to leave it." So when he wakes up, he immediately runs to church where he stays for about five hour, kneeling straight until his knees got numb, not getting tired, neither leaning , nor turning left or right. He prayed around the lectern with his brethren, and participated, on time, in all the unison prayers in the complete breviary; he recited it very carefully as if he stood in the presence of a King, and in full ecstasy.

He could be seen in sensory eyes, but he was absent from the senses; sharing all the prayers in repeated prostrations and sometimes in mental meditation; his verbal prayers had a special practice, spending in reciting them, three hours a day; completing half of them in the daytime and the other half in the night; he pronounced all his prayers, carefully, word by word.

During the day he was reciting fervently his offices, always kneeling; and if there was nobody in the church during the choir prayer, he would say it alone in a loud voice; as for the midnight prayer he always recited it without tardiness.

He sublimated in piety and holiness so he became an intimate friend for God and a companion for the angels; his whole life was a life of contemplation, prayer and liturgy; he did this with zeal and non-routine, with heartfelt love for God, so that he was always united to Him in his thoughts and his heart; God abode in his mind in his prayer, in his work, in his eating, in his sleeping. In short, he no longer lived for himself but for God, no longer spoke about earthly things, but about spiritual matters.

#### **2 - He loved the Mystery of Love**

If you love a person or a thing, you think of them, often speak of them and what they do, and if you can frequently visit them and be with them you won't delay. So it was with Fr. Sharbel, he was always **silent, his thoughts always turned to God, his Beloved**; in his heart, there was no room except for God. He outpaced other hermits by his nocturnal visits to the Blessed Sacrament; every time we lost Fr. Sharbel, we found him in the church.

Sometimes he was seen before the Blessed Sacrament in complete Ecstasy: he sent out of his heart deep sighing, showing his extreme love for the Lord, who is concealed in the sacrament of the Eucharist. You could hear constantly, his sighs, his nostalgia and his spiritual hum; his features soften the rocks, and infuse on the onlookers the reverence and the veneration; his face always overflows with a divine light.

### **3 - Beloved of the Rosary**

He was praying the Rosary kneeling upright motionless, his hands outstretched on his chest, kneeling on a tray woven by his hands from the rough rods, covered by a piece of black cloak. He persisted in this attitude, throughout the duration of the Holy Rosary.

## **II-Stories and Events**

### **1 - The Scapular of Our Lady of Carmelite**

Once, Fr. Sharbel reported to me his desire to send him a triangular scapular representing Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, the Immaculate Conception and the Passion of Christ, to hang it around his neck. I fabricated it and sent it to him with a man from Arbet-Kozhaya, who was passing by the monastery of Saint Maron Annaya; I requested him to ask Fr. Sharbel to mention three names of his relatives in Bqaakafra, to ensure that he received the scapular; I also expressed my desire to the messenger to bring me from Fr. Sharbel a blessing or a relic. Returning from the trip, the man gave me a small paper folded without an envelope, and said: "The hermit didn't send you except this paper." I opened the paper and read these words written by his hand: **Father Sharbel a hermit of St. Maron Annaya, a monk of Kozhaya; you are asking for a blessing or a relic. May the blessing of Saints Peter and Paul bestow upon you.** That was all he had sent to me and I was very pleased with this paper, which was written by the hand of the hermit. The words were written in Arabic but the handwriting wasn't so good. My superior, at that time, Mother Zeyarah of Ghosta advised me to keep this paper, saying: "This paper is written by the hand of the hermit, it's a relic, keep it with you." I rolled the paper into a small fabric; I sewed it and hung it around my neck; later I gave it to my sister before her trip to America so that it protects her from the dangers of the journey.

## **2 - It is I (Mk 6:50)**

Fr. Ignatius Meshmesh witnessed: Before I became a monk in the convent, I was a deacon and a sacristan. One night I went to church at midnight to check whether the pilot was still lit, I found it off and I began to grope in the darkness to light it again, I bumped into someone and got scared, he said: "**Do not be afraid, it's I.**" I recognized his voice; this was Fr Sharbel kneeling in the church, meditating at midnight.

## **3 - What was happening around him?!**

Brother Boutros Meshmesh witnessed: He was always absorbed by his mental meditation, contemplating and immersing into heaven, especially during the Eucharistic celebration. Anyone who saw him would realize that all his feelings, his whole body, all his ideas were with God, so that he neglected every earthly thing; because his mind was so focused on God, he forgot himself, as if he no longer existed, in this world. He always maintained the silence and stillness, so that he did not perceive what was happening around him. The question he asked me while we were working in the vineyard, is an eloquent witness to this: "**How many pairs of oxen are plowing in the vineyards?**" I answered: "Three. You have been working all day with us and you don't notice how many oxen in the vineyard?" He didn't utter a word.

## **4 - He spoke with the angels to God**

Tannouri witnessed: I watched him during his prayer, as if he was out of his senses, rapt in God, oblivious to everything around him, people and things, so he didn't realize there was someone who accompanied him in his prayer; when it was my turn to answer, he continued the prayer alone...

I visualized him in heaven; as if he was talking with God face to face, mouth to ear and heart to heart; as if his body wasn't on this earth; however, his soul, I had the impression that, it was united with the Angels, praising and glorifying God with them.

### **5 -The Holy Week**

If the superior or the dispenser called him to help in the bakery, or to participate in the joint Liturgy of the Hours in the Holy week, because he had a good pronunciation and read fluently, he hurried to perform his work.

### **6 - Surrender to God**

Youssef Abbud witnessed: One day, my son, Gerges was seriously ill, so I went to the hermitage, and asked Fr. Sharbel to give me holy water, he said :"**Sit down now, may God help you.**" I repeated my request, he replied: "**Calm down, submit yourself to God, he will help you**", and he didn't give me holy water. So I went back sad and surprised by his refusal to provide me with holy water, contrary to his habit. As I approached the village, I heard cries and lamentations coming out of my house, and then I realized that my son was already died. I remembered the words of Fr. Sharbel; "**Sit down now and God will compensate**" and I knew why he refused to give me holy water; as if he was inspired by the Spirit about the death of my son, and he didn't want to inform me.

### **7- Noah's Ark (Jn 17:15)**

One year, the locusts invaded the region in large numbers, and swept everything. The superior of the convent, Fr. Elias Meshmesh, ordered Fr. Sharbel to spray the boundaries of the monastery to prevent the locusts from entering; Fr. Sharbel obeyed, but he forgot a lot, situated among the properties of Shiites. The locusts entered the region, and devoured the green and the dry, and spared only the properties of the convent, except that small piece of land which was razed by locusts. In fact everyone, including the Shiites, kept repeating this event; for they were amazed that all the plains, peaks and hills were completely stripped except the land of the convent which remained green and saved from damage; like Noah's Ark in the midst of absolute devastation.

### **8- The parish of Ehmej's vine (Jn 15/5)**

Ouwaini witnessed: My father sent my brother Boutros, begging Fr. Sharbel to come, to bless the water and spray the vine of the church which

was entrusted to him. The vineyard and the crops which were sprinkled with the holy water were spared from the locusts' damage, although the locusts razed everything in that year. Then the inhabitants of Ehmej came to see this vineyard, and among those who visited it, the Rev. Elias Meshmesh the superior of the convent.

## **Y: The Faith of Sharbel**

### **I-Introduction**

The faith of Sharbel was reflected through:

-His mass: he celebrated the mass as if he saw Christ behind the outward forms, addressed him heart to heart; saying it carefully with extreme reverence and respect, as if he stood before God.

- In the rumination in his prayers and the reflection in his meditation: he said his prayer services word by word in a soft and gentle voice. If someone talked to him, he would need some time to return to reality and hear the speaker; as if he was totally absorbed in God. When he committed in a spiritual conversation, he inflamed with zeal, speaking from the abundance of his heart and the fervor of his faith. He never showed in all his life a sign of boredom, fatigue or resignation, when it came to spiritual matters, but he indulged them fervently, as if he was enjoying the things that his heart desired.

-In his obedience to his superior or who represent him; this is clear evidence that he saw God in his superior, without considering whether this one was worthy or not.

-In his work; he did nothing on his own, for he firmly believed that the voice of the authority is the only voice of God. All his actions were carefully crafted and expressed with warmth and authenticity of his fervent faith. God has bestowed upon him the gift of precognition, because of his living faith; therefore, he was a burning flame of faith.

## **II-Stories and Events**

### **1-A lightning**

Shibley Shibley witnessed: One day, in 1888, Fr. Sharbel was kneeling upright in the church, absorbed in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, when a violent lightning fell on the hermitage, burning a new jumper, embroidered with silver, placed on the altar. The lightning crisscrossed the middle of the church, passed him and set fire on the edge of his habit without injuring him. I hastened with the monks of the monastery to see what happened, we found that the lightning fell on the south side of the hermitage, demolishing the stone retaining the walls' plots of the vines, and then entered the church, setting fire on the altar cloths and vestments, throwing the cup to another place, damaging some images, opening the doors, giving off a smell that caused dizziness to the two companions of Fr. Sharbel whom we found in the kitchen almost fainted, where they were warming themselves by the fire. When they returned to themselves, they believed that Fr. Sharbel was killed and they rushed to church, they found him praying, as if nothing had happened; the superior, Fr. Immanuel Al-Jaji, asked him:: "Fr. Sharbel, couldn't you extinguish the fire at least from the table cloths and the vestments?!" He replied: "**My brother, what could I extinguish? It started fast, and ended so fast.**" That is to say that everything happened at the speed of lightning and he couldn't do anything, so he remained in his place.

### **2 - The silkworm's harvest of the convent remained intact**

Fr. Nehemtallah Nehme witnessed: At the time of my mandate in the monastery of Saint Serge in Kartaba, drought had already been damaging the silkworm harvest since eight years. The silkworm only reached the fourth phase, and nine days, and then died. So I sent one of the monks to the hermit Fr. Sharbel in the hermitage of Annaya; he brought me holy water, we sprinkled it on the silkworms and they recovered. Thus, the harvest was saved during my entire three-year term and also in subsequent years.

### **3 - My crop was plentiful this year**

Youssef Abbud witnessed: Once the epidemic attacked the silkworms in my house, because the leaves of mulberry were sick; the caterpillars became yellow and fell over the edges of the boxes on the ground. I rushed to the hermitage, and

brought from there consecrated water from Fr. Sharbel, then I sprinkled the caterpillars; they recovered immediately crawled back into their crates and began to eat again. That year my harvest was plentiful, because of Fr. Sharbel.

#### **4 - Don't talk at all about this (Mk 1:44)**

Saba Obeid said that one year; mice proliferated in his house and devoured the silkworms, to the point of wiping out all of them. He brought blessed water from Fr. Sharbel and sprinkled the silkworms. The next day he came to see the boxes, and found that the mice were dead. Someone went to tell this event to Fr. Sharbel, who said: **"Don't talk at all about this."**

#### **5- The mule of the Convent**

Once the mule of the convent had colic and he fell on the ground wide-eyed, and about to die; the monks and the mule driver tried many treatments to save him, to no avail. Finally they called Fr. Sharbel who stood next to his head and prayed, as soon as he finished his prayer, the mule jumped up and stood on to his feet.

#### **6- Am I God to prevent death? (Mk10:18)**

A man from the family of Shmouty from Batroun owned a flock of sheep, which was attacked by a deadly epidemic disease, so he had lost most of his sheep. Having heard of the reputation of Fr. Sharbel, he came to ask him for holy water, explaining the disease of the sheep, the hermit said: **"Am I God to prevent death?"** the man turned back to go, but he told him: **"Do you have a container to fill it with water?"** Then he blessed the water and gave it to him. The man sprinkled the herd and it recovered. Later he noticed that his silkworms were diminished more and more as if the insects were eating them; he returned to Fr. Sharbel, to bless the water for him, then he sprinkled it on the silkworms; later he found lot of insects, mice, hedgehogs and a large snake all dead.

#### **7- The possibilities of Saints**

Fr. Hassrouni witnessed: At the time of my novitiate, I read the biographies of saints, especially the book of Christian Perfection of Fr. Rodriguez, the Jesuit. I doubted some facts and virtues attributed to the hermits and saints, believing that they were exaggerating, and that these things exceed the human possibility. But

after I got to know Fr. Sharbel personally, and experienced his virtues closely, I was certain that the Divine grace does wonders in the souls; everything that was said and written in the biographies of saints, still less than what I had seen with my own eyes in this mighty man, who is Fr. Sharbel.

## **Z: His Mass is the highlight of his love**

### **I-Introduction**

#### **1 - In the Convent**

The novitiate's regulation explains: "The priest in the Mass is the Vicar of Christ; the offering is surely the body and blood of Jesus Christ... During the Mass we have 3 worships: contemplation on the Passion of Christ; the offering to God the Father; act of spiritual communion... The communion has six parts: The pure confession; act of Faith, I hope that all the sins of the world will disappear by a drop of your blood; act of Love; act of Contrition; I am unworthy ... thanks after the spiritual communion.

Because of the importance of the Mass: he participated on all the masses of his fellow priests, and after they finished he started his mass. He celebrated his mass; sometimes on the altar of St. George on the south side, sometimes on the altar of Our Lady on the north side and sometimes, when the superior ordered him, on the high altar. He said his Mass with reverence and deliberate; his Mass lasted an hour and sometimes longer, in an intimate devotion with the Almighty. Despite the length of his mass, no one was getting bored; he was saying it meticulously, making understandable the gospel, reading it word by word, in a soft voice; however, some of the altar services were avoiding serving his mass because of its long duration. After the mass he took his place behind the door, kneeling straight for about two hours on the ground in summer and in winter.

#### **2 - In the hermitage**

He was kneeling upright before the mass near the door; on a wicker tray to prevent the moisture, in winter, and on the ground in summer. He celebrated the mass in the morning on the days of work, and two hours before noon on Sundays and holidays; a large number of faithful came to attend his mass and bear his blessing; the people were astonished by his presence and the respect which he exuded; saying the Liturgy with a soft voice and reverence. After the Mass, he

kneels upright in the church absorbed in thanksgiving, and then he goes out to the work in the vineyard; all his life was a preparation for the Mass and thanksgiving.

### **3- Face to face**

He was always in ecstasy, especially during the invocation of the Holy Spirit; after the words of consecration, he looked at the Blessed Sacrament in a reverential aspect, as if he saw with the naked eyes the hidden and incarnated God; addressing a very powerful person. When he raised the Holy Sacrament by his hands reciting "Father of Truth" he seemed to be rejoiced by the Spirit of God, as he was seeing God face to face.

### **4- The cleanliness**

He was clean, especially during the celebration of the mass; he kept a coat and a pair of shoes that fit well for the Eucharist, then he immediately took them off after the mass; the towel and the soap, which he used during the sacred service, he didn't use on other occasion in respect to the Divine Liturgy; also he washed his hands in an unusual way before the mass; he gave an outstanding attention on cleaning the objects of the church.

## **II-Stories and Events**

### **1 - Like a magnet**

Miriam Shamoun witnessed: When I was young, I came with my parents from Ehmej to the hermitage to participate at the Mass on Sundays and holidays; quite often we attended the Mass of Fr. Sharbel, and I never saw him except during the mass. My family said a brother of our family had founded the hermitage, so we have a special penchant towards the hermitage; rather a passion because it reminds us of our uncle. We used to spend our summers in Ouwaïni, near the hermitage, a village where there was no church. In addition, the holiness of Fr. Sharbel attracted the souls like a magnet, so the hermitage was always filled by many visitors on Sundays and holidays and **all those attending the Mass of Fr. Sharbel, were deeply touched, and didn't want to leave the church anymore, especially when he pronounced the words of consecration, we felt moved by his reverent and his sad voice** (intermittent because of his crying).

## **2 - Do you eat some grain soup?**

Once a priest came to the hermitage to say the mass, and he was in a hurry, Fr. Sharbel approached him at the end of the Liturgy saying: **"Why are you in a hurry? Do you eat some grain soup "Makhlouta"?"**

## **3 -Receive the Holy Communion (Mk14:22)**

Alishaa Nakad witnessed: I went to the hermitage with my mother Wardeh to see Fr. Sharbel, he refused to meet her and when she expressed her desire to kiss his hands, he replied from inside the locked door at the church: **Receive the Holy Communion at Mass, and you'll have in your mouth and your heart the Son of God himself and he is sufficient for you. When the Son of God is in your heart, no use from kissing my hand?!**

## **4 –The tears flowed from his eyes**

His love was a burning fire; in the alter, he often seemed as if a hot flame ignited in his chest, his eyes sparkled, his tears ran down, his cheeks reddened, his sighs heaved deeply from his chest like a flaming vapor, as if he saw Christ with his own eyes, hence he was shedding his tears abundantly. Ouwaini added: When he uttered the words of consecration: **This is my body! This is my blood!** I saw the tears flowed from his eyes, twice. Once, a tear fell on the corporal; after consuming the body and blood and washed his hands, he saw the trace of tears, he was confused because he thought it was a drop of blood fell on it, I told him: "What's the matter? This is a trace of a tear fell from your eye after the words of consecration." Yet he remained concerned, carried the corporal and showed it to the superior to calm down his soul and his mind.

## **5 - He bit the cup with his teeth**

He started his prayers in church, addressing God as a man deeply in love with the Lord; this passionate appeared in the mass through his tears, in particular when he drank the blood and ate the body, he seemed as someone who takes the finest bread in the world, and drinks a Divine drink. At the end of his life, while he was drinking the blood, he bit the cup and kept it in his mouth for a long time, to the point that the imprint of his teeth was left on it.

# Chapter III: Toward Heaven (Jn 13:1)

## **A: He bore our sufferings**(Mt 8,17)

### **1 - Healing the brother of Boutros Jawad Meshmesh**

I suffered a sore chest and stomach ache for over two years and I have had breathing difficulties similar to those of asthma, to the point that I needed to stop two times if I want to say the "Hail Mary". I was under treatment, but without result, and I was feeling tired day and night until Fr. Sharbel blessed me, so I immediately healed and never felt any pain again. I have continued my heavy manual work and I am now sixty years old.

### **2 - He saved a girl from the death** (Lk 7:11-17)

Youssef Abbud witnessed: While my sister was pulling the grass from the top of a rocky slope called "the slope of the church of Ehmej", she stumbled and fell, from the top of a twenty-meter-high cliff, then hit the ground unconscious and motionless. Her body covered with bruises, her face streaked with injuries and became cold and yellowish, and her pulse stagnant. The villagers laid her on a mattress and carried her home, thinking she was already dead. When I heard about the accident, I hastened to the hermitage of St. Maron Annaya, very disturbed. I told Fr. Sharbel about the accident, asking him to intercede for her to God and bless the holy water for me. When he saw me very troubled, he said: "**Your sister is still alive and she will be healed, take the holy water and sprinkle it on her.**" When I went back home, I found her unconscious and people were moving around her and weeping. I sprinkled her with the holy water, the temperature went back to her body, and she opened her eyes and spoke. Two days later, she left her bed fully recovered.

### **3 - The healing of a dumb man** (Mk 7:32-37)

Brother Francis Qartaba testified: I have a brother called Asaad Hanna Salem, who suddenly fell ill; for two months he could no longer speak. My parents sent me a letter to the convent of Annaya, and then the superior gave me permission to go and visit him. In my village, Qartaba, people thought he was crazy, and advised me to take him to the convent of Kozhaya where they exorcise for haunted people. Instead I drove my brother to the hermitage, and asked Fr. Sharbel to pray on his head, begging him to tell me whether he is going to be cured or not, he replied: **Get him into church;** I brought him and made him kneel on a bench in the choir; then Fr. Sharbel came the Gospel in his hand, the stole around his neck; he put the Bible on his head and read from it about three minutes; then he poured some holy water in his hand and let my brother drink, saying: "**Do not be afraid he will recover.**" We left to our village; me, Saba Tannous Moussa and my dumb brother, after ten minutes of walking, my brother shouted loudly calling me "my brother" and then at a distance from us, some monks were heading towards the shrine,

he began to call them: "O brother Boutros Maifouq, O brother ...." Thus, he spent all day singing and rejoicing until he arrived to his house at Qartaba.

#### 4- Another dumb

Moussa Moussa witnessed: My son Tannous is a monk at the monastery of Maifouq, later he took the name of Boutros when he entered the Order; he was mute from the birth till eight years old, although he could hear. We were very sad because of his silence; one day I took him to the hermitage of Saints Peter and Paul, and asked Fr. Sharbel to pray for him; from that time, the child gradually began to talk and now he speaks like you and me.

#### 5 - The crazy of Ehmej (Mk 5:1-20)

Boutros Moussa witnessed: I lived with a man named Jibrael Youssef Saba from Ehmej, who was suffering from insanity after his marriage to a girl from

village above mentioned, despite the objection of her parents. He tore his clothes, uttered insults, ran naked through the fields; one day I saw him naked from a distance; carrying a pistol in his hand aimed it to his chest, the ball came out but missed him; I ran behind him to his house and found him in the process of breaking the rosary beads of his wife and cursing. Since I am his best man, I advised his parents to take him to visit Fr. Sharbel; they initially thought to lead him to the grotto of St. Anthony in Kozhaya, as it was accustomed in those days to take the crazy ones there to be cured. Pursuant my advice, Jibrael was led naked to the hermitage; reaching it he refused to go in, we tried, in vain, to bring him inside. One of the hermits, Fr. Libaos, tried to force him but he sulked. I told Fr. Sharbel about his case, he went out and ordered him saying: **"Enter the church."** He obeyed without the slightest opposition, and sat improperly, the hermit said: **"Kneel upright"**, he knelt, arms folded like an angel; so the hermit read the gospel and prayed on his head, he got healed immediately; with tears in his eyes, he looked at his parents and told them: "Give me my clothes." Then he left the church healthy and completely normal. At present he is in the United States.**6 - He saved many children from the dead** Fr. Boulos Makhoulf witnessed: My father, Nuha, went to visit his brother, Fr. Sharbel in Annaya's hermitage; the hermit gave him an amulet of St. Anthony to hang it around my neck; but his cousin Ibrahim Hanna Makhoulf knew about the gift from the hermit, and asked my father to give him the amulet to hang it around the neck of his son Nehemtallah; the story of this man is that he had experienced the death of three sons who died a year after their birth; he was always worried about the possible death of his son Nehemtallah; so he suspended the amulet around his neck, because it was from Fr. Sharbel; the child survived and he is in the United States; Ibrahim kept the amulet and passed it down from one child to another and all have been saved.

#### 7 - Your son is alive (Jn 4:50)

Youssef Antoun Jibrael, from Kfarbaal, was sick and had high fever since twenty days to the point that he fell unconscious. So Boutros Gerges, the muleteer of the convent, and the cousin of the patient mentioned above, ran to the hermitage to ask Fr. Sharbel for holy water and for his prayer; before talking with the hermit, Fr. Sharbel met him at the door, saying: **Slowly, when you go back home, you will find your sick relative healthy, having regained consciousness**

**and sitting in his bed.** And so it was; the muleteer was surprised how Fr. Sharbel had known the purpose of his visit, before he asked him anything, and how he knew about the healing of the patient.

### **8 - Your son is well! (Mt 15:25)**

Maron Abi Ramia from Tourzaya came to Fr. Sharbel to the hermitage, to ask him for holy water and to pray for his son who was seriously ill and unconscious; after seeing the hermit, and receiving the holy water he retraced the path in a hurry; when Fr. Sharbel saw him rushed eagerly concerned and worried, he took pity on him, and told his companion: **Call him and tell him to go slowly, because his son is all right.** When the man arrived home he found his son conscious and well; after the doctor Wakim Beik from Jbeil, had given up all hope of his recovery.

### **9 - A barren woman conceived (Mk 7:24-30)**

Nehme Mdawar testified: I went to the hermitage of Annaya, three months before the death of Fr. Sharbel, with the hope that my barren wife Zarifeh, would conceive by the intercession of Fr. Sharbel; before returning, Fr. Makarios, his companion, gave me a blessing from the hermit Fr. Sharbel; four months later my wife became pregnant; she gave birth to a baby girl, followed by three more girls then a boy.

### **10 - The healing of Ouwaini's daughter (Mk 7:24-30)**

Ouwaini witnessed: My wife gave birth to a daughter who suffered from complications in the bile, so that she couldn't breastfeed; when Fr. Sharbel recited a prayer over her head, she recovered and resumed breastfeeding.

### **11 - Who touched me? (Mk 5:30)**

Fr. Gibrael Gibrael witnessed: Mariam, the widow of Mikhael Nehmeh, from Ehmej, was bleeding for over three months. She had been treated by the doctors Najib Beik Khoury from Ehmej, Wakim Nakhle from Jbeil and Gergi Baz from Jbeil with no result. So she gave me a Turkish rial to take it, as an offering, to Fr. Sharbel, and bring a consecrated belt from him. He gave me a scarf, which he took from the image of Our Lady of the Rosary, placed in the chapel of the hermitage, saying that she should encircle herself with it and she'll be cured. As for the rial, he didn't accept it, but he said: **Put it on the altar until Fr. Makarios arrives and receives it.** As for the woman, she was surrounded by the scarf, and was immediately healed.

### **12 - Holy water in the medicine**

Saba Ouwaini took blessed water from the Fr. Sharbel, and mixed it with the medicine that he gave for his patients; the patients benefited a lot.

### **13 - His elder brother**

Wardeh Makhoulf the niece of Sharbel witnessed: Personally, I had never known the uncle of my mother, Fr. Sharbel, because he did not come to the village from the time he was a monk at the monastery and later as a hermit, and I had never visited him; but being an orphan, my grandfather Hanna Zaarour, brother of the hermit, took me into his home to take care of me, so I had heard him talking about Fr. Sharbel; at the carnival, my grandfather remembered him, and he said, weeping: "We eat meat, but my poor brother, never eats meat." In summer, he repeated with deep emotion: "We eat grapes, while my brother who is caring for a vineyard whose grapes could fill big bags does not eat at all." Once we sat down to eat row meat "kebbeh", looking at the dish he cried, saying: "How can I eat meat while the monk didn't eat?" Saying this, he refused to take a single bite. In his old age, he often wept, saying: "I cannot go anymore to visit my brother, Fr. Sharbel." When he was about to die, the relatives gathered around him, and I was with them, he looked at us and said: "I'm sick and I will die; it consoles me to see you all at my side; but when the monk will die, who will be at his bedside?" We answered him: "God won't leave him!" He died on January, 25 on the day of the Conversion of St. Paul, eleven months before the death of Fr. Sharbel and was buried beside the church of St. Saba in Bqaakafra.

## **B: The Last Mass**

### **1 - A sudden illness**

Kafa the wife of Ouwaini testified: One Sunday I went with a group of people to participate in the Eucharist in the hermitage of Saint Maron-Annaya; Fr. Sharbel began the Mass, but when he had finished the words of consecration, a sudden illness attacked him; Fr. Makarios, his companion, hastily, helped him to kneel; then he got better and continued the mass, when he lifted the Blessed Sacrament he stiffened; his companion remarked that he unusually raised the host for a long time, he approached him, found him in full pain; he pulled gently the host from his hand, placed it on the paten, and assisted by Brother Boutros the servant of the hermitage, made him sit on a chair near the altar; half an hour after the crisis passed, he completed the Holy Sacrifice, despite his illness.

### **2 - Do not leave**

Kafa continued: The following Sunday, I returned with some women to attend the Mass in the hermitage; when we entered the church, we found Fr. Sharbel kneeling, absorbed in prayer. At our request, one man inquired about the time of the Mass because it was very cold and we couldn't wait longer, he told us: "Don't leave; it's Fr. Sharbel who will celebrate the Mass soon, wait for him." Shortly afterwards, the hermit put on his chasuble and began the Mass; prior to the Words of consecration, the same symptoms began again; they took off his vestments, and he remained in the church. When we decided to go back home Fr. Makarios stopped us and said,

"Do not go, Fr. Sharbel has a pain in his heart, when he gets better he will resume the mass." Then, the hermit got up and continued the Holy Sacrifice.

### **3 - How beautiful is this child!**

After the Words of Consecration Rachelle the young daughter of Youssef Saba, saw a beautiful child instead of the host, when the hermit raised it; she cried out turning to her aunt: "Look my aunt, how beautiful is this child!" Her aunt silenced her, putting her hand on her mouth, not to make noise and disturb the hermits.

### **4 - O Father of Truth!**

Arrived at the lifting of the chalice and the host during which the priest recites the prayer that begins: "**O Father of Truth**, the crisis attacked him strongly again, he remained motionless for a few minutes while raising up the cut and the Host; Fr. Makarios noticed that he became pale, his feet remained in the same position; he put his stole, came trembling and said: "Let down the cup and the Host." But the hands of Fr. Sharbel clung firmly on them, and he stood motionless like a rock; Fr. Makarios told him a second time: "Let go of the cup, Fr. Sharbel, give me the body of Christ, do not be afraid, leave it." Fr. Makarios snatched the cup and the Host, while Fr. Sharbel opened his hands with great difficulty, then he sat him down. After this incidence, we looked at Fr. Makarios and saw him blushed and trembled from fear, after a rest, he resumed the Eucharist

### **5 - The hermit cut the child**

While he broke the bread, Rachelle sobbed, her aunt asked her: "Why are you sobbing?!" She replied: "Don't you see that the hermit is dividing the child into two? Again, she silenced her, while Fr. Sharbel continued his mass, till he felt chills and pain in his heart. So Brother Boutros Jawad Meshmesh called, his companion, Fr. Makarios, who came towards him took off his chasuble and sat him down; after a long rest, Kafa came up and asked Fr. Makarios, if Fr. Sharbel can still continue the Mass, he replied: "I don't think so", then she walked away. Having rested for the third time, he resumed his mass.

### **6 - He drank the blood of Christ**

Brother Boutros Meshmesh witnessed: The crisis attacked him again, while he was about to drink the Blood, so it prevented him from receiving it; with all his strength he held the cup, embraced it with his lips and his teeth, and remained like that motionless, till Fr. Makarios came and tried to take the cup from him; he hardly snatched it, after Fr. Sharbel had already managed to consume the blood of Christ.

### **7 - I want to celebrate the Mass**

They took off his vestments and carried him to the kitchen; he was unconscious yet he kept repeating: **O Father of Truth. O Jesus, O Mary, O Joseph**. His companion put him on a rug made from the goat's hair to warm him, because of the bitter cold and the snow that already had

piled up to a height of over one meter. When they covered him, he threw away the blanket. Sometimes he came to himself and said: "**I want to say the Mass, prepare the altar for me.**" He also said in Syriac: "**Praise the Lord from heaven, praise him in the highest.**" And: "**Lord have mercy on me.**" He kept repeating these words during the last six days of his life.

## **C: His Last Days**

### **1 - A piece of bread dipped in water**

Brother Francis Kartaba witnessed: I was appointed to his service during his last illness until his death. The most he ate, after insistence, a piece of bread dipped in water or some vegetable soup, and he systematically refused milk, yogurt and meat. During all the period of his illness, he hadn't been removed the hood, or the habit or the sackcloth or the thorny belt; he was stable in one case, lying on a rug of goatskin, without agitation or crying; we hadn't heard from him except these words: "**Oh ... Oh God!**" he also mumbled some words (in Syriac) that I couldn't understand. When I noticed he had a natural need (to go to the restroom) I brought the chamber's pot but when it came to raising his coat, he struggled, raising his voice, waving his healthy hand and saying: **no... no... no...** I replied: "I am your brother do not be afraid, then he remained silent and let me do it.

### **2 -He blessed... despite his severe pain**

With his hand, he blessed everyone who entered and asked for his intercession. He was quiet and placid; nothing was heard from him neither groaning nor restlessness; rather he bore his illness with amazing patience, despite his agonizing pain; enduring his suffering with total abandon to the Divine Will; invoking Saints Peter and Paul the Patrons saints of the hermitage's church, until his illness had reached its peak, then he lost consciousness.

### **3 - Simon of Cyrene (Lk 23:26)**

Ouwaini witnessed: When they called me to visit and treat him medically, he had already lost consciousness. From time to time, I noticed he let slip some words invoking the names of **Jesus, Mary and Joseph**. In his last hours, I was accompanied by Fr. Mikhael Abi Ramia, who I summoned to assist him spiritually and have his blessing... we stayed at his bedside most of the night of December 24, 1898; then in the morning we returned home, to come back to the hermitage around noon.

### **4 - His ardent love!**

Fr. Ramya witnessed: With his ardent love he repeated throughout the period I had spent with him: **O Father of Truth, the names of Jesus, Mary and St. Peter and a prayer for Saint Jacob that he recited most of it, several times**, and I read him the agony prayers.

### **5 - Wine mixed with myrrh (Mk 15:23)**

The law orders: "If the disease persists on the hermit; or he is to be brought back to the convent, or he must **abstain from eating meat, accepting death as a true hermit.**" So when the doctor Najib Al-Khoury instructed that they should give him a fatty soup to sustain his physical weakness; when he smelled the odor, he stirred and muttered, refusing to eat; but when they showed him that this was the order of the superior, Fr. Antonios Meshmesh, he obeyed and took a little bit.

## **6 - They read him the spiritual books**

Then he asked them to send his companion Fr. Makarios; who **he asked for the last absolution**; he received the last sacraments with great devotion and reverence, from his companion's hand and the abbot Mikhael Abi Ramia from Ehmej; who both alternately served him, and read him the spiritual books, pursuant the law: If the hermit is sick, his brother addresses him with words of consolation to lessen his boredom; his words must be useful to heal the suffering of the soul and to revive the Divine Love.

## **7 - The last blessing**

Brother Boutros Meshmesh witnessed: When the agony started, I went to the hermitage where I saw him lying on a mat, outside his cell, surrounded by monks and laity; we heard him saying repeatedly: **O Jesus, O Mary**; when it was very difficult for him to articulate his words, he **pronounced the two names intermittently**. I sat next to him and asked for his blessing; he raised his hand to bless me, then looked at me keeping his hands up, cutting off the sign of the cross; I repeated my request with no result for three minutes; he continued looking at me putting his hand on his head, but nobody understood the meaning of his sign; then Fr. Ramya thought he might be pointed to my hood slightly raised above my head, that the tips of my blond hair was visible; he whispered in my ear to cover my head with the hood properly; as I pulled it down over my eyes, he smiled and blessed me, we were all surprised; in fact, he didn't allow that a monk lifted his hood even a little! When he was in agony, being beside him, he put his hand on me subconsciously, when he regained consciousness, he trembled and laid it away from me.

## **8- He fainted from crying (Mt 26:75)**

When he was about to pass away, Ouwaini cried out asking Fr. Makarios: "Raise your hand and give him the absolution." He couldn't because he was crying bitterly; he went out sobbing, refusing to approach him, then he fainted from crying. So Fr. Ramya replaced him as required by the duty of charity towards the dying; he was delighted by this unique opportunity to have served the agony of this Saint, and he gave him the last absolution.

## **9 - Into Thy hands I commit my spirit (Lk 23:46)**

In the last hour of his agony, those were present; the priest Mikhael Abi Ramia, the vicar Fr. Maron Meshmesh, Saba Tannous Moussa , Bro. Francis Kartaba, and Bro. Boutros Jawad from Meshmesh. Fr. Maron asked him: "Shall we call the doctor from Jbeil?" He replied with a shake

of his head that means **no**; then by opening and closing his mouth, he bowed his head and died quietly and peacefully, saying: **Lord, into Thy hands I commit my spirit**. It was a virtuous and honorable death, after a life full of goodness, after six days of agony.

## **10 - Hemiplegia**

The cause of his death was the hemiplegia, coinciding with the death of Patriarch Youhanna Al-Hajj, on Saturday, December 24 the vigil of Christmas, at the age of sixty-five. Ouwaini said: After his death, I prayed the Litany of the Virgin Mary with Fr. Mikhael, Fr. Makarios and Bro. Boutros, his companion at the hermitage; after sending a messenger to the monastery to inform them of the death of Sharbel, I went home accompanied by Fr. Mikhael.

### **D: To the tomb**

#### **1 - They divided my garments (Jn 19:24)**

Bro. Francis Kartaba witnessed: Wanting to change his clothes, Fr. Mikhael Meshmesh objected saying: "My brother, put it back until the superior comes, lest they say, those who changed his clothes took what he had." I replied: "He is a hermit, what can he have?" By taking off his habit, we saw below it his cilice: a hair-shirt, covering his hands and his chest, falling to his thighs; he added an extension cloth taken from an old coat, from the elbow to the wrist, to hide it from the eyes of others; the cilice was stuck to his skin, when we took it out, it scattered and shattered from the sweating and the long time of using it (17) ; later Fr. Makarios took it, then he left it to Bro. Boutros Jawad Meshmesh. We also could see that his hood, which he had not taken off even during his illness, was tied to his neck with a thread-hair; the white extension, that falls to the back under the habit, to keep the hood on the head, it wasn't there anymore because it had been worn out with time and sweat; it was replaced by a piece of folded cloth, stuffed with something thick and heavy, so we said: "This is the money of the hermit!" We opened it and found that the hermit put pebbles inside it, to maintain by its weight the hood in his head and to cause him trouble by pricking him when sleeping and when moving, we were deeply touched when we saw this. His body was frail bearing a scar caused by the iron belt around his waist with a width of three fingers. Bro. Boutros Jawad Meshmesh removed from his neck a chain with a cross and a medallion.

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[\[17\]](#) a person is rarely bathe, in the era of Sharbel ... Once a year, and sometimes in all his life ... In the house, the family lives in one room ... Near the ass (the family car) and the cow and chicken (the source of the family to eat). From here we understand why the plague had spread in Europe in the Middle Ages ... And other diseases especially skin diseases ... lice, bugs and insects were prevalent in cattle and men as well ... with the absence of modern pesticides .

#### **2 - The last night**

They closed his eyes and mouth, and put his hands on his chest with the Holy Cross, the companion of his life and his struggle, and they were repeating: The Saint died! Congratulation to him! May God give us a death like his! May God have mercy on us through his intercession!

His body was taken to the church of the hermitage, and then placed before the alter, on a mat made from the hair of goats, while his face turned towards the west, facing people. So Fr. Sharbel spent the Christmas Eve of 1898 in the church, as his devotional custom; but that night he was sleeping in death while his soul was awoken in eternity... Those watching over his body were: Fr. Makarios, his companion, Bro. Boutros Jawad Meshmesh, Bro. Francis Kartaba and a group of monks from the monastery of Saint Maron who rushed to the church of the hermitage to kiss his hands. They'd spent part of the night kneeling beside him praying; the watchmen were saying: "If we are constrained to spend one night here, in this terrible winter, how did he manage to live in this hermitage for twenty-three years? Blessed is he! Now he is before God, and he is rewarded for his amazing and perpetual martyrdom."

### **3 - Christmas of 1898**

The snow that reached the height of one meter, and in some places two meters, blocked the roads; the monks were confused and saying: Can we, tomorrow, transfer the body of Fr. Sharbel to the convent's tomb, in this hard weather and dense snow? Will we be able to mourn him and distribute the death shares in the neighborhood? As if, the angels of God, who had announced in that night the Birth of the Savior, to the shepherds of Bethlehem, those same angels also proclaimed in the nearby villages of Annaya that Fr. Sharbel was born in heaven.

The monks of the monastery of St. Maron, the peasants, the villagers of nearby villages, they all woke up in the early morning and saw the snow still falling down; they believed that they would not be able to reach the hermitage, to participate with the release of the body to the monastery of Saint Maron; and they thought that those who were in the hermitage, would be obliged to bury him in the yard of the hermitage's church.

Some farmer-members put on their winter clothes, wrapped their heads in turbans that showed only their eyes; put on their boots that reached to their knees; shovels in their hands, they began to clear the path with a great courage, to reach to their saint and carry him to the monastery. At eight o'clock, a group of youths gathered in the hermitage; at nine they brought a stretcher covered with a cloth made from the goat-hair. Fr. Makarios came with the brothers and the monks, carried the body and put it on the stretcher; then they lifted it with young people on their shoulders; they were all ready for the descent from the hermitage to the monastery of Saint Maron, walking by a rough path that young people had cleared, but the snow continued to fall with a risk to block it again; all feared of a possible tilting of the stretcher with the body of Fr. Sharbel as the path was so difficult to spot because of the snow; so the hermit Fr. Makarios said: Walk and trust in God! Does not worry, Fr. Sharbel will facilitate the path for us!

### **4 - The transfer of the body to the convent**

When they carried him out of the hermitage, the clouds dispersed and the sun appeared before them, while behind them the snow was falling! The procession progressed without fatigue or difficulty, as if walking through a path covered with "ostrich feathers", all said: "This is one of

the miracles of Fr. Sharbel!" They took him to the convent, put him in the church in a coffin according to the monks' custom; the superior was absent.

### **5 - The funeral prayer**

At three o'clock in the afternoon the funeral was held at the convent, with the presence of the monks and the farmer-partners only, because of the density of the snow, in addition to Shiites Hjoula and its surrounding; the countenance of grief and depression were on their faces. They came to venerate him and have his blessing; they knelt before him, kissed his hands, took a piece of his clothes, or his beard to take it with them as a blessing. The funeral was simple but very impressive; the attendance was repeating the words from the Scripture: Precious before the Lord is the death of his Just. They didn't say a eulogy, as if Fr. Sharbel had intended to die in silence, as an accomplishment to his humble life.

### **6 - The cemetery**

The cemetery is located east of the church, with a length of six feet, and a width of three meters. Its west wall is adjacent to the east wall of the church. It is divided into two tombs separated by a stone wall from east to west, and its roof is made from soil; each one of the tomb has a door in the east wall, blocked with soil. Fr. Sharbel was buried in the south tomb.

### **7 - The funeral**

The monks witnessed: Some monks wished to bury him in a place specially prepared for him because the cemetery of the monks was bathed in rainwater and to them he was worthy of putting in a private tomb because he is a Saint; so they insisted to put him in a coffin to keep his relics. While the other monks, including the vice-superior, they wanted to bury him in the cemetery of the monks, according to the rule, and the vice-superior said: "If he is a Saint, he will preserve his body." We went down to the cemetery, just two steps, and we dug at the door, because the ground outside the door tilted on a strong decline; we sunk in mud and water and the dripping water from the roof; the water penetrated inside the tomb from all sides, because its land was very low compared with the outer surface of the Earth around it, and still submerged with mud and water most of the months of the year. We entered there one by one; the cornice inside was elevated, about thirty centimeter above the ground, on which there were no bones or skulls; all the bones quoted and gathered at the corner of the cemetery; we put stones on which we placed two planks covered with a piece of goat-hair carpet; we did so for the Fr. Sharbel, for the high spiritual position he had in the heart of everyone, and for the risk of being flooded with water, and mud due to the high land around the cemetery.

We buried the body wrapped with his habit, according to the custom of the monks, without ever thinking that he would stay incorrupt; his mouth was closed with a scarf tied around the head, but a layman took it away leaving the mouth open; so we said: we are dust, and to dust we return; all present at the funeral said: Blessed is he, he is a saint, he went directly to heaven.

### **8 – We forgot the shovel**

After closing the door with a large slab, blocking it with earth and snow and reciting the last prayer, someone said: Too bad! We forgot the shovel in the cemetery! A secular man replied: That's OK, the companions of Fr. Sharbel in the field, used to leave for him at the end of the day shovels, hoes and plows to transport all of them to the convent.

### **9 - The prayer for the dead, masses and rosaries**

The law orders: When a monk died in a convent, his supervisor should write to the Superior General and other superiors of convents, informing them of the death without delay, so that they offer him masses and prayers, according to the custom. Pursuant to Rule we read that many monks, according to the testimonies, had stated that they did their duty, and it was recorded in the book of the Masses in Annaya: ten Masses were celebrated for the repose of the soul of Fr. Sharbel of Bqaakafra.

### **10 - Weeping bitterly**

Fr. Makarios had mourned him bitterly; because after his departure, he lost a merciful father, a brother, a compassionate friend and an obedient servant; enjoying his intimacy and feeling lonely far from him. He was very distressed by the absence of this heavenly angel, he remembered him and longed for him; because of his deep sadness he saw him in a dream, in a state of bliss in heaven. This venerable Fr. Makarios said: "I am not worthy to be in this hermitage, where the Holy Fr. Sharbel lived." Eid Nakad said: Once, I saw my mother weeping bitterly, I asked her about the reason, she replied: My uncle, Fr. Sharbel died during Christmas Lent, in the time of cold and snow." Tannouri added: "How great was my grief when I informed about his dead! I had shed abundant tears, for a long time.

### **11 - Blessed are you, Father Sharbel**

Fr. Al-Andari witnessed: I remember that when the obituary of Fr, Sharbel arrived, to Fr. Nehemtallah Al-Quaddoum Kafri, and he was the Superior General of the Order, famous for his knowledge and his virtues; residing at the convent of Kfifane; he told the superior of the convent and the principal of his school, while I was near them: "Blessed are you, Fr. Sharbel, you have obtained the heaven.

## **E: The light of the Resurrection**

### **1- The wonderful light**

Some of the farmer-members witnessed: After the first night of his funeral, we started to see from our houses, opposite the convent at a distance of ten minute walk from the South side, a bright light, different from the regular light, like an electric light, it appears and disappears, keeping the same pace as long as we look at it, so some people said: Initially, it may be a lightning!\*In this light, we saw the dome and the east wall of the church adjoining the cemetery, better than during the day; we came to the monastery, and told the monks, but they didn't believe

us, they didn't pay any attention to us! When we informed the Superior he expressed his disbelief, saying: "When you see the light let someone tell me or else send me a signal." The signal was to shoot when we see the light. Every time, the superior heard a shooting, he went out the convent with his monks, but few of them had seen something; so the Superior Fr. Antonios Meshmesh went to the house of Tannous Shehade, opposite the south side of the convent, and had seen the light. We kept on seeing this strange light, whenever we visited our friends whose houses are opposite the cemetery; all those who spent the evening over there saw it; this hearsay was multiplied, and this phenomenon was repeated every night for a month and a half.

Once this news had spread around, the residents of Meshmesh, Ehmej, Kfarbaal, and the Shiite villages like: Hejoula, Rass Osta, Mazraat Al-Ain and others ... many had come to see the light; they actually saw it and confirmed this phenomenon to the monks and to others. Those farmer-partners also saw it: Tannous Shehade, Elias Abi Suleiman, Magames from Kfoun; and Raja had seen the lights from Meshmesh itself, though her house was on the summit, overlooking the monastery of Saint Maron Annaya.

## **2 - The diary of Annaya**

During the illness and death of Fr. Sharbel, the Superior was absent; when he returned to the monastery a week later... he knelt in the mud on the south side of the cemetery, where Fr. Sharbel was buried, then began to pray; the monks also knelt behind him... then he stood up and said: "With the loss of Fr. Sharbel, we lost the lightning rod that drove away the wrath from the Order and from the Community and Lebanon!" He took the diary of the convent and wrote: On December 24, 1898, **the hermit, Fr. Sharbel of Bqaakafra**, died after hemiplegia, provided with the last rites; he was buried in the cemetery of the convent at the age of sixty- eight, in the triennium of Fr. Antonios Meshmesh. What **he made after his death**, is enough to show his good conduct, especially his loyalty to his vocations so that we may say: his obedience was angelic and not human.

## **3 - Some monks hadn't seen**

Some of the monks in the convent witnessed: We heard that some farmer-associates, whose houses were opposite to the convent, saw the light after his death, and they informed us that they saw a bright light above his grave several times; we heard that bright flames appeared from the cemetery during the night, but we didn't see anything. People flocked there because they believed in his holiness during his lifetime, at first they were coming from the neighboring villages, because the news of the light emanating from the tomb had spread.

## **4 - Fr. Sharbel has dazzled me**

One night, at the end of the evening, the superior, Fr. Antonios Meshmesh ordered Bro. Boutros Meshmesh, to fetch drinking water from a fountain, situated above the cemetery; he took a little jar with a lantern and went out. He was late more than twenty minutes, while the distance can be traversed in five minutes, so they opened the East Room, which overlooks the fountain and called him, he replied from near the cemetery, saying: "Fr. Sharbel appeared to me like a star, that's why I couldn't come back, and the lantern is extinguished." They brought with them a

lantern and found him sitting at the gate of the cemetery shivering, his clothes soiled by mud and the jar was intact in his hand. He told them that while he was descending from the fountain, he saw a bright colorful flame in the shape of a star, it dazzled him and he fell on the ground.

### **5 - Fr. Sharbel is...stupid!**

Tannous Shehade from Ehmej, a farmer and worker in the convent, was suffering from a pain in his throat, hips and shoulders; he had been treated from Ouwaini and others for seven years, with no result. One day some visitors from Kartaba came to visit the tomb of Fr. Sharbel, seeking healing, approached him he mocked them; Bro. Elias Al-Mahrini and some farmers who were with him replied: "Do not say that!" he repeated his words: "You are people with little understanding! When Fr. Sharbel has become a Saint?"

When visitors who came to ask his intercession, had become numerous, some of them told him: "Pray for Fr. Sharbel, he will cure you." He replied: "I ask healing from this stupid, I do not believe in his holiness; rather I would seek healing from our ass and not from him!" His wife insulted him by saying: "You are a renegade." Then after his return from the field, and feeding the cows, he thought he saw a ghost before him, he approached him, and saw the hermit with a stole around his neck, a frown on his face, a crutch in his hand, he told him: "What did you say about me, today on the

field?" He put his hand on his neck; he replied perplexed: I didn't say anything, I was just kidding, but I beg you, heal me!" He leaned before him, crying: "My Father, I beg you." He gave him, a blow on the chest, with his crutch, in the place where he had a pain in his hip, chest and shoulders, saying: "**Fr Sharbel is stupid.**" then he disappeared; at once he healed.

### **6 - And... They became friends**

A year later, one night Tannous felt a dangerous attack, and thought he was about to die he called the monks but nobody answered him; so he asked help from Fr. Sharbel; he appeared to him, and touched his cheek, saying: **Stand up, do not be afraid.** At that moment, he stood up healthy.

### **6 - Mahmud Hamada or Abu Sabta**

On February eight at the vigil of St. Maron, the patron saint of the convent, the prefect of the region of Al-Mounaitra in Tourzaya, Sheikh Mahmud Hamada, a Shiite from Aalmat, came escorted by several policemen in pursuit of some of the outlaws from Houjoula; among the members of the escort, there was also a Christian, Executive Secretary, called Abdallah Mouawad; believing that the robbers were lying in the woods surrounding the monastery; they tied their horses in Al-Ouwaini and headed towards the convent during the night; arriving to a place near the convent, in a gloomy and rainy night, they couldn't continue to Houjoula so they returned to the convent area; before arriving there, they saw from afar a light which appeared at first low, and then glittered and shone like a star near the door, east of the convent's church, sparkling high in circular form and then disappeared.

They believed that the bandits were hiding there, and communicating by signals, so the prefect hoped to catch them in the convent; when he reached there, the light disappeared! They had already surrounded the monastery, so they hurried to the spot of the light and found nothing; they knocked at the door, Bro. Boutros Mayfouk replied from inside: "The portal is closed, it is late, the monks are already asleep; this is not the time of hospitality." They replied: "Open for us, when you know us, you no longer dispute!" When he opened for them, they questioned and searched, without finding anybody except those who inhabit the convent.

The farmer-members heard knocking at the convent's gate, late at night, they came to see what was going on; they saw Abu Sabta, a Shiite, the prefect of the region, Sheikh Mahmud Hamada, accompanied by five policemen; they all gathered in the office of the assistant-superior Fr. Maron Meshmesh, then the prefect asked: "Why didn't you open for us, right away?" They answered: "Because we were asleep." He replied: "How were you asleep? While I with my men, we saw the light on the east side, near the portal appearing and disappearing; it is a proof that there was someone awoken in the convent." They said: "Where you saw the light, there lies the cemetery where the hermit, Fr. Sharbel was buried; several nights, the farmer-members and many other people saw a light above the cemetery; Sheikh Mahmud replied:" I swear! At the first opportunity, I will tell the Patriarch about this issue, and I will publish the news in the newspapers! I, myself have been known the death of bishops and patriarchs, I went through lot of graves, but I have never seen such a scene that dazzles our eyes!" Then he wrote a verbatim record of what he saw and sent it, to His Beatitude Patriarch Elias Al-Howayek. He made sure the light didn't originate from a lantern or a fire flame but it came from the tomb of Fr. Sharbel.

**F: Thy just will not see decay (Ps 16:10)**  
**1 - An adventure on the Feast of St. Maron in 1898**

Some of the monks witnessed: The day after the passing of Mahmud Hamada by the convent, I went (me Fr. Alouan) to the tomb with the company of Bro. Elias Al-Mahrini, Saba Al-Ouwaini and the muleteer of the convent, in the absence of the superior who was in Jbeil. We opened the tomb, it was full of water to the level of the board that was supported by two stones, where the body of Fr. Sharbel was laid; the land was very muddy; the body was wrapped in a monastic tattered tunic, and covered with worms from the neck to the feet; we gave thanks to God who has preserved the body of Fr. Sharbel, despite the worms that covered it. He seemed a monk lying on his back, his hands folded on his chest; his body was in a good condition but the drip fell on his face from the roof of the tomb, from the sewer of the church and from the roof of the convent ; which affected his beard, his nose and lips; uprooted a part of the hair and pierced the flesh; his right eye was slightly whitened, and hollowed somewhat from the other eye and damaged; Saba Ouwaini took a small board with which he cleaned the coat of Fr. Sharbel from worms; then we closed the door with stones. The assistant-superior informed the superior about what happened; the prefect of Shiite told him as well, of the light he saw in the convent with his men, at night.

**2 - Attempts to kidnap it...**

When rumors about the appearance of the light multiplied, visitors with their patients flocked from neighboring villages; some tried to open the door of the tomb by force, at the end they succeeded in opening it; they examined the body, plucking hairs from his beard, taking pieces from his fingernails, and his habit or some from the soil of the cemetery, as a blessing. Therefore, the monks asked the superior to open the grave; he responded to their request.

### **3 - In the presence of the Superior**

Some of the monks witnessed: So we opened the tomb and found the body stayed incorruptible; his clothes were well preserved, despite the mold that covered them and his whole body because of the water, the drainage, and the moisture. We were all astonished. Bro. Boutros Meshmesh entered accompanied by Bro. Gibrael Meshmesh, Saba Tannous Moussa, Bro. Boutros Mayfouk, Bro. Gibrael Mayfouk and many others. We found the body of Fr. Sharbel as we had put it the day of his funeral, his clothes were dry. We uncovered his chest and examined his body and saw that the mold covered it, and the bottom of his feet that were callused during his lifetime because of the hard work and lack of care, lost the calluses which fell under the feet that became very soft like the feet of the babies. Bro. Elias Al-Mahrini picked up the two calluses. His body and his muscle were soft and flexible as he was alive. The superior said: Hold the body through the toe of the feet, if it detaches from the body, leave it. Two of them hold him, one by his hands and the other by his feet, and they moved him to see if he was disjointed; they found him intact and safe as if he is still alive; then the superior ordered us to go out and close the grave.

### **4 - I was surprised**

Bro. Boutros Mayfouk witnessed: We found the shovel that we had forgotten in the cemetery during his funeral, its stick was rotten; while the body of Fr. Sharbel stayed the same. I remember well the fact that his trousers were dry but stained with blood from his body! Bro. Boutros Meshmesh added: We were all surprised how the body and clothes remained free of corruption in the midst of the mud; while the wooden stick was ruined, from the water and the moisture!

### **5 - The recovery of Ouwaini**

I was suffering from a pain in my back as a result of a lightning that stroke my house two years ago; I unsuccessfully followed many treatments; I became a little humpbacked, and the pain never left me; if I walked two hours, I should rest for two days. When I heard that His Beatitude gave permission to open the tomb, I hurried there, hoping to be healed because of my full confidence in his Holiness. I passed my hand on his back and his chest, and then rubbed my back saying: "Now it's your turn." Wanting to tell him that now it's your time to act, you died in my hands, without asking anything from you, now I ask you to heal me. After that, I accompanied the monks to Ehmej to attend the funeral of Daoud Youssef Saad, walking back and forth about two hours. When I returned home, my wife told me: "I see that you are alright, you're not tired as usual, did Fr. Sharbel heal you?" Became aware, like someone awakened from

inattentiveness, I touched the painful area in my body, then I got up, sat down, turned left and right; I felt no pain at all.

## **6 - Flattening the terrace**

The monks went back to the Superior insisting on him to allow them to remove the body from the water and bury it near the church, in a dry place to protect it from moisture and corruption, but he refused. He sent the request to his Eminence the Patriarch, requesting him to report what should be done; he told him also about the phenomenon of the lights and other issues; and that he was no longer able to prevent the visitors from coming to the tomb. The Patriarch, ordered to leave the body in its place, to remove the water, raise the body from the ground and take all measures to prevent water from penetration inside the tomb. So the tomb was opened, the monks got in, they evacuated the water, then lifted the body on two boards laid on wooden tripods, spread the soil on the terrace, flattened it by a cylinder stone to prevent dripping.

## **7 - What should I do?**

The Superior of the convent of Annaya wrote again to the Patriarch: On December, 24, last year, your son Fr. Sharbel from Bqaakafra, hermit at the hermitage of your monastery in Annaya died. Since then, every night, the light shines from his tomb; many saw it emanating as a lighthouse; if it shines from this side, the other side remains dark; the people from the surrounding area and the monks do not doubt that this light is caused by a divine intervention; because of the kindness of the deceased and of the miracles he performed in his lifetime; especially after the audit made four days ago, which showed that the body remained incorruptible in contrast to other decaying corpses. Since the place is so humid, I suggest to put the body in a coffin covered with asphalt; if your Beatitude would allow us to put him in a hiding place into the wall of the church, where there is no moisture, it would be more suitable to protect the body. Anyway, the decision is up to your Beatitude.

## **G: Outside the cemetery**

### **1 - The transfer of the body**

His Beatitude ordered to remove the body from the cemetery, and put in an isolated place where nobody at all was allowed to visit it. So the cemetery was opened, the body removed before: Fr. Maron Meshmesh, the assistant superior, Fr. Antoun Meshmesh, Fr. Youssef Meshmesh, Fr. Makarios, his companion at the hermitage, Bro. Boutros Meshmesh, Bro. Elias Meshmesh and Fr. Youssef Ehmej. The body was placed in the nave of the church, on the ground; till they prepare for it, a special place out of sight. The monks asked the permission to change the clothes which remained the same since his death and to clean up the mold from the body, but the assistant-superior Fr. Maron refused their request and the body was left in the church until morning.

### **2 - A light around the body**

Fr. Francis Al- Sebrene witnessed: At midnight, as usual, Bro. Elias Al-Mahrini made his visit to the Holy Sacrament; after reciting the rosary and the evening prayers, he came running to me,

woke me and said, trembling: "I saw something strange, I have never seen like it in my life, come and see; for it is a light streaming from the tabernacle, bypassing the body of Fr. Sharbel, arising on the chandelier and then returning to the tabernacle." I hurried with him to church, I saw nothing, I argued with him, but he confirmed and pointed with his finger as if he was seeing something substantiated in front of his eyes. Many confirmed that the light no longer appeared in the tomb, since the body of Fr. Sharbel had been transferred from the cemetery.

### **3 - The body was bathed with water**

Ouwaini witnessed: When I arrived at the convent, the monastic folk met me saying: Today Fr. Sharbel drove away the assistant-superior and prevented him from saying the Mass in the church; he came early to celebrate the Holy Eucharist but the stench of mold bothered him so much. We went into the church and found the body bathed with water and the smell of mildew spread strongly; we carried the body and laid it in the cloister of the convent on a goatskin mat; we removed the clothes and wiped the mold with a cotton quilt from the monastery that I kept with me in my house. At first, it smelled of mold, but then a pleasant smell emanated from it; I kept it as a precious treasure; many asked me for a piece of it as a blessing and I gave them. Unfortunately, a month later, someone stole it from my house.

### **4 - The condition of the body**

We found the body intact in every limb, from up till down, flexible, fresh, soft as if his soul is still in it; his eyebrows; blackish in color, thin belly and it had a scar on the hip where he put the metal thorny belt, but there were no wounds on it; his eyebrows, his hair, his beard and his hairy chest were preserved, and tended to be gray; the hands and the face bore traces of mold, dazzling white as the cotton. After cleaning up the mold from the body, the face and hands seemed to belong to a living sleeping person, with no trace of corruption, but it emanated a bad smell; we took off the clothes but we didn't need to tear them, because the limbs were flexible as those of a living person; when we washed the body from the mud, we found that it was in a good condition and had a fine normal color; his knees were calloused, but once the mud was removed, the calluses disappeared; showing tender and soft knees; we dressed him in new clothes after having exposed him naked on the roof throughout the day to drive out the moisture.

### **5 - Blood and water gushed forth (Jn 19:34)**

Ouwaini witnessed: I learned that the monks had decided to bring out the body and expose it to the sunlight on the roof of the convent, and then put it back in the tomb; because the water was dripping from it and gave an unpleasant smell. I came to the monastery, after a short time, I do not remember exactly when, all the monastic folk was present with Boutros Saba Al-Khoury from Ehmej, who practiced the old medical treatment; the body was transported to the roof of the convent and placed on a straw mat, after it was stripped, then exposed to sun and wind.

Deeply touched, I told the monks: Why do you expose the body like that? Write to His Beatitude the Patriarch, and he will decide what is appropriate; because the idea of the physician Boutros Saba to expose the body to the sun and wipe it with alcohol, is unnecessary as long as it

doesn't show any decay. You see all the parts are intact, even his sexual organ; then I began to turn his body under their eyes and found no trace of corruption.

Fr. Francis Al-Sebrene added: Ouwaini stabbed him in his hip with a surgery knife, instantly the blood gushed forth from it, he took a large bottle and filled it with the blood and kept it with him; the blood was dark red. The monks reprimanded the mentioned Ouwaini, wiped the blood with cotton, and bandaged the wound so the blood ceased to flow.

## **6- I knew who healed them**

Ouwaini continued: I took the bottle with me to my house and stored it for about a year. Whenever I was given a treatment for the patient, I dipped a straw in this bottle, and mixed my treatment with it, with my belief that it was the best remedy for healing, because I definitively believed in the holiness of Fr. Sharbel to the point that healing is inevitable by his intercession. Many of those returned to me expressing their gratitude for their healing; basically in my thoughts, I knew who healed them. It happened that my brother, Fr. Youssef Ehmej, fell ill, he followed many treatments by the best doctors, but he obtained no results; he asked me for the bottle hoping that through it he would get healed, I gave it to him and he didn't bring it back to me.

## **H: In the "exhumation" room**

### **1 - In the sun**

The monks witnessed: Before we put the body in the "exhumation" room in a small attic, we carried it to the roof of the church where we placed it in a coffin exposed to the sun; because when we took it out of the tomb it was entirely humid, thinking that the body would get dry in the heat, especially in that day it was very hot. In the evening he was already a bit dry, so we changed his clothes; and then we put him repeatedly on the roof in the sun, and yet his body continued to drench. Bro. Boulos Lehfed added: Once, I saw the body exposed to the sun on the roof of the convent, at that time I was a boy looking after the Cattle of the convent in the nearby field, I didn't know why they put him that day on the roof, and because I was so young, I didn't care about this issue.

### **2 - In fear that his fans would steal him**

Above his monastic clothes, he was dressed in a white robe and was placed in a simple wooden coffin without a lid and then put into a small spot located at the top of the northern wall of the church, between the vault and the upper steps of the outer wall, in a small room booked to put coals and old vestments; this place is called "exhumation"; the access was blocked with a stone covered with clay, so that visitors and viewers couldn't reach him; for fear that the fans of his virtues and his holy life, would steal him; and in order not to confuse his body with the rest of the bodies so it would remain knowable.

People flocked from all sides and from Kartaba, visiting Fr. Sharbel whom they called the Saint. The monks prevented them from going to the little room where he was laid; the body remained in the "exhumation" about two years, then it transferred to an isolated room, near the gate of the monastery.

### **3 - The healing of a dumb child (Mk 7:31-44)**

Once, a man came with his mute child, from the town of Foutouh; after his persistence and his solicitation, the monk took him to where the body was laid, the man and his child knelt, prayed then kissed the hand of the Saint, and they went back; while they were going down the dark stairs, the mute child cried to his father: "Father, I beg you, hold me." The father called out: "Thank you Fr. Sharbel!"

### **5 - Oozing out of the "exhumation"**

Blood and water, were oozing out of the body; a combination of red and white blood, but the white overcame the red; ran down the stairs and overspread in the church, emanating the smell of blood which bothered the monks; it wasn't emitting any odor, till after it got out.

## **I: In the hands of Fr. Youssef Kfourì**

### **1 - On the roof of the convent**

Fr. Youssef Kfourì witnessed: Two days after my arrival, the superior asked me to take care of the body; I opened the coffin which was not properly closed, I saw Fr. Sharbel in his monastic clothes, and felt a smell that wasn't bad, but also unpleasant; I found the body in a good condition as if it was for a monk, who died an hour ago. Three days later, I put it in a room on the northwest side, from there I was carrying it at night with the help of Bro. Egidious Tannouri, and laid it naked on the monastery roof; exposing it to the wind, so that the blood that dripped in abundance from his back and his hips, would get dry; this blood was very abundant; I put below the body two white sheets that I changed every day, because I found them too wet with water and blood, the blood was more common than water; I rarely let the sheets two days without changing them; the sweat was leaking viciously from every pore of the body. I kept on exposing the body on the air in the night about four months; the dry east wind that dried up the land and sometimes affected the living trees, didn't affect the body, but it remained intact; the monks sometimes tripped over it and were scared.

I was doing all of these in my own initiative because the superior had work in the properties of the convent situated between mountains and coast. Having found that the blood still oozing profusely from his chest for four months, from late spring until late summer, I thought to extract the intestines of the body, hoping to stop the leakage of the blood; which made me work every day in changing the sheets; the idea was that the stomach had absorbed lot of water when the body was buried in the cemetery

## **2 - They wanted to stop the oozing by any means necessary!**

Ouwaini witnessed: When the body of Fr. Sharbel was removed from the tomb, it was oozing plenty of copious red water like the one of reddish meat, spreading an unpleasant smell; the monks wanted by any means necessary to stop this leakage, I don't know why? So they asked Boutros Saba, an uncertified doctor to see the body; he examined it and advised to put it under the sun to dry out; they exposed it for a period to the heat, and I wiped it with alcohol, as recommended by the mentioned doctor; then they put it back in the old coffin without a lid in a room on the ground floor; but it continued to ooze more than before.

## **3- For the reburial of the body**

Fr. Youssef Kfoury witnessed: The visitors were numerous and they complained from the smell that emanated from the body; even I smelled it, so sometimes I sprinkled the floor and around the coffin with some perfume, I used about three bottles. Fr. Elias Meshmesh proposed the reburial of the body, but the monks opposed this suggestion; so I sought advice from the superior, Fr. Mikhael Tannouri, who suggested to put the body back into the grave; I replied: It's not good for our reputation to return it to the cemetery, after taking it out from there is well-known now, and the miracles he is performing; however I see that we should take out the intestines, perhaps it would get dry and there would be no seepage or odor. I think he told me: "Do what you want."

## **4- The surgery!**

Fr. Youssef Kfoury added: I consulted Ouwaini who was living near the convent, he replied: "I don't dare to touch the body of Fr. Sharbel, because he performed miracles during his lifetime, I fear that would cause me the death of my children." I replied: "We have no intention to offend him by extracting his stomach, but to stop the oozing of the blood." he obeyed. We agreed to keep the matter secret. I went along with Saba during the day, I cannot remember the hour. With a lancet he opened the hip, below the ribs, entered his hand, and extracted the stomach and the intestines; we found them so fresh, like the ones of a sheep that had been slaughtered an hour ago, without any trace of corruption or worms. The smell was the same as the odor of the blood effluent from a corpse, but I don't remember that I smelled any unpleasant odor; I put the internal organs in a regular metallic container; it didn't bleed from the part of the body that we opened, and I don't remember if the blood and water came out from the stomach and intestines. The heart, lungs, liver and gall bladder were intact such as the ones of a recently slaughtered sheep. The water was stained with blood and flowed abundantly; we carried them to an old part of the church, with no roof called "Saint Georges"; here we dug in a corner and buried them, it was already night. I told myself: if the body will transfer to Rome to justify that Sharbel is a Saint, at least we kept something from it; I buried the metal container closed. After a while I asked Bro. Egidious Tannouri, who accompanied me, to examine that stomach and intestines, he checked saying that he found the bottle empty. I informed the Superior, when he came back, about what I did.

## **5- Ouwaini distributed blessings to his patients**

Later Ouwaini went alone; he dug and took the stomach! This is what Bro. Tanios Al-Qady told us, that Saba put the guts in a pot and boiled them, and then he distributed them as a blessing to his patients, this was obvious from the question asked by the commission of inquiry: It's well-known that you had used the blood of this body, in order to treat the patients, and that they were cured because of this blood! The quantity you took must be great!

Ouwaini said he felt deep regret in his heart and added: I remember I grabbed the liver and the heart; the heart was red, oozing blood mixed with water; it didn't have any smell at all; since then my act was constantly present in my mind; I blamed myself because I didn't keep it in my house as a precious treasure; I asked him earnestly to let me have the heart or a part of what I had removed, but he didn't allow me.

### **6- He continued to ooze**

Fr. Youssef Kfoury witnessed: the surgery was unnecessary because the body continued to ooze; the smell didn't emanate from the body but from the seepage; I didn't know where the liquid and that smell came from! The body was reduced to skin and bones! This is a sufficient proof that we are dealing with a strange and amazing fact; that we and the laity deeply believe in the sanctity of Fr. Sharbel; the visitors came from all over seeking his intercession. I felt a strong odor before changing the wet and stained clothes; and then after changing and replacing them with clean ones, the smell reduced, and remained strong on the exchanged ones. The lawyer for the beatification process brought an alb, which had been laid for a week on the body and then removed yesterday for examination and evidence. Fr. Kfoury smelled the scent and said: this is the same strong smell that I tried my best to take it away, and the yellowish-red spots on this alb are the same as before, but the leakage was more abundant.

### **7- Extraction of the brain**

The medical examination showed that the skull was opened to the occiput, the bone was pierced by a very sharp instrument and the brain was extracted. Fr. Youssef Kfoury witnessed: I believe that this act was done by one of the visitors, in order to take it as a blessing; during the period of two years and eight months where I assumed the responsibility of the body; If I had not been so keen to keep it, the visitors would have snatched it pieces for the blessings; especially after his miracles became well-known and after the seepage of blood and water, particularly the miracle of Tabarja's paralytic. **Most visitors had known him during his lifetime, because he performed miracles with them;** so they tried to have a souvenir from him to ask for his intercession through it, whenever they were in difficulty.

It seemed to me that Saba Ouwaini did this extraction, because of his firm belief in the sanctity of Fr. Sharbel and to use it as a medicine to cure his patients; my hypothesis based, that Saba was very attached to Fr. Sharbel; deeply respecting his virtues; he had known him a real knowledge and believed in his ability to perform miracles; after the death of Fr. Sharbel Saba used to pray one "Our Father" and a "Hail Mary" before preparing the medication, seeking his intercession for the healing of the sick; he also asked me to wipe the body of Fr. Sharbel, with some towels, to keep them in his house; so I thought that maybe after I left the convent, Saba

removed the brain; the lawyer of beatification process supposed, that for the lack of belief by doctors, they extracted his brain secretly.

### **8- Restoration of the eye and the nose tip**

Fr. Youssef Kfoury witnessed: I put a little plasters or similar material in his left eye and nose, because when he was buried in the tomb, the roof was dripping constantly, especially on his eye and nose, causing a slight distortion on them; this intervention almost gave them back their normal appearance, and indeed they showed no deterioration. Ever since I've cared about the body, after his transfer until I was relieved from this responsibility, he remained in the same physical condition as far as the flexibility of the skin, either before or after the extraction; I have noticed no difference, and this was an amazing mystery for us.

### **9- Lack of discernment**

The monks laid the corpse only in places that could corrupt it quickly; either in the grave or in the small room on the ground floor; and I, who consider myself among those who are wise, I have acceded to the deformation of the body with my carelessness and naiveté; either by my procedure to expose the body to the wind for four months on the roof at night, or by the extraction of the womb.

### **10 - He drove away the locusts (Lk 5:4-7)**

Locusts suddenly invaded the land of the convent from all sides, two hours before sunset; although monks and farmer-members had made every effort to stop them; the locusts covered the crops and the trees. The superior, Mikhael Tannouri, called Fr. Makarios, the hermit and said: "Fr. Sharbel, in his lifetime, expelled the locusts from the vicinity of the monastery. Go now take a container full of water, wash his hands, and then sprinkle by this water the seeds, the mulberry trees and the crops of the convent, as much as possible." Fr. Makarios obeyed; in the morning the locusts fled. One thing caught our attention; while the hermit sprinkled the seeds, it happened that the farmer-partner in the convent, Saba Zahra said to the hermit: I protect my land, don't trample on the seeds. While the locusts were leaving, some fell in that land and devoured everything. He tried in vain to protect it with the firing of his gun and the burning of thorny bushes, while all around the land had been saved. The locusts devoured the wild herbs even the barks of the wild trees; thus the locusts were useful to the properties of the convent.

### **11 - Recovering from total paralysis (Mt 9:1-8)**

Maryam Zuwain witnessed: Following the birth of my eldest daughter, Abba, I was suffering from a disease on the hands and feet and the rest of my body for over six months; as a result of this disease, I was unable to move and I became like a piece of wood; my pain was unbearable, my stepmother Jalileh, served me; I remember, when my daughter was crying and no one was there, I bent over her, raised her by my teeth and laid her on my chest to breastfeed her, because I was unable to hold her by my hands. Once, she fell from my chest and clung on a hot stove; in vain I tried to save her; I felt like I was in a dream in which I tried to walk but I couldn't move; I tried three times to get up, for my only daughter was threatened to be burnt; but I couldn't move,

so I shouted with all my strength for help; a man named Fares Lahoud, who was flatten the roof in the rain, ran and snatched her.

My disease is not the type of depression that can be cured by emotional stimuli, what could be more emotional than seeing my little girl fell into a charcoal stove to stimulate my nerves and my maternal feelings and to forget my pain and prompt me to save her, yet I remained defaulting, and this weakness worsened my condition. This paralysis wasn't only on my hands and my feet but on my whole body, including my lower jaw, so I couldn't eat for three months except for milk; I followed multiple treatments from many doctors with no result; so I surrendered to sadness and tears, and despaired from healing.

One day a Shiite woman from the village of Ferret came into my house asking for alms, she asked me: "What's wrong with you?" Crying, I told her about my illness, she replied: "Not far from here there is a Saint, he is performing miracles, his name is Saint Sharbel in the Monastery of St. Maron, go there and you will be cured from your illness." Fr. Roukoz Meshmesh was in our village at that time, I called him and asked if it was true what the Shiite woman told me, he replied: "Yes, it's true." He encouraged me to go and visit Saint Sharbel. I decided to make this visit to the tomb of Saint Sharbel and I made a vow for him; then I told my husband about my vow and my persistence to visit the tomb. He rushed and called a mule driver who took me to Annaya, with my aunt Wardeh; I suffered a lot from this trip, the carrier supported me from one side, and my aunt with another woman, from the other side all the way long. In my sickness I wasn't able to change my clothes or eat by myself, but my stepmother was taken care of everything.

Arriving at the convent, they took me to the tomb; I was crying from pain and fatigue because I had spent five hours on the back of the mule from my village Yahchouch to the convent; I was praying fervently and asking Saint Sharbel to heal me and let me go back walking; then they took me to the cemetery where the body of the Saint was laid at first. The superior, Fr. Mikhael Tannouri came and was very touched by my situation; he encouraged me and told me: Be strong in your faith, you will be healed, today; he brought me water from the washing hands of the Saint, and towels that were soaked by the blood exuded from his body; my aunt and the woman with her, Karimeh Azar Karam from Yahshoush, wiped with this water and towels my body, my hands and my feet; at once I felt strength in my right hand, while I was in the cemetery; I started moving my fingers and supporting myself by my hand; my left hand, which was more deficient and more paralysis and pain, I felt the pain was leaving it gradually; while I was at the cemetery, I felt that my whole body strengthened and I realized that I am on the way of recovery through the intercession of St. Sharbel; I left the cemetery by myself, and went up on the back of the mule to go back home; without eating anything because I made a vow not to eat or drink before my healing; my food was prayer and crying; the superior constantly encouraged me and strengthened my faith; when I got up on the mule, I needed no help; I felt that my left hand was tingling only; arriving at the village of Sannour, I had absolutely no pain; I was sure of my recovery, I moved my hands and my feet normally; exalted with joy I got down from the back of the mule, and walked about fifteen minutes, on our way back; I arrived home at the same day completely cured through the intercession of Saint Sharbel; and since then I pray to St. Sharbel daily; my relatives rejoiced; and that was a day of joy and pleasure for all of us.

## **12 - Tabarja paralytic (Mk 2:1-12)**

Jerges Sassine witnessed: I saw the paralytic of Tabarja named Beshara Antoun Azzi, when he was brought to the tomb of St. Sharbel, transported on a mule; he was carried down, in my presence, at the gate of the convent, unable to move his hands and feet; we took him into the room where the body was laid on the north-west. His companions explained to me that he was afflicted with stroke since infancy, in the age of fifteen he was seriously ill and became disable; shortly thereafter they brought him back to the portal; he began to move his hands and feet easily, stretching them back and forth, and then they turned back to his village.

In spring, I saw him coming to the monastery walking, I asked him: "Are you Beshara Azzi, who came last summer to this convent?" He replied: "Yes, I am the one who has been cured of his illness, and now I'm visiting St. Sharbel to thank him, without him, I will never have walked in my entire life." In fact every year, he comes twice, in summer and spring, carrying votive offerings for St. Sharbel, and then returning home without eating anything, I asked him: "Why don't you eat in the convent?" He replied: "I have vowed not to eat anything!"

Bro. Francis Kartaba added: When I was appointed to serve the guests in the convent, Beshara Azzi of Tabarja came to me, carrying a basket containing grains, nuts and other gifts, he gave it to me saying: "I have collected these offerings for the convent, in gratitude to St. Sharbel." Each time, the superior told him: "My son, take back home what you have collected, because you're poor."

Eid Nakad said: Beshara asked us to show him the house in which the Fr. Sharbel was born and brought up, when we asked about the purpose of his visit, he told us, he was paralyzed and Fr. Sharbel cured him; so he traversed each year the Lebanese villages; expressing his gratitude to Fr. Sharbel, collecting alms; we celebrated with him, especially my mother. He continued to come to Bqaakafra, for three years, for this purpose.

## **J: The Lodging**

### **1 - The women at a separate location**

The feeling of faith prompted the pilgrims to go walking to the monastery of Annaya; traversing distances of more than fifty kilometers, including: women, children, poor and sick, who were unable to ensure transport on the back of pack animals, but they came walking because of their poverty; some walked barefoot asking God to have mercy on them and gratify them the cure of their patients from incurable disease, or a chronic infirmity as the limp, the deaf, or the paralysis. The pilgrims arrived to the convent, exhausted after two or three days walking, and didn't find a place to shelter them because the monastery is in the wilderness; in addition, women were forbidden to enter to the monastery, even to church. There was no room to accommodate people except in a dark basement to the right of the entrance which was called the lodging or the accommodation. The visitors were staying in this lodging; the men entered to the church of the convent, while the women remained in the lodging and attended Mass, standing near the window of the church on the south side, just like the women of the farmer-members in Annaya.

## **2 - The insistence of visitors**

The men insisted to see the body of Fr. Sharbel on the first step of the "exhumation" room near the north wall inside the church, they knelt praying and imploring; while the women knelt outside the convent, near the north wall; there in the open air they were crying, begging for help, praying, kissing the wall, holding a handful of earth to take it home for their patients. The monks took pity on the visitors, especially Fr. Youssef Kfoury, so he allowed the men to access to the small room to see Saint Sharbel in his modest coffin; the visitor who could see Fr. Sharbel, was comforted by the sight of his preserved body; he returned home happy and told the people that he had seen Fr. Sharbel sleeping like a living human being! The women were very disappointed to be deprived of seeing the body of Fr. Sharbel so they asked the monks with abundant tears to allow them to see it.

## **3 - The lodging is converted into a chapel**

Two years passed, and the number of visitors multiplied and their insistence to allow them to see the body of Fr. Sharbel increased. Fr. Youssef Kfoury suggested, at a local council, to transform the lodging into a chapel, which will enable women to participate in the Mass; and to put the body there, in a glass-fronted cabinet so that visitors can see him; and he will be responsible to prevent any veneration, forbidden by the church. The proposal was raised to the Superior General, who demanded the authorization of the Patriarch. So the lodging was transformed into a chapel for the celebration of the Holy Eucharist on Sundays and feast days. The monks put the body in a room outside of the right portal of the convent; in 1901, they placed, by the superior-order, a portable altar to celebrate Mass for the female visitors, because the women, in the days of the cold, were unable to hear the mass through the outside window of the Church; and were unable to enter the church because of the ban.

## **4 - Description of the Body**

Wardeh Makhlouf witnessed: Two years after the death of Fr. Sharbel, I came with my aunt and other women from Bqaakafra to visit his tomb. They opened it for us; I reached out my hand and held his hand; it was very soft like velvet; his body appeared normal, his beard as it was always, his face pinky, his neck was sweating, I passed my hand over his hair and his neck.

Ouwaini added: His holy body oozed the same way in all seasons, I saw his clothes wet as those of sweaty people, and had the same smell; from time to time they changed his clothes for washing as they wash the ones of a living person.

Bro. Boutros Lyan explained: I was changing his clothes, in different times, sometimes every week, sometimes every two weeks, or month. In summer, I had to change it more frequently because the seepage was more abundant. What I know, that the body is still healthy and sweating; people visit his tomb, and they believe that it is preserved by a miracle, because Fr. Sharbel is a Saint; this is not just the Maronite belief, but also the neighboring Shiites and other Muslims.

## **5 - The body is standing**

Fr. Youssef Kfoury prepared a glass-fronted cabinet; he laid the body upright supported by two crutches under both armpits; it was always oozing, and from time to time its clothes were changing; they were consisted from the regular monastic habit and a stole around his neck. The upper cabinet was glazed in wooden frame that opened in two parts as the shutters.

Fr. Moubarak Tabet witnessed: I saw a coffin of wood leaning against the wall, the body of Fr. Sharbel stood up on his feet; his whole body was like he was still alive; his eyes closed; wearing a white alb; wetting with sweat and blood. I took his hand to kiss it, I found it more supple than mine, his skin was soft and of natural color, but yellowed by the death. The joy of the faithful, to see the body upright, was great, because they wished him standing among them; in contrary, most of the monks were dissatisfied with this position, because it was just like a childish idea that could despise the body Fr. Sharbel.

### **6 - The Healing of a girl and the raising of a dead child (Jn 11:1-44)**

Maryam Shamoun witnessed: My little girl, named Esther, suffered from the age of three, epileptic seizures and fainting; I brought her to Saba, a healer who had no medical training, with no result. I made a vow to Saint Sharbel, she got healed. Then I gave birth to a boy who died on April 17, 1901. My third child at the age of one year, suffered from epilepsy as his brother, for more than eight days; and since he was a child we didn't understand his illness; his case became worse gradually; in the first days of his illness, he woke up and nursed very little bit, then he never nursed and lost consciousness. When I lost hope of seeing him cured, and it was clear that he's going to die like his brother, I was so desperate; so I decided to take him to the tomb of Saint Sharbel; I used to attend his Mass during his lifetime, in the hermitage of St. Peter, **his mass cheered me up, impressed me and made me feel a deep reverence.** So I carried my child alone and walked, I didn't want anyone to assist me; may God have mercy on my fatigue and save him. In route, I met a woman, she took pity on me and she held him; then we met another woman, who looked at the child and said: "Where do you take the child? Do not wear yourself out! The child is dead!" I started screaming and crying as I saw my baby dead between my hands. The two women pinched the child, and shook him, but he showed no sign of life; I was about to go back, weeping over my dead child and seeing it was useless to continue; they encouraged me and we continued walking, hoping that the Fr. Sharbel will cure him; this happened in Farshaa, a farm belonging to Meshmesh, about an hour away from the convent, I said to the woman carrying my child: "Let's depend on God, and go to Fr. Sharbel." Upon our arrival to the convent, I called my cousin, Fr. Elias Ehmej; he went down into the room where the body was laid, he saw me kneeling by the coffin with tears, accompanied by two women standing near the door; on the step of the altar, I put my dead child wrapping with his clothes; he turned to me and said: "Are you crazy? How did you bring this funeral here?" He hurt me by these words but I didn't answer; the two women told him: "Your cousin came seeking the intercession of Fr. Sharbel to heal her sick son." He went in and found the child dead, mouth shut; he turned him several times, he opened his mouth; but he felt in him no sign of life!

I said to my companion: "Put the child on the ground as the deceased should be placed, his face toward the sea, near the coffin of the Saint, before the altar, and if Fr. Sharbel is a Saint he will raise him up." Then Fr. Elias opened the coffin, washed the hands of Fr. Sharbel with water, opened the mouth of the child, with a spoon of incense he poured water into the mouth of the

child, first, second, and third time, the child swallowed the water, and started breathing. I sighed deeply and we were very amazed; he put a candle in his hand, then gave him back to me; I breastfed him and he sucked; I began to weep from joy; I returned home happy, along with the woman who helped me. My son is already a young man full of life and health.

## **7 - A mysterious hand**

Rev. Ibrahim Haqlani was flattened the roof of his bedroom, located on the south side of the convent of Annaya, using a cylinder stone; reaching the edge of the roof, a violent storm arose, and he fell down with the cylinder stone from a height of four meters. His brothers the monks hastened to help him; they were amazed since they found him running toward the gate of the convent, unharmed. When they asked what happened with him?! He replied: When I slipped down with the cylinder stone, I screamed: Fr. Sharbel, help me! I felt as if a hand was carrying me and then putting me down gently on the ground, after taking the cylinder stone away from me.

## **K: In the Chapel**

### **1 - Transfer of the body**

Dr. Georges Shekralah made a coffin of walnut wood, worthy of Fr. Sharbel; and Boutros Daher carried it on the back of a mule from Beirut, in the autumn of 1909; he asked the monks to put it in a proper place; the body was transferred to a larger room, located south of the first one, in the basement at the southeast corner of the convent left the gate. The ground is paved with stones, and the room is arched with stones as well; the coffin was placed horizontally on a corner and it was closed. Lot of people from the neighborhood and the farmer-members came to attend the handover ceremony of the body; no epitaph has been placed on the tomb of Fr. Sharbel, neither during his funeral, nor after his transfer. Fr. Boutros Damien witnessed: I was present when the body was moved into the chapel; we dressed him in an alb, but the body still oozing a special liquid that soaked the alb and the other clothes; so we had to change them every few days. The people were flocking to visit him, kissing his hand, soliciting his blessing to cure their diseases and asking for the blessing of God through him.

### **2 - The healing of a kidney**

Hawshab Nakad witnesses: After the First World War, I felt an unbearable pain in my hip, I entered the American Hospital in Beirut, where I spent forty days during which I made a surgery of extraction of a calculus from the kidney; the operation was successful. A year later, I felt the same pain in the same position. My mother and my sister Ghalia went to the convent of St. Maron Annaya; there they visited the tomb of Fr. Sharbel; they prayed fervently, asking for my healing. My mother asked one of the monks to give her an amulet that was touched the body of Fr. Sharbel to put it on my neck; the monk replied that he would give her something more valuable: he presented a cloth that was placed under the neck of Fr. Sharbel; and then he washed the hands of Fr. Sharbel after he raised it from the coffin; he put the water in a small bottle and

gave it to her. When my mother returned, I put the cloth around my neck and drank the water. Three days later I dreamt that I was transported to the house of Fr. Sharbel, where I saw a monk who didn't talk with me a single word; in the morning, I eliminated, a kidney stone, as big as a bean. Since then I have no pain.

### **3 - A barren gives birth**

Hawshab continued: When my mother visited the monastery of Saint Maron Annaya, a man called Nehmeh Youssef Nehmeh, who was married since twenty-seven years and yet he had no children, asked her to bring him a blessing from Fr. Sharbel, hoping to have a child; he gave her some money as offering for the convent. When my mother came back, she gave Nehmeh and his wife Hanneh a blessing, the same as mine. In less than one year they had their only child, called Tanios.

### **4 -Visiting the tomb**

The visitors were many and from all sides, all nations and all races. They were pleading for his intercession as asking from the Saints, because they believed in his holiness and goodness. Those who owned livestock, they offered some of them to the convent. Many people of Christian communities and non-Christians flocked to visit him to cure them from their illness. Many of them, when they reached the monastery ground, they continued their walk using their hands and feet, to show respect.

### **5 - I have little children**

Mary, the wife of Boutros Abi Musa from Shkania, was sick with epilepsy; Dr. George Shekrallah was treating her and bringing her medicine from Europe for a long time; but she hadn't derived any benefit. Her husband came to visit Fr. Sharbel, and told him: I beg you, heal my wife, because we have little children who need their mother to take care of them; and I am ready to pave the ground of the chapel (where the body of Sharbel), then he returned to his home. At night, he dreamt about three monks on the road, one of them was walking in the center, a stole in his neck, he ran towards him saying: Please, Fr. Sharbel heal my wife, he answered: She has been already recovered. The woman was healed instantly and completely.

### **6 - I took his hand and put it in my sick eye**

Akel Hayek witnessed: a neurological disease affected my right eyes in 6/8/1903, my eye was twitching continuously, the doctors of Beirut were unable to cure it; I heard about St. Sharbel, so I went to visit him; I found him laid in a coffin in a room of the monastery; I took his hand and put it in my sick eye; after a short period the pain disappeared and it got back to normal.

### **7 - Better than the doctors of Beirut**

Tanios Moussa from Ehmej witnessed: I had a very severe pain in my shoulder which continued for a while in this case; I used many treatments with no result. Finally, I decided to go

to Beirut accompanied by my uncle Saba; on the way we passed to visit my uncle Fr. Youssef in the monastery of Annaya; I told him that I am going to Beirut to see the doctors there to cure the pain on my shoulder; my uncle said: We have here a doctor who is more important than all the doctors of Beirut, Fr. Sharbel! Go and visit him, and take a blessing and you will be healed. I went to the chapel, where the body was placed, and prayed. Bro. Boutros Meshmesh gave me a waistband after he put it on the body of Fr. Sharbel; I wore it and didn't go to Beirut. The second day I got up totally cured, and resumed my work as usual.

## **8 - Maryam opened her eyes**

Rahmeh the wife of Moussa from Ehmj witnessed: My granddaughter Maryam fell ill with high fever, the disease worsened and she lost consciousness. Her grandfather, Saba treated her, but she hadn't benefited; in the end she became like a dead person. We made a vow to lit an oil lamp in front of the body of Fr. Sharbel for her healing; when we turned on the lamp in front of his body, Maryam opened her eyes and asked for food; instantly the fever got to normal and she recovered.

## **L: He healed all the sick (Mt 8,6)**

### **1 - The healing of Bro. Youssef Maifouq**

Fr. Youssef Ehmej testified: While Bro. Youssef Maifouq was eating, a bone stuck in his throat: he suffered for a week, so we called the doctor, Najib Beik Khoury who found no trace for the bone, but the brother still suffering. One night he came to me and shouted: "Please, I was about to die from pain." I answered: "My brother, how can I help you? Take the oil lamp and light it in front of the coffin of St. Sharbel, I hope he will heal you." He went right away, lit the lamp, and knelt down, his hands resting on the coffin. Then he spat, the bones came out of his throat; he came to show it to me; a bone in the length of a needle, fine as a thread, I kept it for a while in my home.

### **2 - The healing of Fr. Elias Ehmej**

One time I felt a sharp pain during the night on my right side so that I could no longer walk without crutches. I looked at the painful spot and saw that my flesh was swollen as if it was pierced with a nail. I got up slowly limping, and went to the grave of Fr. Sharbel, it was at that time on the chapel, I poured water on his hand and then rubbed the painful area; I immediately recovered and went back to my room without crutches.

### **3-Recovering from the typhoid fever (Mk 1: 29-31)**

Fr. Alouan witnessed: When I came back from Annaya to Kozhaya, I found Bro. Bartholomew suffering from typhoid fever and was on his deathbed. I told him about Fr. Sharbel and gave him a piece of his hood, which I took as a blessing from the tomb; he put it on his head in good faith and prayed, the next day he recovered.

#### **4 - A cure from paralysis**

Shibley Shibley witnessed: I had a rheumatic disease on the knee; the disease worsened to the point of paralysis. Several doctors treated me, as Dr. Ounaissi from Jajj, Dr. Najem from Lehfed, with no result. So I asked for the intercession of Fr. Sharbel; I took holy water and a piece of cloth that had been placed over his body; I drank the water and put the cloth over my knees, God has healed me.

#### **5 - The healing of Saba Ouwaini**

In May 1925, I felt a sharp pain in my stomach; Dr. Gergi Shekrallah had treated me once, twice and three times with no success; and then he suggested that I accompany him to Beirut for an X-ray, for he was afraid as I did, it might be a cancer. I told him: "Let us reconsider it until tomorrow!" I left him, and prayed fervently to Fr. Sharbel, to heal me; I promised to donate to the monastery two piastres as a vow. In the night I saw Fr. Sharbel in a dream; he burnt a piece of his habit, took the ashes, poured them into the water and gave me to drink. I woke up at dawn and I was in a great pain; I left my bed and met my brother, Fr. Youssef Ehmej, who was preparing for the mass; I wanted to attend the mass and then visit the grave of Fr. Sharbel; the pain, however, didn't allow me to stay to the end of the mass; so I hurried towards the tomb, my wife, my children and my niece joined me there; after praying and giving the offering; I took from the brother in charge of watching over the body, a piece of cloth from the habit of Fr. Sharbel, burnt it in a can, mixed the ashes with water, as I saw in my dream and then I drank the water. On the way back I felt less pain; I stopped to rest at my daughter's house, Maryam the wife of Tanios Boutros Moussa; she offered me to eat something, because for seventeen days I hadn't eaten except little bit; I agreed, she gave me stuffed zucchini; I ate a loaf of bread and two zucchini. Then I continued my way home, I felt the pain was gradually decreased until the evening. At home I ate well and felt no more pain.

#### **6 - The healing of Fr. Youssef Ehmej**

For more than three years I had constant throat pain. I was treated by doctors Gergi Shekrallah, Najib Beik Khoury and Jibrael Tawily. Meanwhile I had some rest, but the pain always came back. One day I took a piece from the habit of Fr. Sharbel and wrapped it around my neck. For years now I have no more pain and I still wear it around my neck.

#### **7 - Healing from eye disease (Jn 9)**

Youssef Nassif testified: I had a severe pain in my eyes accompanied with redness. When I awoke, my eyes were glued with eye mucus glands and only opened after having washed with water; however, my vision wasn't affected. The disease was lessened in winter, but increased in early spring to late autumn and lasted for three years. In vain I consulted Dr. Najib Beik Khoury;

So I made a vow for Fr. Sharbel, that if he cures me, I would donate fifty Syrian lire; also I would help out each year a day on the estates of the monastery, free of charge, and I would testify before the Congregation of my healing. Then I made my visit to the grave, dipped his hand into the water, I brought the water home and washed my eyes for ten days, the rheum

disappeared and the pain vanished; for more than one and a half month now (1926) I have no more pain, but some redness remains.

### **8 - Healing from Hemiplegia**

Moussa Moussa witnessed: My cousin called Gerges Risha from Ehmej had suffered from hemiplegia; despite seven months of medical treatment, he could no longer walk. He asked for a piece of cloth from St. Sharbel's clothes and rolled it around his waist. He immediately felt an improvement and was gradually recovered, and now he is completely healthy.

### **9 - The Healing of the brother of Boutros Jawad Meshmesh**

I got cramps in my shoulders, so that I couldn't move my hands. I went to the tomb of the man of God Fr. Sharbel, I opened the coffin and laid a piece of cloth over his sacred hand, and then I rubbed my shoulder and felt no more pain at all.

### **10 - Healing of the wife of Youssef Khoury from Amshit**

Fr. Youssef Ehmej testified: The wife of Youssef Khoury from Amshit suffered from a hardening and spasms in the joints. They took her two or three times to Beirut; a group of medical doctors discussed the case, but in vain. When I visited her once, she told me about her situation, I answered: "I will send you a piece from the alb of Fr. Sharbel and I hope you will recover." She and her parents told me that the piece of cloth was the right treatment for her.

### **11 - In New York**

Boutrosieh, the wife of Nassif Saade from Hsarat-Jbeil, was afflicted with kidney disease for seven months in the United States, and entered to the hospital of Virgin Mary in the city of Nathan Matt in New York; she stayed there for a period with no avail. The best doctors in the hospital lost hope from her recovery. One day, while she was suffering, she thought to make a vow to St. Sharbel, perhaps he will heal her from her severe illness. Once, she made this vow she felt totally comfortable and recovered. This was in 11/20/1920.

### **12 - His neck was curved**

Foula the widow of Nehmeh Deeb from Gouma witnessed in 08/15/1925: In 1902, at the age of four, my son Nehmeh, who is now in America, was unable to walk because of the laxity of his nerves; his neck was curved to the left side and he wasn't able to turn it around; he was treated from several doctors, including Dr. Anton Beik Khairalah Gran, Dr. Amin Effendi Thoma Batroun, but he remained in this state without any benefit for about five months. One night, in my dream, I heard a voice saying to me: Offer a quarter piaster for the convent and I will heal your son, or he wouldn't recover! When I woke up in the morning, I told Fr. Boulos Khoury Fares from Gouma about the dream; he said to me: "There is a Saint in the monastery of Annaya, pray for him, he will heal your child." I vowed to offer a quarter piaster and asked him to heal my son; he cured immediately; his neck straightened; his nerves intensified and he

walked for the first time; I took him to the monastery of Annaya to visit St. Sharbel and offered the vow.

### **13 - He refreshed and started breastfeeding**

The widow of Boutros Ghobary from Ehmj witnessed in 09/10/1925: I lived in the house of the priest Hanna Shehadeh from Meshmesh, nursing his nephew. One day we came to the hermitage of Annaya to baptize him in its church; accompanied with his mother, his father, his grandfather and his uncle Fr. Hanna; after the baptismal ceremony, we went down from the hermitage to the monastery to be blessed from the body of Fr. Sharbel, who was recently removed from the grave; when we opened his coffin an unpleasant smell emanated from the body. After this visit, we headed to Meshmesh, as we got far from the monastery, the child suddenly froze his eyes, started groaning and refrained from breastfeeding; so we were very worried about him; his uncle the priest said to his grandmother: "What happened to the child, it's because of you, it is the result of your lack of faith in the holiness of Fr. Sharbel and because you have said the smell from his body is unpleasant... believe and ask him to heal the child." When his grandmother heard these words she knelt on the ground, praying and asking Fr. Sharbel, tears falling from her eyes, to heal the child.

The parents of the child made a vow to Fr. Sharbel, begging him to heal their child; one of us went back to the monastery, offered the vow and brought a blessing from the body of Fr. Sharbel; once we put this blessing on the child, he refreshed, started breastfeeding as usual and recovered.

### **14 - He granted her three boys and a girl**

Youssef Abbud from Ehmj witnessed in 09/10/1925: after the body of Sharbel was removed from the cemetery, I went with my wife to visit him, she asked God to give her a child; God granted her through the intercession of St. Sharbel three boys and a girl.

### **15 - He refrained from eating**

Hanna Hussaini witnessed in 11/19/1925: My grandson, Assad, suffered from a pain in his stomach at the age of eight; he became pale, very thin and refrained from eating; he remained in this state, about nine months. His mother took him to Ehmj, so Saba Ouwaini could treat him but we didn't find him, she said: "I don't want any more to take him to doctors; I am determined to ask St. Sharbel to heal him." We went to the monastery of Annaya and visited the body of St. Sharbel; we offered a vow for the recovering of the child and then we came back to Bejjeh, after few days the child recovered from the pain of the stomach and he started to eat as usual.

### **16 - On foot**

Tannous Lteif from Fatqa Fettouh Kesserwan witnessed in 07/01/1926: As my son Elias had the yellow fever and was suffering from a stomach pain; his last physician was Dr. Khalil Karam, from Ghazir; but he did not benefit anything from the treatments and we were very concerned about his situation. On January 15, I was asleep, almost at midnight, and then I was

inspired that the healing of my son is related to a visit to St. Sharbel; I got out of my bed and immediately vowed to take my son on the first day of July to Annaya on foot, seeking a blessing from the body of Sharbel. I told my son what had happened with me and announced his soon recovery; thus, he was recovered immediately and the disease disappeared completely. To fulfill my votive I went with him on the appointed time to the monastery of Annaya.

### **17 - She went deaf in one ear**

Moussa Ghanem from Lehfed, the director of the district of Gezzin witnessed in 09/29/1926 : Around the year 1900 my sister Marta, at the age of eight, had a shock in one of her ears and because of this she lost hearing completely; she was treated by some of the physicians but she didn't benefit from the treatments. My sister asked me to send her to visit St. Sharbel. Upon her arrival to the place where the body of St. Sharbel was laid she felt a strong ringing in her infected ear and at once she recovered.

### **18 - He granted him a boy**

Fr. Boutros Zahra witnessed in 10/09/1926: Youssef Boutros Abi-Nassif from Mayfouq hadn't had children for thirteen years after his marriage. He made a votive for St. Sharbel and he granted him a baby boy, called Naim and in baptism Sharbel.

### **19 - After fifteen minutes**

Maryam Barakat from Yahshoush witnessed in 10/17/1926: My son Wadih had an abscess in his neck at the age of two and a half, so I took him to the monastery of Annaya to visit Fr. Sharbel. After my arrival with my mother-in-law one of the monks took my child and wiped his neck with a blessing from St. Sharbel; after fifteen minutes he came back healthy, I didn't even know where the abscess was.

### **20 - My parents were concerned for my life**

Deebah the wife of Nehemtallah Ibrahim from Lehfed witnessed: I got sick after I gave birth to my son Estephen in 1926, with puerperal fever disease accompanied with cough and chest congestion that I could no longer breathe; I remained like that about a month, my parents were concerned for my life, they gave me many treatments with no result. Finally, I made a vow for Fr. Sharbel and stopped the medication, I felt better, and in less than a week, I resumed my housework. I visited St. Sharbel crawling on hands and feet, I fulfilled my votive and thanked God.

## **M: Sharbel's objects**

### **1 - The haircloth and the holy water of Sharbel**

Bro. Boutros Meshmesh witnessed: I took the haircloth he had worn in the hermitage, and distributed it pieces as blessings by which many were cured form various diseases! Eid Nakad confirmed: We have water which was blessed in his life time, it is still preserved as a precious

treasure

in

Bqaakafra.

## **2 - Over negligence!**

Fr. Youssef Ehmej witnessed: There is nothing left from his shabby clothes or the mat on which he slept; these were all his vestiges and his fortune in this world. His cell in the convent, that some monks may recall it was dedicated to him, is now abandoned; they put inside it wood and old stuff, a stable is cleaner than it. I think if you enter it, you will laugh at us because of our indifference to the remembrance of St. Sharbel; as for his cell in the hermitage, I don't think it is in a better condition.

Bro. Boutros Mayfouk added: We found there is no mention of his name, not a souvenir from his habit -either in a monastery or in the hermitage; nobody can tell if he had lived in the convent, except the monks, his contemporaries or those who have

heard of him; in these places, his name did not exist, and his body, which is preserved here is unrecognizable, except from those who knew him during his lifetime or after his death.

Fr. Nehemtallah Meshmesh confirmed: If it weren't for the Shiites, the monks were probably not given sufficient attention for him; the majority of them are naive; we all haven't done our duty towards Fr. Sharbel especially me, because we have been delayed to consider the sublime of his virtues and his famous miracles. The evidence of our over negligence, that we haven't retained anything of his clothes, or any of his belongings.

## **3 – Blessings**

Visitors had distorted parts of his hands and nails, as they pulled out some pieces to take them as blessing; nothing remained from his hair and his beard except very few; because the pilgrims had taken them; whoever came to visit him, pulled some hair as a blessing! Dr. Georges Shekrallah said: I asked the monks for a blessing from this Saint, because so great is my respect for him, they gave me a piece of clothing that was touched his body in the coffin, the traces of the leaked fluid were still visible in it. Visitors who requested a blessing received after much insistence: a piece of this clothing that monks had to change at least every week; or some pieces of cloth that passed over his body, or a little bit of water from his hand washing, or some incense from the church.

## **4 - The visitors**

When apostolic visitors came here, they were astonished and said they had never seen like this corpse before, they knelt by the coffin and prayed; other visitors also knelt by his coffin and prayed. Sometimes the monks were irritated by visitors, because they had to take care of them and of their hospitality in this remote convent, which cost them efforts and expenses.

## **N: Dr. George Shekrallah**

### **1 - I was amazed**

When I saw him for the first time I was stunned, because as a physician I have never seen or heard or read in medical books, a similar case. I examined it from a purely scientific interest and wanted to fathom the mystery of this body. After a general examination of the whole body, I found it incorruptible, some of his muscles remained flexible and a part of his joints were folding, some of his hair and beard still persisted despite the pull applied by the visitors, who took them as relics; the rest of his organs have not suffered damage, with the exception of his eye which was affected by the water dripping when he was buried in the tomb, rather it was deformed. As for his belly, I found it like those of other bodies, without any apparent of damage, and I did not notice it had been opened, unless it was slightly dry by time.

## **2 - The plasma or suppurating wounds (Lk 22:44)**

The strangest phenomenon that had confused me was that I saw with my own eyes the stains on his white clothes, emanated from a viscous substance from his pores that match the color and density of normal plasma which exudes from living bodies riddled with sores.

As for the smell, it resembled to the smell of protoplasmic substances that are excreted from the body in case of sickness; the smell wasn't unpleasant, rather it was moldy. The body was soft as it was in the time of his death; it was sweating so we were wiping it with tissues, and kept them as blessings. Ouwaini filled a bottle from this fluid so people when they knew that this bottle had a blessing from the body of Fr. Sharbel, they took from it to use it in case of sickness.

## **3 - The mystery of the body!**

The attorney in the canonization process, asked him: Is it possible to natural circumstances such as freezing cold, plenty of water; or reasons prior to death such as abstaining from meat, low food intake, mortification of the body and the vegetarian diet, to cause the preservation of the body after death? "

He replied: I have never experienced, or read that such circumstances could cause such symptoms; after examining the body, I referred to competent physicians in Beirut and in Europe, where I have traveled several times, nobody was able to benefit me in this matter; the case of this body is unique and no doctor had ever seen like it; nobody could tell me if such a case had been reported in medical history; I constantly seek to achieve whether there was a similar case in the world, by which a body has been preserved under such circumstances.

## **4 - Impossible!**

Then he asked him: "Do you think the status of this body is natural or supernatural? Or, do you think a clever monk managed to discover a drug that can preserve the body?"

He replied: My personal conviction is based on the study and experience, after having examined the body two or three times a year, for seventeen years now (1909), I would say that this body is preserved by a supernatural force; if we assumed that a monk would have discovered a drug that can keep it so, I present the following:

First: If this proves true, the inventor of this amazing discovery should earn the admiration and esteem of the scientific community, and he would exceed, the great scientist, Louis Pasteur. Because, the medical scientists are making every effort, to discover a drug that could preserve the corpse and they haven't come to protect it properly without smell more than two weeks. As for the seepage in this body, it never would have come to the mind of medical scientists to consider it; as well as that such discovery, is impossible with the continuous seepage. It is well known, that the healthy body of a living man contains an average of five liters of blood with only three liters of plasma that could be secreted, at a rate of sixty percent; while the remaining forty percent contain salt, blood cells, and solids. If the body secretes after the death the remaining of natural plasma; and if the pores secrete a gram or two each day; it follows that the quantity of secreted plasma exceeded the stored ones in his body at the time of his death; in addition the amount of plasma must be finished after eight years of his death; if we consider that the secretion was fully preserved and didn't lose some amount due to evaporation; and what I've noticed that the body is oozing over one gram per day, because the rate of secretion would not be plentiful if the body of Fr. Sharbel secretes only one gram daily.

Secondly: You know better than me the inadequate education of the monks on the medical field, especially those of this convent who spend their day in the field and don't know except for prayer and manual labor. I believe that the simplicity of the monks, their negligence and their failure to take care of the body, were sufficient to adhere to the corruption of the body, unless a supernatural force has protected it.

I also said: During the war, I saw people die of hunger after having spent long days without food, their stomachs were empty and dry, and their bodies deteriorated after seven hours of their death; also the typhoid patients who survive about twenty-five days, drinking only water, and the water secretes from the body, but few hours after death, their bodies began to decompose; in addition, cold, humidity and heat help to decompose the body, all these factors are not protective elements, but rather destructive for the body, yet all these phenomena have been exposed to the body of Fr. Sharbel; assuming that the monks had discovered the ancient Egyptian method of mummification, how could they stimulate the body to exude fluid.

In a word the body of Fr. Sharbel is preserved by a supernatural force, and I am ready to pay the sum of ten-thousand francs as an award- a high sum for me to afford- to the one who can keep a corpse in the same case.

### **5 - This is medically impossible!**

**The attorney in the canonization process, asked him: Couldn't this secretion be a result from an injection of plasma into the body through a syringe?**

He replied: It is medically impossible, because this plasma is found in the body of man and it isn't a pharmaceutical product; I studied pharmaceutical before medicine, and I had practiced it for some time, I have my legal degrees from the School of Lyon. Who can donate blood for twenty-seven years to get it then injected into the body of Fr. Sharbel; moreover, the operation of

the extraction of plasma from the blood can only be made by specialists, equipped with all necessary instruments for the preparation of this work; if possible, it wouldn't remain a secret. Who among the monks, who are renowned for their simplicity, would be able, if he obtained the plasma, to use it; let's assume all this was available, it would be impossible to inject the corpse after twenty-seven years from the death rather it becomes impossible after a month of death, because the veins and arteries through which must pass the plasma dry up shortly after the death, even the pores of the body are blocked which prevent any seepage.

## **6 - It only delays the corruption!**

He also asked him: "Could the extraction of the heart and liver result to such a case, or what could it result for?" He replied: "The pull out of the heart and liver, doesn't result for anything of this kind; while the extraction of the stomach, where the corruption starts, could delay the decay for a certain t

## **O: Other examinations**

### **1 - Burning quicklime**

Before 1910, Dr. Najib Beik Khoury had summoned to examine the body; after the examination, he ordered to be placed under the feet, burning quicklime in order to absorb the blood and plasma and dry the body, as it was laid upright in a cupboard. After some time, the doctor who was only nominally Maronite, found the body as it was; so he asked to remove the quicklime which had been put under the feet, and said: I put the quicklime believing that it would deteriorate the body, but I see this body is preserved, with a force which eludes the scientific knowledge, without doubt it is due to the holiness of Fr. Sharbel.

### **2 - It doesn't exist in the medical field**

Fr. Youssef Ehmej witnessed: In 1901 I was appointed a superior of the convent of St. Maron Annaya; the body was laying in his coffin at the corner of the church. As the secretion of fluid continued, I called the doctors: Georges Shekrallah, a friend of mine and my father's neighbor, Najib Beik Khoury from Ehmej, Wakim Nakhleh from Jbeil, and another Armenian doctor, they are all dead now. After their arrival, they transferred the body into a room in the convent near the church; they put it on a sheet over a table, and each one examined it separately; I was with them with Saba in the room; they opened the body from the lower chest to the belly to discover the cause of the secretion of fluid and after a meticulous examination of the interior, they put back his clothes; leaving, I heard them talking about the secreting from his body; Dr. Shekrallah said: "I paid fifty pounds Ottoman for the one who can explain what's this substance? And what's the cause of the secretion?" Dr. Najib Beik Khoury said: "I do not know." The Armenian physician answered the same. To my question, they said this situation isn't normal, so we couldn't give a technical answer about it; Dr. Shekrallah said: "Do not ask us heavenly issues that do not exist in earthly medical field.

### **3- Dr. Elias Anaissi**

I saw in the convent of Saint Maron Annaya the body of Fr. Sharbel; when I approached from the coffin, I smelt an indescribable odor from the body it was similar to every odor emanating from the living bodies; after I had examined it and focused on it, I saw a substance oozing from the pores; a strange and scientifically inexplicable phenomenon in an inert body for many years; I repeated the examination on the body several times in different periods, it remained as it was.

Signed,

on

10/16/1926.

#### **4 - Examinations of 1927**

The body was examined and found; that the color in the total body is yellowish red, the skin is mostly dry but still soft on the hands and the back; the muscles were absorbed, and the absorption is particularly evident under the skin; the skin though dried, it is exuding a sticky substance, that has the color of the solid plasma, and smell like the scent of the decaying plasma, as if this substance is decomposed, as soon as it emerges from the invisible pores.

A significant amount of hair still exists in the chest, chin, head, hands, and also in all sections which the hair grows, and the hair that was in his lifetime; this hair still held well as in a living body. The neck shows sections from the bones, cartilage and skin, as in dead bodies before the corruption. The eyes and nose are a little deformed because of the dripping of water from the roof of the tomb where he was first buried; the bones are well preserved even the nails. The joints are still moving and folding, when moved and turned. The chest and back still have the same appearance of a body after death; the belly is thinned; we see a twenty cm long scar, from the lower sternum to the left thigh, arising from a human surgery; in the stomach appear the traces of an iron like color, more salient than the body color, perhaps this is an indication that Fr. Sharbel was wearing an iron belt; the sexual organs are still visible; the knees bore the marks of callosity, indicating to his long kneeling; the soles of the feet, and the hands especially the left one, the most exposed to the sight and touch, showed scratches caused by human hands, the flesh visible beneath the skin is reddish-white; below the skull there is an opening, about four cm length and one cm wide, slashed by a knife; all the deformations on the body are caused by human hands, except for the eyes and nose, which have been deformed by the instillation of water. After Dr. George Shekrallah, opened the abdomen from left to right, and the middle of the chest, the abdomen was reopened where there still very little guts: the intestines, the stomach and the liver were extracted; as for the skin and its layers, they were flexible and preserved; they opened the skin layers, before the committee, the

layers were still intact and uncorrupted, like those of an animal slaughtered two days ago.

### **P: Till the year 1950**

#### **1 - The transfer of the body**

In 1927 the body of Fr. Sharbel was laid in the tomb by the order of the Holy See; after the four walls were coated with sand molded with lime and covered with a layer of cement; the

same layer of plaster covered the ground, then the walls and ceiling bleached with lime; that tomb was in the wall inside the convent, on the ground floor, near the south gate, formerly used as a hen-house; this basement became a new tomb for Fr. Sharbel; he remained there from 1927 until April 1950. On the epitaph, it was written only the following expression: This is the tomb of Fr. Sharbel.

## 2- Saint Veronica's Veil

The Superior General ordered, to open the door of the church and allowing women to pass through it -because it was forbidden for women to enter the church. At the same time, the visitors observed some moisture in the bottom of the wall where the coffin was placed, so they informed the superior of the monastery; this latter and the monks suspected that the rain might had been infiltrated inside the tomb and affected the body; the superior came accompanied by Immanuel Immanuel at ten o'clock p.m. and started digging, Immanuel asked the superior: What do you think, if I dig and see what's under the Saint? He replied: Do what you want.

Immanuel witnessed: the Superior Fr. Boutros Abi Younes asked me in early February 1950 to execute the order, and begin the excavation work. I began to remove the stones; initially we started this project to see if the moisture had damaged the grave and the body; I opened the tomb and went down, lantern in my hand, I found it dry from all sides; but I saw the water dripping from the coffin and turned into a puddle, and found the body and the clothes were all wet; the seepage of liquid was from the body and was stored in the coffin, which was rusted by the zinc and made a hole so the water slopped outside and infiltrated from the wall, and the people saw it; then I asked the superior to bring me the baptismal vessel from the church with some towels.

Before me laid a man! Yes, a man! A dead man! His hand was soft, so I dared to kiss it! His hands were seeping water as if he was a living man who was sweating; the more I wiped his sweat the more he oozed profusely! I cut out of his flesh a piece of twenty cm length, five cm width, then I took another piece smaller than the first, and put it in my pocket. I also pulled up two canines and a tooth. The superior came and **wiped the face and the hands of Fr. Sharbel with a white cloth; his image imprinted on it**, and then we closed the tomb.

The next day we went to Beirut and informed the Superior-General Andari about what we did; he blamed the Superior of the monastery for having taken this decision without seeking the authority approval; this latter apologized saying: he only sought to know the source of the water, because he feared it would penetrate from outside and corrupt the body; then the Superior-General informed the Commission of investigation, including the lawyer of faith Fr. Mansour Awad, about what had happened. The next day, people overflowed by thousands to Annaya to visit the tomb of St. Sharbel, we didn't know how they knew about what had happened; many miracles and healing took place through His intercession, which also reported to the press and listed in the records of the monastery. Whoever enters the monastery now, could see near the gate, a room full of crutches left behind by those who have obtained the healing through the intercession of Fr. Sharbel, a sign for their gratitude.

## 3 - Shroud of Jesus Christ

Abbot Andari explained: Then a petition was presented to the Patriarch, to appoint a committee of doctors to examine the body. The appointed doctors were: Youssef Hitti, Shikri Milane, Teophile Maron. On April twenty-two the same year 1950, the Committee, the General Orders, the prelates, Bishop Aql, the vicar of the patriarch, the attorney for the canonization process Fr. Mansour Awad. and innumerable crowds -without knowing how they were informed about the event- they all gathered, and the tomb was opened, the coffin was placed in the church and the doctors opened it before all the above-mentioned; they found the clothes, the mat, the pillows, the dalmatic all wet; they are all now preserved in the convent of Saint Maron. The doctors testified that the water didn't come from outside but from the body of Fr. Sharbel; they took a small sample from the body to examine it in the laboratory; they wrote a detailed report about everything they saw and examined; having raised the body, which was placed naked on the sheet to be tested, **the features of the body of St. Sharbel was found imprinted on the sheet, as the image of Christ was imprinted on the Shroud on the moment of Resurrection.**

#### **4 - What was found in the tomb and in the coffin?**

The body was found sweating; red blood was accumulated on the body itself, and on the priesthood clothes; the white blood was accumulated in the coffin till it covered the body and the clothes, and filled the coffin until the shoulder of the body; a part of the dalmatic got worn-out; the tube which they put inside it the two reports was rusted; the bottom of the coffin was frayed and cracked under the legs of the body so the white blood gushed forth from it on the stone which is under the feet on the west side, and on the terrace of the tomb to the west, and gathered on the western wall and from there it leaked to the outside; the black blood accrued on the skin of the body; the body is still soft from inside, the hands and the feet are still able to be folded.

#### **5 - Examination of the body and the closure of the tomb**

After the examining of the body, they dressed it with new clothes and new chasuble, and put it back into the same coffin then into the tomb; the access was locked by stones and cement, after the coffin had been sealed with red wax.

The changed-clothes were entrusted to the prosecutor of faith, with a quantity of soil that mixed with some plasma secreted from the body.

In August 1950, they reopened the tomb, and the examination took place before a clerical committee, consisted from Bishop Boulos Aql, the prosecutor of faith, Fr. Mansour Awad, Bishop Abdallah Njeim, the superior general Fr Andari, the council, and many priests and monks. Also a Committee of doctors was present consisting of; the doctors from the previous Commission, with Dr. Mershed Khater, the dean of the Faculty of Medicine in Damascus, an Armenian doctor who came especially from Egypt to examine the body, Dr. Elias Al-Khoury, who was the Minister of Health, and other doctors. Also the Mayor of Kesrwan Toufiq Haidar was present, with the representative of the former President Mansour Lahhoud, and the wife of the ex-president Mrs. Laure Khoury and many others. After the committee members had taken the oath in the chapel, they opened the tomb before the whole assembly and took out the coffin. Then the doctors entered the grave, before them Dr. Mourshed Khater; they examined the walls, which proved to be dry and there was no way that water could enter to the tomb through them;

but they found burgundy-color secretion under the coffin toward the feet; they opened the coffin and saw the chasuble, the mat and the pillows, all wet with the fluid which was oozing from his body; in the hood you could see mold; the body was still intact in the same condition. Dr. Theophile Maron cut off from his chest a little piece and put it in a glass vial; the members of the Committee and all those assembled saw the plasma oozing from the sides of the cut. Then they changed his clothes and the chasuble, the mat and pillows. They sealed the coffin, put it back into the grave, and closed it as before. A detailed report describing the entire examination was written, and signed by the doctors and the clerical committee, a copy was placed in the coffin, and another delivered to the lawyer of the canonization process. When the coffin was opened on twenty-three April 1950, they found the metal container which they put the report inside it at the time of burial in 1927, was riddled; while the report itself was still intact, except for the edges that were stained with maroon-color due to the sweating.

## **6 - Exposition of the Body and visits**

When the body was transferred for the last time, they gave permission to expose it, by the order of ecclesiastical decree. The following people came to visit the body: the Syriac Catholic Patriarch, Cardinal Tabbouni and Cardinal Aghajanian and a large group of their clergy; with many bishops, as Bishops Njeim and Aql and other Maronite bishops. Patriarch Antoun Arida celebrated the Mass in the hermitage of Saints Peter and Paul in their feast day.

People flocked to visit his tomb; from all levels of society, young and old, illiterate and educated, Christians and non-Christians from Lebanon and the Arab countries, from Europe, United States and from all the world. Most of these visitors were suffering from various illnesses, disabilities and problems, which need the help and the divine assistance. Among the visitors the President Beshara Al-Khoury, ministers, deputies, statesmen; the groups continue to flock to his tomb, in particular, on Sundays and holidays, driven by their belief in the sanctity of Fr. Sharbel, and the efficacy of his intercession.

## **Q: Sharbel's Image**

### **1 - A monk with a transparent body!**

Bro. Elias Nohra witnessed: On Monday, May 8, 1950, the day of the feast of St. John the Evangelist, patron of our Missionaries Congregation, I headed, under the order of the Principal of the Apostles' School in Jounieh, Fr. Youssef Merhi, ( later bishop) to visit the monastery of Saint Maron Annaya with Fr. Boutros Shalhoub, Fr. Sassine Zaidan, professed brothers, novices, scholastic and servants, we were about forty people in the school bus. Arriving at noon, we visited the church, the tomb of Saint Sharbel and the convent, the crowd was immense, the number of patients afflicted with disabilities was great; the prayers in the church were continuous, and the public in the midst were participating in prayers with faith and fervor; we celebrated the ceremony of Saint Maron, then the Blessed Sacrament.



After that a part of our team ascended to the hermitage of Saints Peter and Paul, where I really wanted to take a picture with some brothers who were with me; the novice Youssef Antoun from Ebrine; on his right the student Hanna Ghosn from Dar-Baashtar; behind him a tree adjacent to the hermitage; to his right a young man who was visiting the shrine called Youssef Tannous from Hawqa; on his right Bro. Boulos Yazbek from Kartaba; seated before him Fr. Elias Abi Ramia from Ehmej, the head of the hermitage. The photo was taken with a camera "Kodak Broni". On May 9, we developed the film; and behold, before the young man from Hawka, was the image of a venerable monk; where we saw his face, his white beard, his hood on his head and his right hand fingers blackened like a mummy. His body was transparent, dressed in a black habit like all Lebanese monastic monks; behind him appeared through his body, the stones and the herbs on the ground, as if the monk was from transparent glass; the figure of the monk appeared clearly, while kneeling, and it seemed closer to the camera from the other two young men standing behind him; his hood too was transparent.

## **2 - I want to take a picture with you!**

Youssef Tannous witnessed: I visited the hermitage of Sharbel on May 8, 1950. Some visitors from the Monastic of Kreim, came to me saying, would you like to take a picture with us? I replied, that's OK, and I stood up arms crossed. Then suddenly a monk appeared before me, saying: "**I want to take a picture with you and sit in front of you.**" Bro. Nohra Elias shot, suddenly the monk disappeared. After the development of the film, the monk who I only had seen, reappeared in the picture, those who knew him said that he was Saint Sharbel.

## **3-This is the picture of Fr. Sharbel!**

The attorney in the canonization process Fr. Mansour Awad, in cooperation with the Presidency of the Lebanese Order, in particularly the Abbot John Andari, showed this picture to the following: Alishaa Nakad who is the son of Wardeh, daughter of Hanna the brother of Fr. Sharbel; Bro. Gerges Nehemeh Lehfed; Fr. Elias Meshmesh; Fr. Youssef Ehmej; Fr Boutros Khalifa Maifouq; Fr Boulos Younan Meshmesh; Fr. Antonios Nehmeh; Fr. Youssef Saad Khoury from Meshmesh. They all knew Fr. Sharbel in his lifetime and testified under oath, that

this is the image of the Fr. Sharbel, represented him suffering at the time of his agony; also his hand resembles to the one on the corpse of Fr. Sharbel. Mrs. Nouhad Shamy said: This is the photo of Fr. Sharbel.

#### **4-The Superior General Ighnacios Al-Tannoury**

"The way of holiness" magazine wrote: We have enlarged the picture of Fr. Sharbel and collected about thirty pictures of the old fathers of the Order and then we went to Al-Tannoura asking him to recognize each of the fathers represented in the pictures; as a trick to know if he could recognize the image of Fr. Sharbel. Gradually, he gave us the name of the fathers on the photos; when he arrived to the photo of Fr. Sharbel, he took it stared at it, looked at it closely, no longer till the tears flowed from his eyes, then he kissed it, bathed it with his tears; we knew well that it was the miraculous image of Fr. Sharbel that appeared in the shooting of the photographer. We asked him: "Father, is this picture to one of your relatives or your loved ones, that it has touched you so deeply." He replied, sobbing like a child: "No, this is the picture of Fr. Sharbel, from where did you bring it? He never took a picture in his lifetime!

#### **5 - The distinguishable mark!**

Abbot Andari explains: This image has a distinguishable mark, well-known to all who were witnesses on April 22, 1950 upon the disclosure of the body of Sharbel in the monastery of Saint Maron Annaya; this mark is, the fingers on the right hand of the corpse that is unharmed; it appeared in the image as it is currently in his coffin; as if it was taken directly from it.

### **R: I will overflow of my Spiri (Ac 2,17)**

#### **1- the curing of a handycaped and a paralysed**

Al-Indari testify: when the tomb was opened in april 22 -1950, I met while we was in the walkway, a young crippled man named Emile Boutros,who walks on two crutches because of a bad knee. So I told him to call for the intercession of Saint Charbel for curing.

Then when we was in the Church to examine the body of saint Sharbel we heard in the outside applauding with lots of noise. In checking the matter, we learned that the young crippled man was healed of his illness.

And I also knew that a man from Bmaryem, (not to claime his name), whom he works for the phone company, passed by saint Maroon Ennaya`s Monastery, the day of the examination of the body.

And since he could`nt enter the tomb, he wiped his hat at the wall, for blessings, and went back to his town Bmaryem.

He had a paralysed niece, means she cannot walk, now her parents knew that he was at Ennaya saint Maroon`s monastery. So they asked him if he brought with him, any blessing (item). He told them the

story, he could`nt enter the tomb and that he wiped his hat at the wall. Then he gave them the hat, they wiped the girl with that hat and she got healed and stood up and walked.

## **2-Their hearts was broken ( Acts 2/37 )**

And the crowds was moving in to pay a visit to the tomb, from all ranks, and of all religions, scholars and simples, governors and average people. Aiming for curing of sicknesses, illnesses, and hopeless cases.

Now the greatest miracle of all, was that : a lots of people whom was away from receiving holy Sacraments for decades especially the Sacrement of repentance (Confession).

Now visiting the tomb, they were driven by a great sense of piety and the feelings of repentance, and went to confess with tears.

## **3-Curing a blood streamer (Mark 5/25-42)**

Curing father Lattouf Al-Indari sister in law from a blood stream she had it for two years when she was about to die. Then she was cured with the intercession of father Sharbel.

## **4- The curing of joints illeness**

Niehmatt Yousef Ibrahim, one of saint Maroon Monastery`s partners.

In 1941 When he was five years old, he caught a disease, the illness of his joints. His parents took him to the physicians, and they said, the healing of this disease takes a long time.

So his mother rushes to saint Sharbel`s intercession, and asked for relics of his tomb. So I gave her a piece of clothe of his trace, and some water with which some of saint Sharbel`s clothe was dipped in. So she took that blessed piece of clothe dippeded it in that blessed water, and rubed her son`s joints, right at that moment the boy start moving and the next day was healed.

## **5- After Lord Jesus (Matt 20/29)**

Father fallom the Jesuite, wrote: I myself went to mount Jbeil. The seen was wonderfull, tens of buses, hundreds of cars, carrying the crowds. This what drive me to think about the crowds which was bursting two thousand years ago, after Lord Jesus... It is a seen that leaves in the mind, a deep impression of faith! Thus I beleive There are miracles there, that leads to faith which exceed the healing miracles.

## **6- Red flames of fire like tongues (Acts 2/3)**

The healing matters went beyond boundaries of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, even to Europe and America.

Sharbel became the common news for the whole world. The number of daily visitors to the tomb are no less than five thousands, when at sundays and feast days the number grow up to fifteen thousands, and at Pentecost day the number crossed forty thousand!

About five thousand people of whom was standing at the right side of the tomb in the open field, the day of the pentecost, assured seeing in the midst of the day, father Sharbel's tomb, illumined with a heavenly light, clear and so bright, soon as it diminished turn to redish fiery tongues. Like that one, which came down from heaven the day of Pentecost on the Appostles at zion's upper room .

Joy and fear shadowed over the presence and every one was crying that feelings. And they glorified God in Sharbel.

The following day (to Pentecost) and right before all these crowds who was gathered from all around the world, and at their views, many of who carried petitions for healings of their hopeless cases to father Sharbel's tomb, was healed miraculously just at once.

### **7- One miracle in two!**

This miracle happened with Fouad, the brother of the recluse father Youhanna Al-Khawand. After he was in coma for over two years. Now happened doubled miracle: The first is the healing of Fouad who's name became Sharbel. The second is the printing of Sharbel's picture in the heart of the recluse father, which made of him a modest monk, in all the stages of his life, and he followed Sharbel's footsteps, and became a recluse in saint Antonios's cell at Tamish, in 1/17/1989.

#### **A poeme was written by father Khawand discribing what happend; here is what it mean:**

Father Youhanna khawand was eleven years old when he joined Monasticsm.

In Ghosta as a beginner and in his third year, when saint Sharbel was enlightened with heavenly light over his tomb, plus the miracles, that have been performed thru him.

His brother was yet in coma for two straight years. Physicians gave up on him.

Hopeless, remain skin and bones, lying asleep.

It came to pass, that one of Their relatives, Yousef Shekrey, a very faithfull person. Visited saint Sharbel, kneeled and prayed at the tomb, then collect a piece of cotton watered from the saint's body. He wiped Fouad's forehead with that cotton, and prayed fervently to the precious Lord.

Fouad was then in the Monastery of the Cross getting full service, as a sick patient.

At night Fouad wakes up, cried loud: <mom! where am I? What is the matter with me!?!>.

After seen his brother, father Khawand went back to his monastery, and thus saint Sharbel changed his life from an evil person to a modest one, and spent lifetime as a monastic and now as an anchorite.

## **8- The blinds sees, the lames walks and the sick are getting heald. (Lu 7/22)**

El Aamal news letter, wrote in 6/1/1950: We are satisfied to recite details of three miracles happened Thursday at the view of all the people, who reach the Monastery at all hour of the day, among them diplomatics, high ranks, clergy men, individuals and families.

### **-Miss Mary Maalouf**

She is from Zahleh living in Al-Rmaileh Beirut. She had shortness in one leg, about eight centimeters.

She headed to saint Maroon`s monastery that Thursday. Then she went visiting saint Sharbel`s tomb, as costumed, the second she enter, her leg became just normal, and she never felt any shortness after that. Then she went back home, which became a station for the visitors.

### **-Saeedeh Asaad Farhat**

She is from Al-Jermok, El-Nabatiyeh, and she was seventeen years old. Born mal-formed and hunchbacked, She could`ve never staight herself up.

That Thursday she visited saint Sharbel, and bowed down before the tomb, and start praying, and saying: < I Wo`nt leave before I got healed . then instantly stood up straight, and start walking thru the crowds, like she have never been ill.

### **-Mohammad walks**

He had his feet paralyzed. And could`nt walk without crutches, and with lots of care. That Thursday also visited saint Sharbel. The moment he touches the tomb, the two crutches was seen falling on the ground, and the man stood up on his feet and walked fast without any help, in the midst of these mobes, where every one was astonished. He headed straight to the Monastery and asked the abbot to accept him in, as a monk among the monks. But the abbot appologises and asked him to go back to his family and kin.

## **9-Prince kaysar Abi El-Lamaah**

I had stomach ulcer. And I always vomited what I eat, this happen jointly with blood dripping. And I use to spend many months every year in a critical conditions. I was treated by many physicians, and I got no result. Then I payed a visit, to saint Sharbel and came back. And since then it has been two years already, vomiting has gone, and also no blood dripping any more, nor acid burning my stomach, when in the past it was constant and strong, burning my throat up.

## **10- Inserting in, Sharbel`s Tomb in the (Tourist Manual)**

Lisan El Hal news letter, wrote in June 1950: July and august, convoys of tourists arriving Lebanon, coming from America, and all parts of Europe and Asia.

Touristic companies chifes representatives of Lebanon, informed our agent: < Some amendments has been inserted lately to their vocational tour program to the Lebanese land, (Added to the list of historic events, sharbel`s tomb at saint Maroon Ennaya).

And his news are spreaded around the globe >.

Major general of the national security brigade, gave his order to invent a small police station, neighboring the monastery, and another one in Al-Mnaytrah on the monastery`s way, to controll the traffic that crowd out on the streets days and nights heading to the monastery.

## **Sharbel the Blessed**

Sharbel was proclaimed Blessed december-5-1965.

At the closing of the second ecumenical council (Vatican II). In the presence of thirty five hundred catholic bishops, from the entire church around the world. After studying these following four miracles by the church, and after achieving a legitimate investigation with over twelve witnesses for each miracle. The church took in consideration two of them.

We took the initial to put in details, the storys of these four miracles, knowing of how intrested some people are, to know details of the cause and the developping of illness. And the details of the healing, and it`s spiritual result. And also to make it known, how precise and definite the church are to determine a miracle.

### **1-The healing of Akl Wakim**

#### **-He fell down from the bycicle**

Akl Wakim was a student of Al Hickmeh school. And it come to pass that one of his teacher`s father died, in the town of Bekfaya, in April-11-1940. So he went there with four of his comrades, for condolences. He was at the age of fourteen. Coming back on bycicle, in a place called Jouret Al Zaitoun, the way back from Bekfaya, where rolling down the hill becoming very severe. He fell down of the side of the road at a height of 8 meters. He broke his hip, and a stone pierced his side.

His friends, with the help of a municipal police from Intelyas, took him home, in Al-Quarantina-Beirut, in a complete loss of conciense.

### **-A Simple matter!**

When his parents saw him in this state, they were very troubled, and rushes him to doctor Boulos Toutenjoy. So he found his hip got loosend and his leg was turned out backwards. He also got deep wounds on his side, his chest and his face.

The doctor tried in vain to bring back the hip to its place, for half an hour. Then gave up, and said, to take him to some specialist. They aimed to doctor Rizk, and did not fined him. Finally headed to the American University Hospital. It was 11-PM. So they treated the wounds with bands, and said to wait for tomorrow till the physician comes.

The next day, doctor Samy Haddad came and checked him. Then X-Rayed him, after that, gave him a surgery. And told his kin, his situation is a simple matter, he`s done. His hip was mooved of, and I brought it back into its place. He remained in the hospital for six days.

Then came back home. And stayed lying in bed on his back for three weeks. Then when he tried to walk, he found his leg jamed, both the hip and the knee.

### **-His leg don`t heal !**

Then his parents took him to what is called, Arabic-Physician, (Someone who practice ancient medicine, used back in the old days, especially for bone fractures. Sometimes are efficient) name Elyas Arbeed in Al-Msaytbeh. He treated him with a hot water bath, plus some variable steam warming, he massaged the injured leg with some creams. Now the boy start bending his knee, but not his hip. Next Mansour Saab from Al-Rmayleh also an Arabic-Physician treated him the same way, and did not succeed.

Two months later, went back to doctor Haddad in the American University, and after an X-Ray, he proclaimed, his leg won`t heal even with an open surgery! And they asked him the cause? He answered: there are some blood that dried out in the the hole where the hip bone sit!. So they said how did you say last time he was healed?! In answering back said: I am responsible for my patient as long as he is in the hospital, after leaving I`m not.

### **-Shy to walk around with young ladys**

Akl went back to school to finish his scholastic year, and he stayed six months the way he is.

One day he jumped from a locomotive. And not dare to tell his father, that he hurted himself, fearing him been severe in straighting his son.

His leg got worse. And as he is growing one leg is growing, and not the other, and his walk got more defected.

Now again they consult an Arminian (Arabic-Physician), from Bourj Hammoud. So he hung at the boy`s leg a bag of sand weight 15-kilograms. But also no benefit, with that treatment.

Now his hip look bumpy. And the shortness of his leg forced him to wear a boot of 7-centimeters higher than the other. Even so, he was walking too much bended. And don't want to walk around, with young ladies, because he shy.

### **-Carrying a gun!**

A bump showing of his hip, which makes every one that sees him think, he is carrying a gun, or a meal maybe on his side. And it happens that if he wants to sit or kneel down, he has to bend the natural leg to the back and the crippled one to the front, for the hip bone was jammed, and if he ever walked for five minutes, he feels great pain and needed to rest.

Then people were counseling his father, to take him to that great Surgeon, Rovito for a surgery. But he refused fearing that he may get worse.

### **-He became a heavy burden on his parents shoulders**

Finally they left him as he is.

And he became like a dependent parasite. No one is able to give him a job. His application to join the department of public works for the state was rejected. Nor accepted at the railroad company, where his brother got a job.

The only chance left, was to open a grocery store, in order to make a living.

He had to ride the bike, only in the way down, using his right leg only, and couldn't ride it back in the way up. And also couldn't bend to the floor, nor bow down, if needed, but by bending his back, and his right leg, and stretch the left one to the back. He stayed like that ten years.

Doctor Hanna Al-Ryashi's wife, (Akl's doctor), always told her sons, whenever they vexed her asking for bikes, in answering: look what had happened to Akl from biking...

### **-Toward Sharbel**

Akl heard about saint Sharbel's miracles. So he decided to visit him one Sunday.

But when his brother heard about the healing of Mary Jamil Maalouf, and the fact that she was born crippled. He aimed to her house to verify that.

And when he saw that. He went back flying to his brother's store like crazy and told him: <Shut the store, shut the store now!, his language showed he was thrilled and amazed! Akl asked him why you want me to shut down now?! Repeated: Shut the store now, we want to pay a visit to saint Sharbel, Mary Jamil was healed! Akl felt great fever of faith, and now he got motivated for the visit. And shut down the store.

Here some people laughed, and said what possibly he's going to do, or gain, ten years already passed, and yet he is crippled!.

### **-One Cabinet Minister is complaining**

Emile Lahoud minister of finance portfolio, rushed to the palace of the president of the republic, Bsharah El-Khoury.

Mad! with loud voice said:

-The noise that flares out, about that monk (Sharbel) is comic. And what is uglier, that the press got infected by.

It is our duty to put an end for these wiles!

The first lady interfered saying:

-We need to see plainly, what is going on there, this is the only possible way for us to know the truth.

The minister continued:

-It don't smell good stuff. Must be some wile there.

How shame, this is happening in Lebanon! Lebanon the civilisation, the advancement... And now we hear talking about some denounced flagrant conjuration!.

The president answer with intimacy:

-Emile you are the favored one to clarify this case. Go up to Ennaya, and see what's going on. And when you come back we'll take the eligible action.

-People are crazy! furthered the minister, < Today one of my neighbors named Akl Wakim, who have been ill for over ten years. Now they took him to Ennaya. And the whole neighborhood have nothing else to talk about but him. Ar`nt these but just feeble minds>!?

With a hint the president cuted of his minister saying:

-We are relying on you to go and bring us the good news. Verify by yourself. Comeback and tell us. We are waiting for you.

The minister car rolled thru the roadway curbs to Ennaya. By Toarzayya, Ehmej, Mesmesh, Ennaya (villages in the mountains the roadway to the monastery) he saw the crowds fullfilling the highways, the streets, the roads, even the very narrow roads, are all jamed because of this heavy traffic, flowing like rivers in the way to the sea. It was almost impossible to drive thru.

The minister resented from this slowness, and the fact that many people knew him and were surprised!

The abbot received the minister and was surprised too! from such a sudden visit by a fame politician.

### **-Stood up and walked**

Akl and his brother Tanios, his mother and his two oncles, took a car straight to Ennaya.

Akl took a vow that if he got heald, he will fast for a week, eating bread and drinking water only. And he was praying all the way long, in his heart, the (Our Father, and Hail Mary), without looking around him, nor to the left or to the right.

When they arrived, Akl entered straight to the tomb, even with a big difficulty, making it thru the mobes. And throw himself on the ground under a table used for lighting candles. He was praying with the audience, the petitions for our Lady Mother of God. His mother was wiping the tomb with her hand and rubing his side, then catching some soil from the grave and putting it in his mouth.

They were almost half way yet reciting the petitions for the Theothokos.

Then he felt suddenly, like an electric circuit running thru his hand, passing from the palm to the elbow. Now at the elbow the circuit got stronger, he got scared and shiverd! He mooved shuddering! Then found his crippled leg kneeling normaly next to the natural one! He was astonished! He implore much stronger repeating in his heart, I hope this will be the miracle. And kept praying back with the crowds. And yet he wasn't sure of the occurence of a complete healing.

When the petitions ends up. He stood up and walked. He was feeling he progressed. But he did not dare to declare that, fearing a scandle!.

### **-An Orthodox witness**

Doctor Antoine Al-Shamy, was the physician for the monks hospital in Jbeil. And sheikh Rajy Zakariyah, an orthodox man, inspector of the directory of tobbaço in Jbeil. And they Were discussing father Sharbel's phenomenon. The doctor proposed the visit of the sepulcher. It was about 3-PM, arriving, right before the tomb, they found Akl Lying down under the candle table, and the candles melting down and dripping on his clothes. So they asked him, what`s with him? He answerd: I'm in pain I am sick. So they shared a prayer together for a moment, then they left and aimed to the hall to rest, along with the minister Emile Lahoud.

Then sheikh Zakariyah said to doctor Shamy: Apparently nothing is happening today! No miracles?!

### **-The bells ringed**

When Akl walked out of the tomb's hall with his mother, he said to her: It seems now I'm meandering on the right leg instead! Perhaps I'm healed! And he went walking fine, bending, kneeling and standing. His uncle started applauding from joy saying: nephew you're healed! Right there he took off the high boot of his left foot, and started walking well.

Seeing that, the people were so amazed and zealous. Shouting and applauding in the outside, and the bells rang.

### **-I am a believer in God**

When minister Emile Lahoud heard the bells ringing, he thought the people were welcoming him. Grouchy he became, and said to the abbot: please! I'm not here in a legitimate visit, so calm down these manifestations outside, and stop the bells ringing. The abbot answered with a significant smile he couldn't hide it, saying: it is true you surprised us with your visit. But this is not on your account, your excellency, we were not informed of your visit!. Perhaps these good people have seen some miracle and started applauding.

The minister screamed terrified! Miracles! And pulled himself out through the crowds, along with doctor Antoine El-Shamy and the orthodox witness sheikh Rajy Zakariyah which was squeezing from every side. Now while passing the courtyard, he saw a young man hastening towards him, vigorous, delighted, rejoicing, surrounded with part of his kin, and friends, applauding and cheering.

He knew him: this is Akl Wakim shouting to him: you! Are here! Your excellency? So the minister answered him with a question: you are Akl? or I am wrong? Akl answered: yes That is me, myself, as you see... I by the intercession of saint Sharbel am healed!

The minister put a hand on his forehead, puzzled, trembling, mumbling as if he in a dream, and said: something bizarre like a dream! Then looked back to the abbot who was following him and said: father I don't know what is happening to me. I know this man he had permanent disability for some ten years.

The power of God had healed him. And healed me of disbelief!

I believe in God. In saint Sharbel. In the Catholic church. In heaven...

### **-He gained repentance**

At night Akl came back home, and he was walking with fortitude.

And now for straight fifteen days people filled the house congratulating him for this marvelous event.

No more meandering, no more pain. But the growth of the muscles of the left leg was happening gradually.

Akl's behavior was not favorable, and a bit rebellious. He also complained and murmured little bit to much from having no job.

He wasn't visiting the church repeatedly. He had no warmth towards religious dutys.

After his healing, he changed and became a peacefull person, and start practicing religion. Repentance took place in his life. He was not letting go any spiritual act or obligation.

Also whenever he got the chance and receive enough money for cab, he go visit saint Sharbel, to pray and work for free, in order to ratify and show gratitude, to the doing of saint Sharbel with him. So he do carry on his side which was the bad one, heavy bags of sand and stones, vigorously.

### **-The healing of an atheist**

Edmond El-Khoury from Sid El-Baoushriyeh testified:

My brother Edward's right hand was paralyzed. And did not receive healing, even after his visit to saint Sharbel.

But Akl Wakim's event, had touched me deep.

When I always thought that, there is no power superior to men's. But after that marvel, I start believing in a godly power, above men. And I happen to start longing and get ready, for worship and for religious dutys.

My ideologys use to be, that: It is enough for man to achieve social courtesy towards one another. Without trying myself thinking about religious facts or engagement in its dutys.

But now my inner part has changed towards this concern. And if untill today I'm still behind, I know this is because of the way I was raised. Things that are rooted in, takes time to be changed.

July-25-1950 I was shot mistakebly in my stomach. A bullet ripted of my intestins in seven spots. I was taken to the hospital under a critical conditions, and received a very delicate surgery.

The best part of my healing was this: the minute I got shot I took for refuge saint Sharbel, and I said to him, Oh saint Sharbel save me! Like you saved others! And in deed I was saved. And thanking God, I got out of the hospital within fifteen days.

### **-A Dancing Walk**

Minister Emile Lahoud testified;

I saw a man old in his days, entering the monastery, he could've barely walk, with big difficulty! Then after a little while, I saw him climbing the stairs that take you to the church, down in the

bottom floor. He was making it without anyone`s help, without a cane to lean on. Then the hall of the monastery, he took it in a dancing walk!.

Mymy karam from Baskinta, worked in tailoring. She had the muscle of her leg paralyzed. She walked hunched, and caught her knee with two hands to lift it up during walking.

But after her visit to saint Sharbel, she started walking just naturally.

The minister added:

After these Supernatural events: My faith got rooted, and my cult became fixed.

The unsure and hesitators, came back to the faith.

The faithful increased in faith, and their reasons facing atheists got stronger.

The atheists who stick to their atheism, got just shocked.

## **2-Boulos Akiki**

### **-uncured blood pressure**

In 1943 he started having blood pressure. And after his brother Farres died, his sickness got worst. And caused him a-----تكلس في شرايين----- of the heart. Bsharah Dehhan physician, treated him. And gave him the prescription of the designated medicines used in such incidents, which consisted of iodized materials. And a special diet program prohibiting: meat, pasta, fish, eggs, gravy, alcohol, caffeine, and definitely no smoking. And he allowed him eating, vegetables, especially if boiled, and a little bit of meat without any grease, once a week. And also told him repeatedly: be watchful on your diet, you are still a young man.

Boulos followed the treatment. And fasted ten days, with a little bit of water. And that was of no effect.

His blood pressure was going between 22 to 24 the high, and 11 to 12 the low. And he happened to have short breathing, inflammation of the liver, trembling in the nervous system, migraine, weak vision. He was continuously in pain. He got troubled eating! Cannot walk more than five hundred yards, without taking a rest. He also had chest pain, and the pain went onto the left hand all the way to the fingers. On top of all; During the crisis his heart beat ceased. Physicians used to treat that with special needles, that stay hung under the skin.

He was living terrified.

His doctor defended him living in mountains. (Which, three quarters of Lebanon are mountains).

Now in the summer of 1946 he was in Hrajel (an elevated mountain), to spend a small vacation at his brother`s house. It was night when a crisis hit him. This one physician came and checked his blood pressure, it was high 23! Then he lost conscience. His family now picked him up and took him home, down to the city. After the crisis he took four days to recover, he was tired and got treated with all these medicines.

Linda his sister in law, Farres`s widow, use to give him service with his old mother and the handmaid, Leila Khalil.

The members of the house was always attentive not to disturb him. But in the contrary they did work so they don`t tire him.

He, once a while use to go check on his trading market store in Beirut. And also his gardens in Wata Nahr El-Kalb. He was the one, taking care of all this work, before illness had putted him to retirement.

Coming back home, he go straight to his bed and stay.

He was always scared of death, as if he was about to die, at any minute. And because of despairing, he decided one day to write all his heritage down for the benefit of his nephews, whom he raised, the sons of his deceased brother Farres.

Then one day he stoped taking his medicines, and treatments, believing in it`s vanity. It was one week before a visit to saint Sharbel.

### **-Light is shining from the tomb**

He aimed to Mar Maroon monastery, from all his heart with christian faithfulness. Along with his cousin, his uncle Semaan, Amin El-Faloughy`s wife, Linda his sister in law, and her two daughters, Antoinette, and Georgette. Each one was aiming having his owne mind, and petitions.

Arrived to the monastery, and visited Sharbel`s tomb.

Boulos, in piety the tears dropped of his eyes. And everybody have seen light shining of the tomb. And he was rubing with his hand, the marble stone that is on the tomb. He have seen two miracles happening while there, this had touched him, and strenthened his faith. He shared a procession with a group of people praying, crying, and imploring.

Then he felt an ease and inner joy. And also felt he was healed.

Then Boulos ate of what they got with them, some sardine, and eggs...

When they return home. He ate with his kin and slept comfortable.

And since then he start smoking -----نرجيلة.

Linda brought with her a little branch of an Oak tree from the yard of the monastery, as a blessed relic. She soaked it in water, and it oozed out a burgandy color like wine. He drank some of it. His body shivered a little bit. Then he felt getting relieved from the pain he had for all these years. The next day, he got diarrhea. And as a fat man, he checked his weight, he found that he lost two kilograms!. Diarrhea stopped after the fourth day, when he kept drinking of that water for eight days. Then kept losing weight, one kilogram a day. He felt comfortable, and started climbing the stairs without fatigue.

After that he bounded for doctor Dehhan, laughing and on his face the signs of happiness and joy. He extended his hand, so confident of himself that there is no more blood pressure, and told him, take my pressure. So the doctor did and it was natural: 14 on 8 ! he repeated the checking twice, then looked astonished at Boulos: what have you done Boulos?! Who else treated you then me?! I know your illness is uncured!

So he told him what had Sharbel did to him.

He was amazed and told him Boulos: What is for God, and father Sharbel, and his saints, is not for doctors, he is omnipotent!.

Even so he did not believe this result is gonna last long!. For that he asked Boulos to pass by once a week for a test to verify, was this going to last or not. Also he asked him not to keep any diet, but to eat freely drink and smoke.

So Boulos did, and he was passing by the doctor once a week, and the result have not changed.

He also started going to the mountain more often without any problem.

Many were touched with such a story, and visited him congratulating.

#### -The Oak water

Linda, Farres Akiki`s widowed testified: I had a nine years old daughter, whom was permanently ill. This was caused by a high fever. She was checked by many physicians, and got no result.

After the visit for saint Sharbel, I started giving her water of that oak branch.

This one night, the church was all adorned. So my daughter asked her uncle to go visit and see the ornament, he objected, telling her how ill she is. And she said: no uncle, the saint appeared to me and told me, < you are going to sleep tonight, and tomorrow you will wake up with a regular body temperature of 37 (cellcuse)>.

This what happened. And she got healed, thanks to God.

#### -The healing of the spirit

The healing of Boulos, had its influence on the region. Big part of people came back to the faith more then before.

Boulos had not enough warmth, in persevering religious dutys. But after the healing took place in his life, his fever augmented thousand percent. And he started persevering to approach holy sacrements, Masses, confessions, and also attending church conventions or assemblys. People who was away from the church, came back with warmth. They start coming frequently to the church. Among them, someone named philip Asaad, who was also away from the church. Now he is first among active and zealous members. And he says,< I was one who does not like church. But today, I like attending daily masses, and I also like to take costumers every day to saint Sharbel (he was a cab driver) to take advantage from the visit>.

Anyone of Boulos neighborhood or connections got sick, Boulos ask his sister in law, to give him water of that oak tree branch for healing. Some muslims people ask him relics of saint Sharbel. (Boulos lived in an islamic neighborhood). And he gave them.

### **3-Sister Mary Abel Kamary**

#### **-complete health**

Sister Mary was since her youth, living the common life of a christian villager girl. At home and in school.

She later on joined the monastery, and became a legal nun. She was striving for sanctity. With a very good manner, and a good example to others, she was very pious, zealous, of a good spirit, nice behavior, and a clear mind. Very diligent in doing some work, she had sobriety, and wisdom in her precisions, enlightened, sharp mind, just judgment, strong will. And she is someone who measure things with her mind, not with her emotions.

She became a teacher, in the elementary school, which belong to the Jesuits.

She also had a very good health conditions, and a strong body.

#### **-chronic sickness**

New year`s day 1936, sister Mary got inflicted by vomiting, that stayed with her for a while.

The mother-superior checked on her, and brought her, doctor John Shamy. And after checking her, and see how healthy she was, with a strong body, he said: this is nothing but a nervous situation of the system, coming from her sharp mood. He informed to treat her with a standard medication like some carbon.

But vomiting kept going, and increases day after day. And her body was lessening. Even though, she kept persuing her duty in school, regurarly till the end of the scholastic year.

The day of the exams, she was attacked by a dizziness, and she couldn't continue doing her job.

She was sent to rest. The next day, she was trying to get up. Here she start sweating, and passed out.

She was so skinny at that time, and already lost thirty kilograms.

She went to doctor Yousef Hetteh. And when he saw her that skinny, down to the bones. He gave his guidance, to be well fed, and rest, and change climat, and said: we cannot give her any treatment nor pass any surgery, with such conditions.(that she is very skinny).

She was sent to Ain Zheltah, (village in the south), but it wasn't fittable for her. She got caught by diarrhea, and start vomiting untill she got exhausted. From there she was sent to Hemmana, (village in the mountain), where an egyptian physician consulted her Joseph Marajel, a specialist for stomachache. He happen to be there for summer vacation. He gave her a treatment for eight days, with a special diet program. Vomiting had diminished, considering the small amount of food, and its light quality. Then the doctor, ordered an X-Ray. And the result was an enormous ulcer in the intestin. The doctor gave her as treatment some injection. But no result.

After that she was sent to doctor Baaqlyni. And when this one consulted her, he start blaming and cursing the pysicians who treated her untill now.

And she was deliverd to the Sacred Heart, the french hospital, in Beirut. So they execute for her a treatment of series of injections, serum and a stomach wash, by a hose.

Vomiting kept increasing, and blood is showing in the stools.

She was X-Rayed again. Doctor Baaqlyni then decided a surgery.

So the surgery was done, in the presence of doctor, Ibrahim Abou Haidar, and a list of other adjoining doctors. The surgery took two and half an hour. They found the gallbladder the kidney and the intestin are connected together.

She stayed in the hospital for over thirty days. And the cut was left open for excretion of pus, thru a tube that was connected to her belly. Later on when the the cut was stiched out. She start vomiting again more then before. And some yellow to greenish liquid was seen when she throw up. They assumed (doctors), this is a result of a nervous act.

They tried to keep away from her the recipient where she do vomit in. And she tryed to press on herself not to throw up. But in vain.

Then she received another surgery, and that was for four and a half hour. Doctors found this time, that the gallbladder, kidney and intestin sticked again together, and not only that, but the liver and all the inetins are now sticking with together.

Doctor Baaqlyni couldn't finish the surgery, because her heart was running with hundred and seventy beat per minute.

He lost hope of achieving all the separations of all the organs. So he gave up, then left her alone, to God's mercy.

Her condition became critical. Therefore she received the sacrament of Anointing for death. And she stayed under risk for a while.

She abstained from eating. And she was nourishing from the serum only. Later on she started eating again, and again she's back throwing up, this time lesser than before. Doctor Baaqlyni foretold that this is only a momentary recovering attributed to the inner cleaning he achieved in the surgery.

She left the hospital in mid october, aiming to Bekfaya, where she stayed three months. And vomiting start increasing again.

About 1938 she was sent to doctor Kalimat, in Hotel Dieu hospital. He indicated to extract the gallbladder. She refused after taking the permission of her superior, seeing what she went thru for no result.

Then she was sent to the monastery of the beginners for rest. Right there she spent many years, between life and death.

She wasn't given big job to do, but teaching catechism, and giving some personal lessons.

In the beginning she was walking back and forth in the monastery, without no one's help. But because of too much vomiting, she got very weak, and she couldn't walk without a crutch, and a nun to lean on.

In mid 1941, she had a stroke, she turned dumb, her right hand was paralyzed, and she had severe pain in her spine, up to the back of her head, to where she couldn't sit anymore.

She had more than one stroke, which put her just near death. And father Yousef, the youth preacher gave her again the death anointing. After seven days, she got just a bit better, but her hand stayed inoperative, and the pain in her back stayed still.

Doctor Abi Haidar, and doctor Michel Farhat, from Hammana, agreed, that the cause of this Crisis, was weakening and dryness in the bones and in the veins, coming from bad nourishment.

Her hand stayed inoperative for seven years. And one day got healed because of anointing her with some soil. The mother superior had brought it from Rome. That healing took place the following day of the anointing.

Then she stayed like this, until 1950. Crisis flares much often, and vomiting accompanied her. Then her teeth got ruined. And worst she became.

Doctor Hikmat Jabbour was consulting her, and kept saying her sickness is incurable. Her stomach is not able to hold even light food, nor any liquid. Father Yousef the Jesuit, the youth preacher said, he does not understand how possible, sister Mary Abel still alive, since she vomit any thing she eat. And every time he sees one of her nun`s sister, he asked if sister Mary was still alive?!

She remained in bed, ajoining with the recipient for vomiting. Then she could`ve no more get up from the bed. And every body was expecting her death, at any moment.

**In her sickness she showed extraordinary virtues: her patience, her smiley face, her longing for prayers, and her complete surrounding to God`s will. Sometimes they called her: nun saint.**

### **-They brought her to die in here**

She heard news about saint Sharbel`s miracles. And his picture is on her bed, and she is wearing his relics on her neck.

She, before visited him was imploring him, saying: if you have the will to cure me let me see you in a dream.

Not to long after that, she saw him in a dream. He appeared to her wearing a white garment, standing next to her bed, extending his hands above her, then dissapeard.

Another time he appeared to her in a dream, and gave her the blessing.

The first time he appeared to her, she told the nuns. And they asked her if he look like the picture that present him, where he is drawn kneeling on that reed platform, which was the only known photo for saint Sharbel, back then. She answered: no he does not look like that! So they said back: then this is not him.

However this did not weakend her faith in him. Also she never asked to visit him, but she wished of. Knowing for sure he`s going to heal her.

In July-11-1950, she visited saint Sharbel, accompanied, with mother Isabelle Ghrayeb, the mother superior of Jbeil monastery whom she was inesting telling, sister Mary`s mother superior of how dueable is taking her to Ennaya`s monastery. Also with Matyld Zambaka Al-Bawshriyeh monastery mother superior, the elementary teacher mother Bernadette Neffaa, and sister Leotinyn Rahmeh.

In the way there, she was very disturbed. She was vomiting all the way up. The car was stopping every other moment, so the nuns give her injections. They were scared she may die, on the road. They even thought to have her resting in Jbeil monastery, one night before getting to Ennaya. But she refused.

And after five hours on the roads. Finally they arrived, but she was decayed. She was brought out of the car on a seat. People around her, seeing how she look, said: how narrow minded are these Jesuit nuns! They brought her to die in here! Let her die on her bed at home!

### **-Throw me with the poors**

Michel El-Sroujey, victor Ghawi, and fouad El-Sayegh, official employees, of the health squad departement, for Ennaya`s monastery, carried her to the tomb, on a chair.

Upon entering the tomb area, and upon laying her hand on that peace of marble that is on the tomb, she felt like a tremor in her back, and a power entering her body. And also she felt the presence of the saint in that place; the feeling she didn`t have, nor before the empty coffin, or in the church, but at the active tomb where the saint`s body exist (there are some empty coffin there, where the saint`s body was layed, throughout the examining period, by the order of the head church).

Then she was taken to a room where she was layed down on a bed, which was prepared for her. She was offered some fruit. The minute she ate she throw up.

At night she told mother superior Isabelle Ghrayeb: I don`t sleep on a spring bed. Throw me with the poors, on the floor by the tomb`s Ground! But she answered: there is no room for you by the tomb!. So she submitted and said to saint sharbel: Look you are a monk, and so do I, you know what obedience is. So I obey, and the rest is on you.

Then she pass that night praying with the nuns, in a room that was prepared for them.

The next day, early morning, the nuns participated, in a procession for the holy Host, then a Liturgy, then after Holy Communion. She was put in the tomb`s room before the marble of the sepulcher. Right there she participated, with three Masses. Also she was sharing with people, their cases and pray like them: they cry, so she did! they mourn, also she did!.

An extraordinary state of prayer was shadowing over, in the room, with a special common loving feelings.

At that point she start feeling, painfull anguish in her haunch, and more in her right knee, but she foresaw goodness in that, and said to herself: he is healing me no doubt! Because she heard before: that if he is willing to heal, he increases pain.

### **-A touch from God**

At nine fifteen AM, after finishing a walk that was held, from the monastery to the cell, (where saint Sharbel lived) mother Izabelle, came back and proposed to Mary, to join her for breakfast, maybe she can have little thing to eat or drink. She refused and said: it is better for me to stay here and pray! Leave me and go I`m not coming out of here but walking on my feet! She left her and gone.

After a little while, the health squad team came to do the cleaning, and spray the hall with the (D-D-T), for insects. So they moved the sick to the outside. When they arrived to sister Mary, she asked them to put her in the front of the tomb, from the outside. They picked her up with the chair she was sitting on, and they put her where she wished. After finishing spraying. They brought her back in. so she thanked them saying: I already bothered you twice picking me up! But this one is the last!.

And she sat before the tomb staring on that marble over the tomb, it was like something attracting her! She couldn't even move her eyes away from it! She was taken with the site.

Beside her there was this blind man, whom he was touching with his eyes that marble, while saying: have mercy on me Oh God, have mercy on me... then he lifted up his head and tried to open his eyes with his hands, and he repeated that act many times.

Her pain was yet still continuous. And while she was praying she looked, where saint Sharbel's name is incised, on that piece of marble, and saw! it was wetted out with couple drops of what may look like water, these drops were held in place!

She rejoiced and said to herself: this is for me! and she willed to take a napkin, and catch these drops, then rub her stomach and her body, with it then stand and walk

And so she did, she took a napkin, and tried to stand up, there was this one woman trying to help her, she refused help, but insisted to make it on her own! And when she put the napkin on that marble, it turned wet, she was so impressed, and started rubbing her stomach, her spine, and her haunches. But no one else had seen the drops of that water but her!

Now she turned to see around her, if her sisters nuns were there so they witness and rejoice her healing miracle, especially how hard they work helping her all these years. So she found some of them, and she asked the nurse, to call for mother Bernadette. The nurse rushed and brought her. Mary stood next to her and handed her the cane she was leaning on, and stood up straight! And shouted with loud voice: move (in plural)! Make room for me! Then she walked! Her steps in the beginning were stable and firm, she was lifting her feet, above the standard measurement, then she didn't take too long to walk like everybody. The people around her cheering and applauding.

Next to her there was this one Shiite Muslim man, who had seen her when she first arrived to the monastery and how she was, and seeing her now getting healed, he raised his voice shouting: I want to become Christian.

People started snatching her clothes! The bells rung! the crowds acclaimed. Sister Isabelle Ghrayeb hearing that, her body shivered, she was deeply touched and said to herself, I hope of God, our nun has walked! She rushed out between hope and fear! and met sister Matilda Zanbaka shouting and saying: sister Mary Abel is walking!.

Father Ageya, walked slowly, he was also deeply touched, arriving to the church, he entered, and his knees were shaking, he could've barely stand up, because of the influence of the incident, the church was packed with people. And one of the monks, was giving a sermon, with a fiery

zeal, talking about, the authority of God and the intercession of saint Sharbel, while sister Mary Abel was standing on the stairs of the Altar like a candle stick, just straight, staring at the priest and listening to his words. When the sermon was over, father Ageya felt he is moved to speak, so he recall for, repentance and faith. The audience was crying of joy and participated with his feelings.

After the procession of the holy Host. They celebrated a cult of veneration, a procession around the church, for over two hours, sister Mary participated with, and did not feel tired. She was even jumping over the blocks of stones that was piled in the yards of the monastery. Michel Al-Sroujey came and picked her up again, as he did when she was all crippled. He was shouting to the crowds saying: look people, nothing is difficult for God! look who is picking up who! Wow to whom he have no faith!

### **-Who is Michel Al-Sroujey**

I was a sick man, since 1947, untill May-9-1949. I had a joints illness. And the sickness reached to the internal and exterior membrane of the heart, and caused me an infection, that put me off work. Which then results of puting me to retirement, from my job at the police. November first 1949 I left the office.

The next month, December-27-1950, at 5:00PM. I was riding a bus, when a quarrel happened between me and this one man, named Victor El-Khoury from Al-Hadath Beirut. The bus stopped and he ends up giving me a kik by his foot when I was at the door. I fell on the ground, and my back hited the edge of the sidewalk, I passed out.

This has resulted of breaking me, two vertebras of my spine, the twelve`th and the thirteen`th. Which paralyzed my legs and my urinal. This was confirmed after X-Rayes, by physicians which I do carry their certifications with me.

I stayed like this untill May-9-1950, when I heard about saint Sharbel`s miracles.

I asked my wife to take me to visit the tomb of father Sharbel. She prepared a car, and she asked her cousin, father Boutros Al-Tannoury the general deputy of the Maronite monastics in Aleppo Syria back then, to join us for the monastery.

I was carried to the car. And aimed to the monastery.

I was so disturbed in the way there, and my heart was in a very bad condition.

When I arrived to the monastery. I was checked by physicians appointed by the monasticism, whom they are, doctor Ibrahim Bakhos, doctor Sakher El-Khazen, and doctor Antoine El-Beayni. They reported that I was in a critical condition. Their report is registered in the memorandum of the monastery.

I was carried down to the sepulcher of the saint, but I couldn`t enter because of the crowds. So the people brought me back up to the church.

I approached confession, and confessed standing up, the priest was holding me, and another priest, father Gebrayel was holding me also by my side, I was tired from that position. Then I was picked up to the holy Altar table and partaked of the holy Communion. After that I was carried again down to the sepulcher, and stayed before the tomb layed down on the grownd, surrender myself to crying and imploring, of a wounded inside.

After three quarter of an hour, I felt all my joints shuddering, and somehow I felt suffocating. I stood up quickly, my body was shaking, I blew up mourning and I screamed all at once like someone was just frightened!

Right there, was this one man named Espiro, who was putting marbles for the floor of the sepulcher. He was just started, and placed only three marbles.

He went out and spoke openly that a miracle had happened to me!

I aimed toward the door shivering, walking like a baby in his first step! Then I heard the bells ringing and the women trilling, and people shouting: miracle! Miracle!

I took a napkin to dry out my face that it was sweating, the napkin was wetted out with a yellow liquid, I proceeded and found a frock hanged on the wall, by the church door, I wiped my face with it, then people burst forth, toward that frock, and teared it apart among themselves as blessings. Then I walked to the church alone without leaning on anybody, so I visited the holy Host.

After that I was brought to a room, where Master Boulos Salami was layed sick, on a carriage bed, I was yet heald for only fifteen minutes, I approched him and told him: Master of poets, may God give you healing, like he did to me. Then people was crowding in that room to look at me.

Then doctor Sakhr El-Khzaen came, and checked me. He had me taking of all my clothes, and start checking my heart, and knocking on it with his hand, he checked all my body and found me just in a good condition.

After that I dismissed the case I had opened, in the criminal court against Victor Khoury, for the gratitude saint Sharbel, had offered me.

### **-The presence of God**

At night, sister Mary Abel along with some nuns climed to the cell (saint Sharbel`s) walking, from the point of the car drop, (about half a mile) and spent the night sitting on a chair, before the recluse`s cell.

In the morning she went back to Bekfaya, and the congregation of the monastery there, was rejoicing. She had breakfast with them, this time without vomiting.

She start again doing hard work both, mental and physical, like the best nuns whom they are in a complete health conditions. But she kept taking some vitamins, because as it was mentioned, she already lost her teeth, which unable her of receiving enough nourishment.

The chance for her zeal, came back even wider then before.

One time she was giving a speach, telling the story of her healing, before a large community in Hemmana, among the crowds, there was this one durzy man, (a similar religion of islam) he cried when he heard the story of her healing.

#### **4-Iskandar Obeid**

##### **-the wounding of the eye, and a first healing**

Iskandar Obeid was hit in his right eye with a fiery splinter, while working as a blacksmith. The wound was infected, and caused him, a loss of sight.

Along with doctor Toufiq Salhab, he headed to this one frensh specialist for eye sight, doctor Dober Long. The doctor checked him and found the wound is on the whitening of the eye. Then gave him as treatment, injections in the hand for seventeen days, which enable him to gain part of his sight. He became able to see big things, but not things small in details, nor can read.

His mother already took a vow for him, to saint Nohrah Asmar-Jbeil. Later on when he recoverd, he payed the visit to saint Nohrah, to pay the vow. And spent the night in the church. He slept and saw himself in a dream standing with, priest Gerges Labakey, the servant of his congregation back then; he saw him chanting at the reader stand, then he handed him the Senexarian to read. Iskandar answerd: my eye hurting father, I can not read! Then he stinged him with his staff strongly and said: I told you take and read! Then he wokes up from his dream, dread and terrified, not even knowing where is he at. Then he took a lamp that was on the bench, litted up, then realise he was still in the church. Right away he start pondering, what possibly that could be, then he closed his left eye and read with ease. He knew he was healed. He gaved thanks to God and saint Nohrah. And he stoped going after physicians.

##### **-A long term pain**

In year 1937, Iskandar was with his brother in law in Bhersaf (village in Lebanon), for the election day. While walking on the road along with his brother in law Asaad Sharbel, he was pushing away from his face, a cypress tree branch, then left it all at once, it happen that the branch, was slamed back and hit his right eye. A hit made him going out of his mind, because of its heavy impact. Instantley he lost his sight. He screemed out of pain to his brother in law: Asaad I lost my eye.

They took a car and went straight to Baabdat (village in Lebanon).

Seeing doctor Salhab, again he recommended, to go straight to Beirut. they did and went to doctor Nephrey Khalaf, together with doctor Dober Long the french. After examination they recommended to rest for one week lying in bed on his back, and to keep his vision fixed on one point. He did that for seven days, with the eye fixed on one point in the ceiling. At the second day, he gained back his vision, but not completely. He start seeing and distinguishing things, and faces, from About seven yards away. He stood up to go to the doctor as recommended. Now he felt like something fell on his eye and covered it, he couldn't see no more. That was to hard for him. The doctor told him again to lay back on his back this time for fifteen days, presuming that the eye retina was ripted of, and it may mend again this way. He went back to his bed and did what the doctor had recommended. He gained back his vision, but after fifteen days, when he was trying to stand up same thing happened again, and he lost his vision one more time. He went back to doctor Nephrey, now he kept him in the hospital for ten days. But he gained nothing. When doctor Nephrey saw this. He orderd an immediate surgery to plug his eye out. He refused and left the hospital.

He checked many other eye specialists, among them Habib Abella, Shahin El-Saliby, Philip Touma, and doctor Oliger, but in vain. And that last one had reveald to him saying: Your eye is out of order permanentley, and had adviced me not to go check any other physician any more! But consider yourself born with one eye!.

Afterward he submitted his case to God`s will. He forgot about his eye and went back to his job, as a blacksmith. He wasn't feeling well especially when he had a very delicate job, which require to be very fine and accurate. He then used to ask someone else help, to check for him, whether the job was well done or not, that his eye went completely blind.

Things went so difficult for him. Pain was coming back every once a while, from fatigue and heat. Doctor Touma alerted doctor Toufiq Salhab: that it is better for him to plug that eye out, so it don't deactivate the other. But he refused.

### **-I am calling you today for visiting me**

People was prompting to go visit saint Sharbel, after his healing miracles became very famous. They called for Iskandar to join them more then once, but he refused, and left his wife go alone. she came back with some blessings: cotton with oil and, a small peace of saint Sharbel`s clothe. She rubed his eye with it.

Iskandar decided to pray the niner Rosary for a demand of healing. And asked saint Sharbel to inspire him, to visit him, whenever he decided to heal him. The first niner Rosary passed, and yet no answer. He repeated the petition, second time, third and forth. And nothing he received. Then he kept on praying.

One night while sleeping, a monk came to him and told him: I am calling you today to visit me.

The next day when he wakes up. He told his family: I'm going to saint Sharbel, today. His wife objected saying wait at least, so I prepare for you, a meal for the journey. His son asked him to

wait until Saturday, so he will have the chance to join him without missing school. He refused, and insisted to go.

He rolled down to Beirut, it was a Tuesday, October-17-1950. He took a cab, along with one polish, and two russian ladys.

Upon their arrival to saint Maroun`s monastery they visited the church, then shooted down to the sepulcher, where they stayed praying until eleven at night. Then everybody went to sleep, except some people, and Iskandar stayed with them praying until after midnight.

The next day, he aimed to kfarkeddeh village in Jbeil region, to visit a friend (a close village to the monastery).

In the way there, pain started in his eye, with tears. He spent a blank night in kfarkeddeh, he couldn`t sleep. He wasn`t knowing why.

Thursday morning he went back to his village Baabdat. Yet he did not loose hope. But he was saying to himself: my time did not come yet. And the pain was increasing little by little.

### **-I`m going to get you some powder for your eye**

Friday october-20, while working in his shop; pain increased much on him, but he beard it all day.

Coming back home at night, he met with Mary El-Jemayel`s father, riding on his chariot. He asked him to fix a screw that was broken in the chariot. Iskandar apologysed saying: I`m tired and my eye is hurting me too much! The man answered quickly: your eye is going to heal! These words gave him big hope, so he turned back and opened the shop for him and fixed him his chariot. Then went back home.

Now at home he was washing his face and tears was dropping heavily from his eye, like a faucet, and the pain increased unbearbly. The pain kept increasing up to where he start crying. His family was so worried, and his wife was insisting to call for a doctor, or at least using some eye drops for pain relief. He refused at all, and kept on suffering. He was then saying: Oh Lord, either take my eye off and and release me or, give me healing!. He stayed like this until, 4-AM, then fainted out from fatigue and sleepiness. He slept on a cushion he was lying on.

Now he saw in a dream, that he came to saint Moses`s monastery on a truck, carying iron, along with a driver, whom he is a partner of the monastery. Then when they were unloading the truck, the driver took a staff of iron and hit him on the eye, so he screemed: I lost my eye!. People at home woke up on his voice screeming, they saw him all sweat and his body was shivering from cold. Another ten minutes, he covered himself and slept again.

He start dreaming again. This time he saw a monk with gray hair emerging, and asked him what is the matter with you? He answered: I lost my eye! The monk answered back: why don`t you speak it out? Tomorrow I`ll get you powder (medicine) for your eye. He entered the church,

and came back with that powder, and spinkled it in the sick eye. Then he told him: close your eye. He closed his eye, and opened it again, then he did not see the monk! He saw the asphalt of the road near him cracked of with -----karshouny----- language, was written: Sharbel, God's servant.

### **-I can see**

He woke up frightened, he call his wife, and told her: take a look of my eye, see if it's swelling? For the monk who appears to me in dream, and puted the powder in my eye, told me: it is going to swell, but fear not. His wife looked and saw it was puffed out from the eyebrow down to the cheek! Now he knew, that the saint has visited him!

He asked for saint Sharbel's photo, his wife brought him one, so he covered with one hand his whole eye, and caught the photo with the other hand, and looked at it, he nevertheless seeing it clearly! He shouted I can see! He kissed the photo crying, and knelt down and prayed.

He closed his left eye, and looked, he saw at about some seven yards away master Elyas, in his bed, this man was an agent for the DMV, and he was a tenant in his property, and he shouted at him: master Elyas I can see, I am seeing you! Elyas start forming signs to verify that, and Iskandar was seeing every thing; master Elyas jumped from his bed, knelt down and start kissing the floor (it is a way of humbling oneself before God) and thanking! And the whole house stood up cheering and thanking. The neighbors woke up at the noise and saw Iskandar's house all litted up, so they came to check the matter. And when they knew they rejoiced with him, among them was doctor Toufiq Salhab. At night his son doctor Emile Salhab came and verified his healing.

### **-The healing of the spirit**

Iskandar was religious and a good man, practicing his religion dutys in deed and in faith. He was a religious Ideal in his village Baabdat. So if per example he was absent, means he was at saint Moses's monastery, or saint Iseiah. His noblety and faithfulness increased after the marvel, that happened to him.

And that marvel created, in Baabdat and all regions, an up side down turning, in spirituality and morals, among people; we start seeing people who was away, and do not practice religion, now they do, and others whom used to come to church as a habit, now they do in faith and fever.

### **-He hunged his scrutches at the sepulcher**

Najib Tabet testified: I went to visit Sharbel. There was a disable man at his sepulcher whom I knew from my home town, Furn El-Shebback. He use to lean on two scrutches, and beg to live.

This man touched the marble's sepulcher with his hand and rubed his legs. Then slept a night next to the sepulcher.

The next morning, he stood up and start jumping like a deer. Then he hunged his scrutches at the sepulcher.

### **-untill it deformed his eyes sight**

The year of 1955, Father Mbarak Tabet testified: My nephew Abdo a fourteen years old boy, was born with a tumor on the upper side of his cheeks. And it was growing untill it deformed his eyes sight.

Physicians was saying, it can not be cured without surgery.

But his father took a walk from Furn El-Shebbak, Beirut to Sharbel`s sepulcher, Ennaya, and back barefooted (about twenty hours walk each way) .

He came back another time with his son and visited the saint`s sepulcher and went back home . The following day, the tumor started diminishing and after a while it disappeared completely.

### **-She thanked Sharbel whom he directed her to the medicine**

Another testimony for Father Mbarak Tabet in the same of year of 1955: Najibeh my niece wife of Georges Conforty living in Beirut.

On her Cheek appeared a little pimple, when she was at the Nazarette`s monastery in Beirut. She was getting treated for it but it kept growing and developing untill it cover all her cheek up to half of her mouth. All physicians of Beirut and groups of physicians, even those coming from Europe not one left, but all have examined her, and none of them could`ve get to cure her.

She went to Saint Maroon`s monastery Ennaya, and stayed next to Sharbel`s sepulcher, praying and crying, and asking him for curing. She stayed there three days, and when she found she didn`t get cured, she told the saint: I would`ve like to stay here untill I get cured, but my time is over. If you are willing to cure me show me a way that do so.

She returned back home. Her place is a duplex, she occupie the down areas, upstairs living her roommates. And as she entered home she went upstairs to see her friend, she saw her little child carrying a small book, she took it from his hand, she opened it, and she found written about a medicine for the same pimple she have. She took the book to doctor Hakim, and showed him the medicine. He saw that was brilliant, then said: we just didn`t think about it, take it and use it.

She did use that medicine, and within few days she recoverd and the sick side of her cheek was looking almost like the other.

Right after that she payed a visit to El-Bramiyeh`s monastery to show her people, her cheek so they rejoice with her, and thank with her, Sharbel who leadd her to that medicine.

### **-She Shouted and trilled of joy**

May-5-1950, Gerjourah Aoun from Jdeidat El-Matn testified: Tanios my son caught a lung disease in one of his lungs, when he was six months old. Doctor Shekrey Al-Hasrey treated him. He became well only for one day. Then the next lung caught the same disease, and the boy was

in a risky condition. Then after two months of treating, the risk had gone. But he became so weak, which made him vulnerable to any sickness.

Many physicians had treated him among them, doctor Phylip Shedid, who kept have him X-Rayed over and over, seeking out the real cause of the sickness, that made his hands stiffed and bended his legs. The X-Rayed photos revealed, he had weakness in the bones.

And in vain physicians treated him with needles and pills, it was just of no benefit. But in the contrary, he became worse. And he couldn't walk but with a big effort. He was swaying on both sides. His belly got inflated, and his right hand got stiffed, he couldn't lift it up to his mouth to eat, but he was using his left hand.

He stayed like this untill we heard about Sharbel's miracles, and we was affirmed of its authenticity, through the miraculous healing that ocured with Akl Wakim, whom we both live in the same building.

May fifth-1950, we headed to Ennaya, with hearts full of faith and certainty in God that he is going to fulfill our demand through his servant father Sharbel.

We was eight people, among us a Checkoslovakian Jewish man Mr Chervanka.

When we arrived to the monastery we saw the crowds packing the place, so we couldn't get to the sepulcher but by cutting through the people, and that was a hard task to achieve.

When we reached the sepulcher I bowed down before it and I indicated to my son to prostrate next to the wall where behind it sits the tomb. I started touching the wall by my hand and rubing my son's body and massaging his stiffed parts. I was praying with fever and piety saying: My Lord! If I was a sinner and not fitting to receive the fulfillment of my demand, just look after this child who did not yet accumulated seven years of his age, and he have no guilt that deserve such a punishment, have mercy on him and give him the healing through the intercession of father Sharbel. I also taught my son to ask the healing of God through his faithfull worshiper father Sharbel.

The crowds was packing the place looking to get closer, I had to give them the chance, so I withdrew back with my son Tanios. And as he was walking before me, I saw his shoulders straight, and his walk are natural, I thought I am seeing this because I am under the influence of an illusion, or I am overwhelmed by the need of healing, but when my wife saw our son walking straight she shouted and trilled of joy.

### **-I will pray alone**

Montaha Daher from Bkasyn testified: I caught a high fever when I was one year old, it created me a hunch in the left side of my back, and it was growing over the time.

When I visited Sharbel's sepulcher in May-11-1950, I stood up afar from the tomb, because of the crowds and said to him: I am not disturbant like the others, I am only reciting to you one time

the Our Father and Hail Mary, asking you to grant prosperity to both of my orphans nieces. And I for myself will ask you for nothing because I am fifty already, and not much, what is left for me to live. Just keep my eye safe, so I can keep doing my job, (which is tailoring).

I returned to Beirut without feeling anything. The night of May-15, I have seen in my dream, that I am in a church surrounded by my relatives, so I told them: share with me in the prayer, they answered back: we are doing a job, we can not share with you. Then I told: better leaving, I will pray alone. Then I woke up, it was four thirty in the morning, I stood up at the mirror and start wearing my clothes, and how strongly astonished was I, when I saw my hunch disappeared.

**- You are annoying us with your prayer, (if it was gonna rain, there must be some clouds first!)**

May-14-1950, -----Hesen----- Al-Mhayar testified: My right leg was shorter then the left, I was born with it. I used to walk bended, and I always felt, the bone of my wrist is bulged out. That deformity was very painfull. And it always hurted me seeing my friends walking naturally, and I bended.

Then when Sharbel`s miracles appeared, my cousin told me about it; I thought he is moking me. But he affirmed to me that truth.

Since that time I started praying and asking God to heal me of my disability, at his servant`s hand Sharbel.

One of these nights, while sleeping I screemed: Sharbel is in our house. Without seeing him.

May-8-1950, I went with my sister and my cousins to Ennaya`s monastery. About a kilometer before reaching the monastery, I stoped the car, and took a walk straight to the sepulcher. Right there, I knelt down on my knees , and my heart was filled with faith and certitude, that God is going to respond to my demand.

We stayed there about half an hour, then I went up to the church, and settled down for the night, because when we reached the monastery, it was already seven o`clock at night. We stayed there, praying for hours.

In the morning, people was mooving forward to partake of the holy Communion, I approached and partaked with them.

After Communion, and while still in the church praying, I felt too much pain in my hip. I returned and visited the sepulcher and took as relics, some soil some blessed water and some blessed oil from it. And because I had a strong faith I ate of that soil, and I took some and hanged it on my bad hip, and I wiped the marble of the tomb with my napkin and rubed my hip also with it. Also again when I wanted to leave the monastery, I went to the sepulcher, and kissed its wall, and I said to Sharbel: I am leaving don`t forget me.

I returned back home, and I was praying and supplicating God the most high, like I used to do before.

Yet the pain in my hip stayed like it was in the church.

The next day May-tenth, I dreamed while sleeping, that it is due to warm up the blessed oil I got, and rub my leg with. I did not respond in the beginning. Beside that I used to rub my hip with the blessed water, I used to hear it cracking.

I went with my mother to visit some relatives, and the pain was accompanying me always. About four thirty in the after noon, we headed back toward the house, and I was praying in the way home, my mother blamed me saying: you are annoying us with your prayer, if it was gonna rain, there must be some clouds first,( a lebanese way of indicating , no hope). I answered my mother: you are committing a fault by doubting, and my faith still like it was, and I`ll be heald in God`s willing. When for my sister Aafaf she was sharing the prayer with me.

When I reached home, I warmed up the blessed oil and rubed my leg with it, and I brought the photo of the Lady of the Rosery and two candles I also got them from father Sharbel`s sepulcher, I litted them and put them before the icon, which it start having some drops like someone sweat, I start touching it and rubing my leg with it. And I start hearing the cracking again. Finally I took the measurement of my legs and found them equal. Then I start walking like the rest of the people. And I have all confidence that God responded to my petition, by the intercession of Sharbel.

### **-She was praying one time and chanting another**

May-24-1950, Badawi Nasr from Tarablous testified: When my daughter Juliette was born she was in a complete health. Then when she started walking, her mother and I noticed, she`s tottering. We was thinking this is because of her been a baby.

When she became two, her swaying grew up. We verified and found her legs are not equal in height.

We took her to our very friend, doctor Abd El-Latif Bysar. He examined her diligently and urged a surgery for her.

He passed her the surgery with lots of care and finesse. Then we`re backed home with our daughter. And she stayed in bed for six months, suffering pain.

In the end, doctor Rabbat took off the -----gypsum-----. He found the surgery has not succeeded. So he passed her another surgery. Again Juliette haded to stay another six months in bed. Now it is time to take the -----gypsum-----off, doctor Rabbat did; and he was grieved finding out this surgery also failed. He said: I am flying to Germany and at my return, I will pass her a third surgery hopefully will be successful. Her mother did not accept.

Two years ago we took Juliette to doctor Frisho in Beirut and after very delicate examination, he said that he will pass her a surgery but he do not guarantee the healing, and that he will keep the tottering as is but he will prevent its growth, but she had to stay three months in bed. Juliette this time refuses and said: God will help me and will remove my tottering gradually.

Juliette stayed in her condition till the end of April-1950. Then in May-5, she went with her mother and brother, to visit Sharbel`s sepulcher. They stayed there two Hours, then returned to Tarablous. In may-19, Juliette headed to Beirut with her sister, and right there she met with a group of ladys seeking to visit Sharbel. The next day they all together went and stayed all day in the monastery. Then when they willed to go back to Beirut, Juliette refused to go Back with her sister. But she stayed in the monastery desiring to make a blank night in praying. She did and made that night live, praying to God in faith, fever and piety, imploring him to comply to her petition and lavish to her the healing through the intercession of his servant Sharbel. She was praying one time and chanting another.

At three in the morning, there was a procession for the Virgin Lady, Juliette knelt down on her knees, when she couldn`t do before but on one knee. At that point she felt a strong shuddering throughout all her body, she was scared it may be a strike of a high fever, she started crying. Then she went to Sharbel`s sepulcher, asking him having pity on her, she said in fever: Oh our father Sharbel I am satisfied with what I was before, bring me back to my parents the way I was, and you can heal these people laying down before your sepulcher. That shudder stayed about an hour.

When the morning rises, Juliette returned to Tarablous with some friends.

Here she felt complete changing in her body, her legs came back equal, as a natural state, she became whole and healthy, walking easily without disturbance. Through the intercession of saint Sharbel, we thanked god for our daughter whom she owe him her life.

### **-He asked for a piece of cotton wetted with the blessed oil**

June-6-1950, doctor Iskandar El-Ghrayeb testified: My grandson Samy, of my son Elyas, was attacked with-----شال الاطفال-----in his right leg, when he was two years old. Then after recovering of the high fever, he started walking on his toes to keep balance and to prevent tottering. Then that caused to him having a swell in the higher part of his foot, that looks like an arch. He started wearing a four centimeters higher boot to bring it equal to the left.

Now he is twelve years old, he informed his father, that Miss Juliette Nasr, was heald of tottering she was strickend by, in her childhood, after she visited Sharbel`s sepulcher.

He asked her for a piece of cotton, wetted with the blessed oil, she brought it with her.

He annointed his crippled leg, and it just became natural, and he was able to walk on the palm of his foot. The swell in his foot disappeared. He took away his higher boot.

Today he walks, and both legs are equal. We thanked God for such an extraordinary result.

**-like a crazy**

June-9-1950 Mariam Akoury, from Ajaltoun testified: I had migraine, for eighteen years. And the pain caused me nervous crisis, making me like a crazy. In the beginning it used to strike me once a month, then it started increasing, and lately it started to happen several times every hour sometimes.

Jesus's Heart hospital's physician doctor John Kirkyan treated me about ten years ago. He passed a surgery for me, in my head, and extracted the sum of about 500 grams of -----عمل----- . I rested for some eight months.

Then the crisis attacked me again. And I went back to doctor Kirkyan for several times, he prescribed for me some injections and many different medicines. But it helped me not.

Then for years ago, I went to doctor Phylip Touma, and after he consulted me twice, he stated that my healing is not prospective.

I went back to doctor Kirkyan, then doctor Mounir Kanaan, whom he prescribed for me some analgesic injections. But in the contrary pain started increasing instead of decreasing.

The crisis became so intense, I started having pain in that bone close to my left ear, where I couldn't eat or sleep unless I held that sick bone in my hand. Again doctor Mounir Kanaan gave me more of injections, without any benefit.

And for this matter my niece came to me with some blessed water and a piece of cotton wetted with blessed oil, from Sharbel's sepulcher. As soon as I anointed my head with that cotton and drank of that water, I immediately felt the routed of pain.

**-I stayed ten minutes at Sharbel's**

June-10-1950, Sheikh, (Muslim clergy) Mahmoud Taqey El-Dyn testified: four years ago I started feeling degradation in the hearing of my right ear, and it was lessening over the years, until it was about to get muted.

About two years ago, doctor Oliver checked my ear, then doctor Dyab, whom both agreed that the -----طبله----- is pierced and there is no hope for its healing.

I was moved by a higher call, I couldn't resist it, to go to Ennaya. Where I headed and visited Sharbel's sepulcher, asking his intercession.

I stayed there around ten minutes. Then returned to Beirut, without any strange feeling. But after several days I noticed I started hearing with my sick ear.

**- because of too much pain he loses his rationalization**

June-23-1950, Georgette wife of Gergei El-Zeghby testified: Six years ago my husband was stricken, by weakness in his head's tendons, which caused him a sleepless situation, he also caught crisis, pain in the head twice a day, and a shivering in his body, and because of too much pain he loses his rationalization, and does not know anymore what is he doing nor what is he saying. He became very thin because of lack of sleeping.

He got treated by physicians, doctor Maurice Nassar, Hanna El-Shemaly, and Maroun Shebr, for six years, and he profited nothing.

Doctor Hanna El-Shemaly declared to us, that my husband sickness is incurable.

When Sharbel's miracle appeared, I went with my husband accompanied with a group of people, to Ennaya's monastery, to visit his tomb. we stayed about half an hour, then we roled back.

Since then, my husband was cured, he started sleeping well all night long, the crisis had gone away, pain, shivering, Dizziness, and mind trouble. And now he is enjoying full health.

### **-The signs follow the faithfulls (Mark 16/17)**

#### **-I have seen father Sharbel**

Naeem Ghawy from Wady Shahrour testified: I had the chance to be the appointed physician for Ennaya's monastery, by the health portfolio minister, doctor Elyas El-Khoury in 1950.

The crowds was packing every spot inside the monastery and outside. And the sick fulfilling the hall, where inside its wall exist father Sharbel's body.

This one time, a thirteen years old arminian boy came to the monastery after staying a long term in the American University Hospital, getting treated of the bones -----سل-----disease, but got no result.

He was carried in, by his father. He had with him his files and the hospital statements indicating his risky state.

Father Yousef Khashan helped his father carrying him down to the sepulcher. The second day I was informed, that he's having a chest pain, and it is about to finish him. I rushed to him; and in vain I was trting to convince his father to bring him into the clinic, for better accomplishing the treatment. But he was answering strictly: it is better for my son to loose his life, and not loosing his place next to the sepulcher...

The same night, about midnight, arrived to the monastery four buses, from Deir El-Qamar and its surrounding. The visitors came down and entered the church chanting. And upon starting the procession of the icon, one of the visitors tried to pass the prayer book to an old monk he had accompany them entering in the temple, thinking he was one of the monastery's habitant, so he

can recite the ruled prayer of the priest. Then all at once, a mighty astonishment took over the audience, and fear locked down their breaths.

What happened? When the visitor got close to the monk, he suddenly disappeared!

I was then close to the church, when I realised that sudden quietness. I rushed to the window, to see what happened, thinking must be somebody passed out, as it come to happen sometimes. Before I reached the window, I have seen a monk walking out of the church, and passed by me to close to where our shoulders touched. Then people told me what happened, so I hurried to the outside, to find out about that miraculous monk, I looked toward the cell and I saw him ahead of me walking toward the east. I rushed after him, and pointed my flash light on him, the moment I reached him and my hand touched his clothes, I was freezed, perplexed and I was frightened, a fear that was going to make loose my concious, the monk disappeared from before my eyes all at once.

I was puzzled, confused looking here and there, then I have seen above the cell, a strange brightning, dazzling.

Then when I was in that state of trouble, I heard coming from the sepulcher, high voices shouting and applauding, I ran to see what happened, I found the young arminian boy completely heald.

### **-I was threatened by cutting off my tongue**

July-1-1950, Wahibah Khalil a sheeite (muslim) from Bafely, Tyr testified: When I was a prisoner in Jdaydet El-Matn jail. I ----stole---- a purse from the jail director`s room. And when I was asked about it, I lyed and I swore in the name of father Sharbel, falsily that I didn`t see it. The director asked of father Sharbel to show his miracles by revealing the thief who did it.

In the after noon I went to take a nap, and within half an hour, I woke up, I saw in the room a monk wearing a black frock, with a rod in his hand, he came near me and told me: put your tongue out. I did, then he hited my tongue with his hand, then it stayed out.

I was trying to pull back my tongue inside my mouth but in vain. It was twisted out, sticking by my lips to the left side, about five centimeters out of my mouth.

I became dumb, I couldn`t speak. So I went to the director, and she took me to the warden. And when he saw me, he thought this is just a wile that I`m fabricating, and turned me back behind the bars.

And when the story spreaded out, doctor Hanna El-Ryashi came and was trying all methods to bring back my tongue inside of my mouth, but in vain. Finally they threatened me to cut off my tongue, if I don`t pull it in, but I definitely couldn`t. Then their threat had gone with the wind. Also doctor Antoine Rizk-Allah, couldn`t do, anything.

I stayed like this three days. Then I was turned to El-Raml jail. And upon my arrival there, with a tongue extended out, and cannot speak. The director gave me some blessed relics from Sharbel, to wear on my chest. I did, then right away my tongue was loosend and returned back inside my mouth, and I started speaking.

### **-I used to mock Sharbel`s miracles as if it was superstitions**

Mhammad Ali Mrouweh from El-Zrariyeh southern lebanon testified: November-9-1948, I entered the jail, and I had a whole body, exept I used to feel some nervous sickness.

In the jail, problem increased and I was troubled because I had a family.

One day I felt some pain in my body and weakness in my left eye for about five months, the fingers of my right hand was stiffed.

I was treated by doctors El-Hetteh, Joseph Farhat and Albert Zbouney the head of physical checking in Hotel Dieux Hospital.

And after long treatment the vision of my left eye, shuted down. And I couldn`t see at all with it.

Then about a month ago I had joints inflation. Again I heard about Sharbel`s miracles, which I use to mock as if it was superstitions, I always also thought it was a propaganda to make money out of it.

In the end when I revised the news and read more about the numerous miracles of healing and seeing the photos of the cured sick, who received the healing thru Sharbel`s intercession. I believed in his holyness, and vowed to pledge fifty pound for him.

I charged, the nurse Avdokiya Saliba to visit his sepulcher and help me fulfilling my vow. And here is the text of the petition I had: I am a man whom was imprisoned unjustly, and lost my vision, and my health in the prison, therefore I shelter to God and Saint Sharbel. And if he heal me of my sicknesses, and got out of the jail, then I owe him five hundred pounds. And if I am guilty, I don`t like to come out of the jail, but blind and crippled, and here is a fifty pound money down with Avdokiya...

The nurse had gone to Ennaya along with the nun president of the hospital, and the corporal Shafiq Baydoun the police chief officer for the hospital. I was optimist for the fact they had gone.

Upon their returning at night they gave me incense and blessed water, some soil of the sepulcher and a piece of cotton which was wiped on Sharbel`s tomb. I started rubbing my eye, the inflated and painfull spots, and all my body after I weted it by this blessed water they got me.

About two hours later, after I wiped my eye, tears flowed from it, after four months of dryness. I also was optimist because of that too.

The next morning I woke up early, I felt and verified my body, it was completely healed, and there are not even any trace for the inflammation nor any pain, I became able to move my stiffed finger naturally. My eye started recovering day after day. And here I am now reading large letters, and it is about to catch full recovering.

### **-an apparent tottering**

Yvone and Janette Hanna Antoune Roukez from El-Batroun, were stricken with an apparent tottering, since they were born.

Doctor Tawfiq Sarah from El-Batroun, and other physicians have treated them, but never got healed.

And after their visit to Sharbel's sepulcher in 1950, they came back whole.

### **-the healing of Elyas Lishaa from Ras Baalbek**

Emile El Khazen recite: the night of July-24-1950, I came to visit Ennaya's monastery and to have the blessings from father Sharbel's Sepulcher.

It was about ten in the night, I climbed to the cell (where saint Sharbel recluses), with my family. I approached confession, and repented of my sins.

I came back to the monastery about midnight, and shared with the

Prayers till morning without resting. Then I attended mass and prayed in fever, I repeated my confession, then partaked of the holy communion, then attended another mass.

After all before leaving I intended to visit the sepulcher. While there it crossed my mind to implore pardon with fever, so I prayed and asked father Sharbel to give me the grace of watering my napkin with the plasma that dripped from his body. Within a moment I saw some drops of water on the wall, when the weather was so dry, so I stuck my napkin right by the drops, it absorbed these drops, its color was like dried blood. I cried, I kissed the tomb's marble, and gave thanks. I considered that act, like encouragement for my repentance, and the perseverance on it, the complete believing in God, and his precepts, his representatives, and the holy church.

About nine o'clock in the morning, I was with my fourteen years old son in the inner courtyard of the monastery, I have seen a man helping this six years old crippled boy walking on crutches. Stimulated by faith, I did not know how I dared to do that: I shouted to my son Hady saying: son do you want to see this crippled boy walking! He smiled and said: yes! I grabbed the boy and set him between my arms, then entered the tomb's hall, I asked the boy to implore father Sharbel's affection, and I started my role in praying, I asked father Sharbel the healing of this boy as a proof of absolving me and of accepting my repentance. I stayed like this about some ten minutes, supplicating in faith and fever, then I put the boy down from my arms and I felt like a voice inside of me saying: he was healed. I threw his crutches to the side, and shouted to him: walk alone with father Sharbel's protection, and don't be afraid. The boy walked somehow slowly in

the beginning, then his walk started progressing quickly, he walked out to the courtyard. After that he climbed the stairs alone toward the church.

His parents came and thanked me and told me the story of the boy and how he got crippled by falling from a camel's back, and broke his legs.

**-he can't see at all with his eye**

Linda, Tanios El-Awsat's wife, from Wady Shahrour in may-27-1952 testified: my son Abdo who is seven years old, got hit on his eyes with a stone four and a half years ago while playing with his cousin, and gathering almonds, in its season.

He got a black eye, then over the time, the blackness was washed away. But he lost his vision, he couldn't see at all with eye. I was so sad and I dedicated him with a vow to the holy father Sharbel, and I willed to visited him at the first chance.

This one day I had the chance to go. A group of people of my home town prepared a visit to the venerated sepulcher. So I brought my son Abdo and went with them to the monastery.

I presented my son before that piece of marble of the tomb. and I taught him to ask father Sharbel the healing of his eye.

He did in his childish language and he cried. Then spontaneously, he start looking and seeing motion before him.

I tested him by closing him the left eye, which he can see with, and brought before him different things, he was distinguishing it and naming it, correctly. The groups of the visitors gathered around him and each of them was testing him by tern and he passed that exam.

I do thank God for his grace, and Sharbel for his intercession.

**-Nothing is separating me from death but a step**

May-18-1952 sister -----Saint Georges-----, from the sacred hearts monastics testified: I am thirty five years old, and eighteen years ago, I had pain in my stomach. Physicians could've not guess what the sickness, is.

Pain was growing and their treatments made it harder. I had an appendix surgery. But the pain stayed still. Then in 1948 I had a doubled surgery, an ulcer and-----مرارة-----but I felt no ease at all. I was always disturbed, could've never sleep for fifteen years, because of this very severe pain, that is undescrible.

In November-10-1951, pain started days and nights, with heavily vomiting that stays straight for over fifteen minutes. After vomiting I used to feel a gradual weakness, accompanied with severe pain. And afterward disability of eating, sometimes for straight three days.

And even though, I kept persevering doing my dutys in teaching, because life to me was whether shortened or extended, only its dutys just matters.

January, fifth, 1952, doctor Faraj Saadeh decided that I needed to see doctor Baaqlyni, because he saw the pain coming from a new ulcer.

I have seen doctor Baaqlyni, accompanied with sister Consdtat, he checked me and was worried, and ordered an X-Ray. And he told Consdtat: poor is this non!

Two days later, I felt motivated to pay a visit to father Sharbel and ask him, to stop this vomiting for me, but leave the pain.

I proposed my idea to my mother superior Isabelle Ghrayeb, She agreed.

The next day. Even thru snow condition, I headed to Ennaya, along with my sisters nuns, and some of the students. Then in the after noon we went to the cell. (Sharbel`s cell)

I was praying and asking for my healing with all my heart.

After this visit I never vomited again.

In March-12-1952 after I was treated in Jbeil by doctors Tawileh, Shamy, Shahid and Saadeh.

I went to the frensh hospital. I had high fever and a hard cough even with the treatments and the needles. I stayed in the hospital nineteen days. Without a benefit, but in the contrary, stomach and chest pain increased, plus vomiting and continious-----حمض----- . I have had to many X-Rays, for the chest, the stomach and the right kidney.

After all, doctor Baaqlyny confessed before the physicians the nurses and some nuns among them sister Germaine, saying: it will be easier for God to create a new creation then to heal this nun. Because her kidney and her left lung are bad and she have four ulcers in her stomach.

I left the hospital with an extreme depression, when I knew doctor Baaqlyny told my sisters nuns, that he couldn`t do anything to me.

In may-16, I caught a crisis from five AM till eleven thirty AM, I felt nothing is separating me from death but a step.

Saturday, May-17, I headed along with sister Josephine Mary, to Ennaya to my tender hearted father, the virtuous father Sharbel, where I asked him for healing, and that was under obedience of my superiors, it was there will, that I get cured.

I had a desire to sleep at the sepulcher, but my sister nun prevented me, considering how cold it was and how weak am I.

The next day in the morning I felt, great pain from four AM to quarter to twelve noon.

I felt like an electric circuit passing thru my back. And with all the pain, I stayed in the church, and attended seven masses. And I was praying with all confidence and fever saying: Oh saint sharbel tender hearted give healing to all the sick! Oh saint Sharbel the obedient, you got to heal me in fulfilling obedience...

Twelve at noon, even with all my pain, I felt real hungry. So I ate a loaf of pita bread with labneh (kind of milky cream), when lately I needed five days to finish one loaf of bread.

At one o'clock I attended last mass. Then I walked with my sister nun to the cell without pain.

Then in the after noon I understood, that my sister nun like to go back to Jbeil, but she is afraid to leave me alone, thinking that I may go and sleep at the sepulcher, which is gonna hurt me.

So I planed to go with her, and we walked out to the courtyard to catch a ride. Then we met with the monastery superior telling me don't leave until you get a complete healing. Tonight I'm going to get you a mattress, that will enable you to sleep at the sepulcher. I heard these words and my heart rejoiced exultant, now knowing assuredly of my complete healing.

We entered the sepulcher's hall at nine thirty at night. My sister nun slept and I stayed awake, writing my promissorys, to father Sharbel: #-1 obedience like his image, because he heald me in responding to obedience. #-2 sacrifice oneself. #-3 the ruled and regulated life. Then I puted these promissorys, on the tomb's marble, with a white napkin I wiped with it that marble several times. Then I layed down on the mattress, and I was asking father Sharbel saying: oh my tender hearted father Sharbel, you have healded me by the merits of the blood of Jesus. And because you already did I ask you fervently, to give me a tangible mark for this healing. At midnight I felt great ease in my body, and I started sweating. Then when I was in this state between awake and asleep, I heard people screaming and shouting saying: oh saint Sharbel please give her healing! The door was pushed in, and a group of people entered, both laymen and monks, having with them a sick women that is hopeless. It was one o'clock in the morning. I stood up and grabed the napkin that was on the tomb and wiped the sick women's face. Then I starred on that napkin, I saw a reddish spot similar to the liquid dripped of father Sharbel's body... At that point I Knew saint Sharbel responded to my desire and gave me the tangible mark I asked for.

I thanked him of all my heart with tears dropping of my eyes.

Monday I returned with my sister nun, with an unmeasured joy.

### **- the healing of a-----بأغمة-----in the brain**

Naziha daughter of Nicola El-Aajeil from Behdidat, eleven years old. She, all of a sudden felt her knees are untagled and weakness in her vision.

She stayed eight days in Al-Khandaq El-Ghamiq hospital. Physicians right there, agreed of an existence of a-----كيس ضغط-----in the brain. It was proved by a portrait made by doctor Fouad Sabra, the specialist of scanning the brain, in the American hospital of Beirut.

Physicians decided in conclusion, that there are no solution for the healing of this girl but by cutting in the skull bones. And such an operation, no one can do, but Parisian physicians.

And since the father financial situation unable him of doing so. His daughter`s pain kept increasing, day after day.

Four months later she was attacked by a crisis, for straight five hours, when everybody thought she died. And they start crying.

Her father at that point recognised father Sharbel and rushed to where his photo are, and start asking him for a miracle, in all faith and certitude. And he promessed to visit him and donate all what he can do, if his daughter get well.

The next day the girl woke up. And got completely heald.

### **-The healing of a broken skull in 11/16/1952**

Majyd El-Haj from Aintouret El-Maten testified: my son use to work with me somewhere above Aintoura. And when we was coming back at night to the village. We saw passing by, a loading truck full of people of our relatives. Some of them called my son Youhanna, to jump in, while the truck kept rolling. He jumped, when one of the riders gave him hand, but couldn`t pull him in, his hand slip off, of the other man`s grip, and his head was slamed on the truck body. His skull was deep wounded, and lost conscious.

Quickly we rushed to a certain doctor from Dhour El-Shoueir. He checked him, and found his skull broken, and there is no hope for him to live. But said: let us take the risk and send him to the American faculty hospital.

Right there he was checked by this one Armenian physician Jodiak, whom he also presume that there is no hope for the boy to live. But if his parents agreed, he will pass him a surgery, but it is going to be a risky one.

The surgery took three hours. The doctor cleaned the skull of the boy. Then inform his parents, of a hope that he may speak again.

The boy stayed in the hospital for sixteen days, with no benefit. At this point physicians agreed that there is no hope of him, and they indicated to his parents to take him home.

When his mother heard so, she knelt down and called to saint Sharbel for succor, his father also adjoining the supplication he promess father Sharbel to visit him barefooted.

Two hours later, after the physicians gave up on him, and that his mother puted him under father Sharbel succor. Life came back to him and he started mooving. After three days he started talking. Not to long after that, he left the hospital healthful.

## **T: The wonders of God**

### **1-don't be afraid!**

Linda El –Yamani testified: my son who have three years old and a half, got a belly-----فتق----- to the right hand side, and the intestin fell over the-----كيس البيض-----, that caused him a swell and a fast growing puff, which made the risk rising day after day.

I took him to the army doctor, Berjawi, he recommended to be girded. I fulfilled his order for three days. The -----فتق----- and the risk kept increasing. I headed to this one surgeon Anis Makhoulf, after the examination, he indicated that the intestin is knoted in, and he have no more then three days, to receive a surgery! Or otherwise the child will risk death! He asked for two hundred Pounds for his expense.

And since we are average people, living of my husband`s salary, and we cannot afford to pay this amount. We then bounded for doctor Shehab El-Dyn for help, and he promessed to give help in Hotel Dieux`s hospital, and also indicated of the need of passing surgery.

Before starting anything, I picked up the child along with my husband and the whole Family, and headed to Ennaya`s monastery in september-11-1950, and we layed the child on Sharbel`s tomb, and asked him, thru his love to the poors and the sick, to have pity on the child, and heal him without going after physicians. And we annointed him with blessed oil and water, and censed him with father Sharbel`s blessings, and girded him with a waistband from the saint. We stayed in the monastery for a night and a day. We had vowed to stay there for three days and three nights. But my husband`s job doesn`t allow him so. When coming back home. An elder monk appeared to me in a dream, wearing white, he reproched me saying: why you did not let stay the boy for three nights before the tomb? Get up and take him. And do what I ordered you to do. And you will see that the boy will be heald. And don`t be afraid!.

In the morning she found her son in a natural state.

### **2-the surgery succeeded**

November-6-1950, Yousef Assaf El-Sheweifat testified: five months ago I had a severe migraine.

I went to doctors, Zbouny, Elyas Baaqlyni, and Kiwane. They have me X-Rayed, then told my son Shaker: we diagnosed your father`s head and suspecting a cancer. However there are no curing for him at all!

I was surviving my pain with analgesic injections and pills, for sleeping little bit, because I use to feel like knives piercing my brain.

They had me having twelve X-Rays. And all indicated that I had brain cancer. And it appears catching the brain like a crab.

About a month ago I was having a meal with my family, when a severe crisis hit me, I put my hand on my forehead, food fell from my hand, I screamed get me a doctor then I passed out. Doctors Karakian, Ajarian, Zbouny, Kiwane, and Rizk all came and checked me, and all agreed, that there is no solution for me! My stools and urin was coming out without feeling.

I had a neighbor, who was George Beyk Hemeiry (Beyk is like sort of a count) he offered to take me to the American University Hospital immediately, and so he did.

Upon arriving I was in a coma, doctor Rajnian, declared to my son: it is absurd to have your father in here! Because he have fifteen minutes left to live. And the doctors of the faculty refused to pass a surgery for him! At that point my son went back and told George Beyk Hemeiry the story. George contacted the hospital chief doctors and told him to pass the surgery when in both ways he is dying. This way he may have the chance to survive. And this what happened.

This took place in late october 1950. they took me to the operations room out of concience.

My kin in the outside was waiting, carying saint Sharbel's photos, kneeling on the floor, shouting, wailing, saying: Oh Mar Sharbel, change the cancer to blood (thinking that a blood clot will be easier). And they puted saint Sharbel's photo on the glass at the operations's room, repeating: change the cancer to blood.

The surgery started, they opened a cut me on the right side, on the top of my head and found nothing, then they stiched it with three stiches. Then they opened another cut on the left side, at a measure of thirty eight stiches. They took of the bone. And found something dark black appeared covering the brain. So they sucked it out with a needle. It was hundred and twenty grams of darkened blood.

At that point, doctor Jarakian the faculty president, left the operation room, and stepped out and told the people with a very loud voice: saint Sharbel has changed for you the cancer into blood! The surgery succeeded!

The surgery took two hours. Then three hours later I stood up and walked, like I was never ill. I even asked to go home.

### **3-Poor, and my family consist of nine members!**

Shaker makhlouf testified: I, as a daily handy worker, was carying a heavy load at Edward factory in Naher El-Kalb, I felt some pain in my back, I thought it is just little passing fatigue. But it lasted long, it stayed for about two months.

During that period of time, I was checking physicians, among them Emile Geagea and Abou-Rjaileh, and some others. They told me that I need a surgery. Then I had X-Rayes in Hotel Dieux Hospital, right there I also have been told, that I need a surgery, because the vertebras are mooved from its places. I consulted two other Arabic physicians, one said the same thing, the need of a surgery, the other said, It takes a long time to recover.

Then I was thinking that I am a poor man, and that I am responsible of nine persons, so I rememberd saint Sharbel healing many, and that I am of his kin and of his village, and that I must take him for shelter.

At that time I couldn't walk without leaning on a staff. And at the second I willed to visit his tomb, my backpain dissapeard instantly, and I threw the staff away, and walked like I never had pain.

Then I visited saint Sharbel`s tomb. To pay thanks to the grace of God, given on the hand of his saints.

**-Go and teach the whole world (Mat 28/19).**

### **The healing of a Child son of Hasan Rmaihiy the summer of 1952**

Hasan Rmaihiy (a muslim) from the village of Karkiya close to Kartaba, his son who is six years old fell from a high roof. His brain shaked.

Doctor Farres saaid consulted him, and found no way of his healing.

Then his father took him to doctor Habib Al-Khoury`s hospital. The physicians there, sent him back, to die at home.

In the way home his parents saw him giving up his last breaths. They asked of Yousef Fransis from Janneh, who was accompanying them, to pass by Mahmoud Nasr El-Dyn (a muslim), who is staying next to Aalmat, right at the Al-Meshnakah`s curb, to call him to attend the funeral (muslims, start funeral right after death). When they reached Artaba, Ghattas Karam`s wife heard his parents weeping for the boy, she rushed and grabed him from their hands after she urged them to believe in father Sharbel, the boy was out of any indication of life. She took him home and annointed him with water, from saint Sharbel`s sepulcher. Right away the boy, regain concious and shouted: mama!.

Everybody rolled back and headed to Ennaya`s monastery to baptize the boy and to give thanks to father Sharbel.

In the way there, they arrived to Al-Meshnakah`s curb, they stoped to informe Mahmoud Nasr El-Dyn, not to go to the funeral. By coincidence, they met right there with Yousef El-Khoury Boutros, they recited to him the event, and asked of him hoping to accompany them to the monastery, to be the god-father for the boy.

### **4-Sharbel in Iraq**

Noura Karkaji testified: My son Nawal who have four years old now. He caught a high fever when he was twenty five days old. Which hit down the tendon of his legs and cramped his toes.

That made him hunchback like an arch. And dryness hit the brain nerves, then it spreaded to all his body.

Then he turn to be, a hopeless conditions. when I try to set him on the floor he fall on all the four sides. He was suffering the pain of his conditions all the term of his sickness.

His father showed him to all the physicians in Basrah and, elsewhere. He even showed him to the english doctor Terd and doctor Davis, the physician of the oil company in Karkouk.

Our house become looking like a pharmacy, because of the uncountable number of medicines we brought him.

And with all these efforts, the boy attained no result at all.

Finally, we brought him to Beirut, and took him to many doctors, among them, the children specialist doctor, Philip shedid.

This was taking place in 1949.

And after much of treatment the boy stayed the same, if not to mention he was becoming worst after treatment.

His father decided to take him to london. But when Sharbel news and great miracles became widespreaded in year of 1950. we picked up our son and bounded to his holy tomb, many times.

The boy started gaining healing time after time untill his back got fully straighted, and his legs`s tighs was completely released, and backed to its natural state. His continuous migraine had left him, and gained back full health.

He also gained appetite, after he was someone who does`nt know what food is about. When feeding him I use to put an amount of a bite in his mouth and it stays there twenty four hours, without swallowing it. Today he become eating good, sleeping good and calme.

She furtherd: In June-27-1950, saint Sharbel appeard to my son conciously before lots of group of people at his cell. After I had asked saint Sharbel to take of the blessed gird from my son`s legs. So he started talking to the boy with a high voice everybody there heard it, then we saw the palm and the wrist of a hand on Nawal`s leg, who started crying. After that we found the gird loosed out of the boy`s leg, and also he took of his socks.

## **5-Sharbel in Brezil**

### **-Ulcer and weakness of the heart**

The News, Brezilien news paper wrote: Victor kimawy, a man residing in the city of Byron Pears in Saw Pawlo state. He is the director of health and rescue, for that city. He had a very

complexed stomach ulcer, and got healed from it. He said: I caught an ulcer in my intestine, the twelfth, (duodenum.) For more than fifteen years.

Many specialist physicians undertook the assurance of my curing. And I also took enough precaution, in eating and drinking. All these efforts were just in vain, with no benefit.

During that period, I also had sickness of my heart.

The hardness of my sickness pushed me to where I entered one of Saint Andrew hospitals, through its director, whom he is a famous surgeon, and a specialist for stomach sickness.

After an X-Ray, he decided to pass me a surgery, after four days, so they will have the chance to take all precautions needed for the surgery. Next a group of physicians, have checked me, and found my heart cannot resist a surgery. So they cancelled the decision of passing it. And they left me in a state of despairing, which because of it I may not go out the hospital alive.

That night, a Lebanese friend visited me. And the fact seeing me in that state, he started calming me down, proposing saying: there are a physician who will give you healing, like he did to many, and he is present and absent! Alive and dead!

And he recited to me the biography of Saint Sharbel. Then I vowed to him, to confess and partake of the holy mysteries, every Friday for nine months. Then I started a nine-Rosary for the Sacred Heart of Jesus, through his beloved Sharbel, so he may assume for me the Grace of healing.

That night I slept calm. In the morning I woke up, feeling hungry. I asked for food and I ate with appetite, without feeling pain like I used to. Therefore I quit taking medicine and stopped abstaining from certain food. I started eating whatever I desired. Three days passed and I didn't feel any pain in my stomach, nor in my heart.

I went back to my residence, and got back in the office, continuing my job, in health directing.

A year passed and I am in a complete health and vigor, even though I am almost sixty five years of age.

Beside the physical health I received a spiritual one.

### **-A dentist in Rio De-Jenero**

Doctor Ibrahim El-Khoury testified: I caught a heart disease, followed by diabetes, and short breathing, for fourteen years.

My illness got hard, and put me to bed, motionless, couldn't even speak, in answering, I used my hand signaling.

I've been treated by many physicians, but with no benefit at all. Then when physicians gave up on me, they urge me to go see this one famous specialist Jayro Ramos in the city of Saw Pawlo.

Then I have been carried to his clinic. This one after checking me, and seeing the X-Rays, presume in spot, there is no hope for my healing. But thru treatment and watching, I may live another year or two.

I have been brought back home, and I am in a total risk.

But my curing was with a just Godly miracle, at the hand of father Sharbel the wonderworker, thru this one lebanese person Mr Louis Khoury.

And this one coming back after visiting Lebanon, and having the honor of visiting Sharbel's tomb, got a blessed peace of clothe of the tunic Sharbel use to dress with for Liturgy. Been kind and generous to me he gave me a little peace of it, and I putt it on my heart with a living faith. And I started praying for God in honoring father Sharbel, after I and my physicians had lost hope of my curing.

Right away I felt a sudden progress, and I was driven to a speedy recovering.

I left the physicians completely, and got of my bed. And I felt no more in none of my three deseases.

### **6-Sharbel in Egypt**

Image, the frensh issued magazine in Cairo, wrote in August-15-1950: they notify us, about many miraculous healing events in Egypt, that happened with people, who dranked from the water imported from Ennaya's monastery, where the body of Sharbel exist, or have touched a piece of his clothe, was sent by faithfull people by the intercession of the holy man.

We did not give enough attention, in the beginning. But here is a doctor and professor, in Al-Ayni palace faculty, and a well known surgeon, in Cairo, are getting ready to testify that they have seen, an extraordinary healing incidents, by the intermediary of the recluse Sharbel.

So, is it the good effect which had touched that holy man, is appearing even in Egypt?

We wanted to be sure of that point. So we went to visit, people whom the miracles happened with, from afar distance.

### **-The healing of Mrs Adma Yousef Yssa**

In Shobra street in Cairo, a heavy populated street, living an old lebanese woman, named Adma Yousef Yssa. She have been living in Egypt for twenty three years, among her children and grand children.

She have been suffering for a while, from blood pressure, which causes inflation in her legs, provoking pain that prevent her from walking.

She told us one day: I woke up at night under lots of pain, and took the bottle of water, which a friend of mine had sent me, from Ennaya`s monastery. I drank the whole thing and not like I was informed to take drops at the time.

The next day, I was completely healed, all the pain in my legs had gone. and I start walking and climbing stairs as you see.

### **-The healing of the lebanese star Joseph Al-Jalekh**

There are, some other lebanese, living momentarily in Egypt, the star Joseph Al-Jalekh, one of the very believers, of Annaya`s hermit (saint Sharbel). Last month was attacked by a very high fever, which measure fourty cellcuse (equal to hundred and four fherheight).

He received an envelope from his mother, having a small part of father Sharbel`s clothe.

He said: I rubbed my forehead with it, and after half an hour, I felt a violent tremor in my body, then I slept.

The next morning, I woke up healed, a complete healing. Plus I was suffering pain of a joint illness in my knee and it has disappeared just miraculously.

To show gratitude, I invented a painting portray, representing the monk Sharbel, of my own imagination. And what is worthy to mention, is when the french press reporter, Charles Dede saw the drawn portray, assured to me he look like this one monk`s photo he have seen, at the maronite patriache in Bkerke, Lebanon.

### **-The healing of an Egyptian Surgeon**

Doctor Samir Aabdallah, the professor of the surgical dentistry in the faculty of medicine in Al-Aayni Palace, declared: I myself observed the goodness and the benefits of father Sharbel, and I declare that I got healed instantly from a very high fever, thru the intercession of Sharbel, the second I touched a piece of his clothe, it was sent from Lebanon.

### **-The testimony of doctor Sabeth Michayl**

Since I did put a piece of clothe of the monk Sharbel, in my clinic, I noticed a quick and tangible recovering with many healing events among my patients.

### **-My daughter Amale is in critical condition**

Abd Al-Aziz Mhammad Ali testified: I am the business representative of the lebanese count, Edward Shedid in Egypt.

I was in Lebanon when I heard about father Sharbel`s wonders. So I willed of visiting, and I accomplished it. I got as blessings, oil and water.

Upon my arrival home to Al Zaqaziq in Egypt, entering my house I found my daughter Amale sick, of typhoid, and already got treated by two physicians.

She was in a critical condition. I annointed her forehead with the oil I got, and she slept that night unconcious.

The next morning was just virtuous for all of us, that we found my daughter`s health in a good condition. And God took the risk away from her.

Nowadays my daughter is in good condition, by the grace of God thru the visit of father Sharbel`s tomb.

May god give us the benefit of his blessings, asking him mercy to me and my likeness. Amen.

## **7-Sharbel in syria**

### **-In Damascus**

Miss Yvone daughter of Georges Khoury from Damascus. Upon accumulating first year of her age, she got caught with high fever,which hit both of her hips, and left her crippled, swaying in her walk, in a way that attract the visions of people and mooving their feelings of pity toward her as a young lady.

Her mother Hasibah, thirty years ago, her knee also got caught with a sickness that made her stiff, plus she had a heart sickness.

In June-3-1950, Yvone and her mother came to Beirut along with her brother Dimitry whom he is a new married young man with a lady from Ashrafiyeh Beirut.

At five PM, Dimitry mooved on with his mother and sister, toward Sharbel. Yvone already prepared herself for the visit by fasting three days without water, so she can assume the grace of healing together with her mother thru the intercession of Sharbel.

They took a ride going there. Now two miles before reaching saint Maroon`s monastery. They got out of the car. Dimitry, huged his mother and sister each on one side and walked toward the monastery. The road was unpleasant to walk, it was full of thorns, bushes, stones, and meanders, which they were not customized for. They walked for an hour and a half.

Dimitry was prepared for his mother, he took the medicines for the heart, in case she needed it. In the way there he proposed the medicine for her, she refused clarifying: I am relying on God and saint Sharbel.

After all, they arrived to the saint`s sepulcher and found the groupes of visitors gathering around it. And the sick are praying and crying, demanding healing. They were hundreds, some staying at the tomb, others sleeping in the walkways in the monastery or in the new temple, next to the sepulcher.

The mother and her daughter was touched by the seen of the sick, which most of them are inflicted, with much greater disability than them and cannot work to make living. So they felt pity for them, and said to one another: we are in a better state than these miseries, we can at least make living, but what these paralyzed people can do to live?

The mother forgot about her sickness and started praying for the sick that are lying down before the tomb, likewise the daughter did. They spent the night between the church and the tomb, in praying and imploring without sleeping.

At six in the morning, the three of them return back to Beirut, each having in the heart the fever of the faith, and gladness. But Yvone and her mother received no healing.

When they arrived to Ashrafieh. The mother layed down in bed, to rest, the journey was so hard for her.

Not even half an hour later, she started feeling her dry leg numb. Then started feeling severe pain in her stiff knee, then she heard like a crack in the knee bone, then screamed! What's with me? Right away she stood up, and without noticing she bent her knee and with an immediate act she knelt on her knees praying, yet she did not know she's healed, Yvone shouted my mother is healed, miracle! miracle! Members of the house with Dimitry ahead of them rushes to see the matter. He rejoiced seeing his mother kneeling and praying, then turned to see Yvone, and now this time he shouted you also sister are healed! Because he saw her knee is moving freely and his sister is walking toward his mother a just natural walk, like she was never crippled or disordered. Yvone who also wasn't aware of her healing, she was troubled and did not believe herself, screamed: how possible can be? Her brother was afraid something may happen to her from the heavy impact of such incident, he referred to her to go upstairs and watch herself on the mirror how she looked and walked straight. She did, and when she saw herself straightened standing and walking for the first time in her life, she started crying and cheering of happiness, and shouted of a high voice: Thank your goodness oh saint Sharbel! Two wonders in our house for me and my mother! She called home Damascus, and proclaimed the good news to her kin and neighbors. She recommended them to offer sacrifice an animal and call the poor of the neighborhood for a ceremony of Cheering and thanksgiving to God.

June fifth the family was back home in Damascus, people was crowding in the house family, friends and connections, congratulating, sharing the happiness, but above all of that, to see the two miracles.

Damascus spoke about these two miracles happening in one house.

Yvone started walking all the hours of the day, even sometimes late at night, before her visitors, so they see her and give glory to God for such a healing.

**-in Aleppo**

**\*An unseen hand hited me**

Gebrayel Yasmin testified: I am an orthodox christian, I have thirty five years of age.

Two years and a half ago, I caught a very severe stroke on the right side of my body, and it became motionless, like a wooden board. My sense of feeling went dead, from the shoulder to the bottom of my foot. Sometimes when I got injected with a needle in my right side, I wouldn't know it happened unless I look. My head shake strongly and fast, my crippled hand too. And I used to drag my hip with disturbance when walking.

Then I heard about Sharbel's amazing events.

My mother and I took a ride, and came straight to visit his blessed tomb.

Then when I was there for even less than two days, the morning of June -12-1950 I felt like an invisible hand, smacked me on the right side of my jaw, a hit made me fall on the ground. My body start convulsing especially the right side. The crisis lasted for about two hours. My mother thought I am giving up my soul.

Nevertheless, the moment the crisis ended, my right hand and leg started moving, and gained back its sense of feeling, my head stopped shaking and rested in its natural position. then I never felt any problem.

### **-That will develop risk for the boy brain**

In 1950 his parents declared: our son Tony who have six years old was born with an empty----  
-كيس البيض----- . He was little ,we wasn't paying attention for that.

But two years ago he started complaining of a pain in his-----محالب----- . I his father started observing then I found the ----كيس البيض-----empty. I was scared. I carried the boy to doctor Antoine Seccal our relative. He consulted the boy and found----كيس البيض----- empty, and assumed that the ----البيض----- are sitting on the top of the ----محالب-----, and that will develop risk for the boy brain in the future, which may make him dumb.

Fearing that, we took him to Beirut, to doctor Norman, chief doctors of the American faculty of medicine.

After a very delicate consultation, he came out with the same determination of our related doctor. And he gave him prescription, a series of injections as treatment to go for a while, and after that urged the necessity of a surgery.

A year passed, and the injections gave no result. So we stopped the injections, and gave up on medicine.

People use to tell us, he is fittible for priesthood!

We stayed like this carrying this burden, until the proficient heavenly physician came, father Sharbel, whom was sent as mercy to many by the care of God.

So we carried our son to him, us his parents accompanied by his aunt Aalyeh.

We arrived to the sanctified sepulcher. And bowed down before it, sharing the prayers with the believers. Then I his mother Mary heard, a voice in my depts, my son Tony was heald and his ----البيض----- slided down to its place.

And it was so. ----البيض----- was in its natural place, fixed, in the size of a big olive.

he was checked by doctor Antoine Saba, the designated doctor of the monastery health departement.

The miracle took place in August-29-1950.

### **-in Qamishly**

September-2-1955 Mounirah stano testified: In March-9-1954 I caught a desease of ----السحايا-- ----and I stayed ill for twenty one days.

My parents had brought me groups of physicians, among them, Ahmed Nafez, Francois Shadaravian and Paul Boulghary. Unanimously all agreed that the chance of my healing is very low.

The clergy came and gave me the death annointment. Bishop Yousef Janenjy came and was there attending my case.

During my sickness days, father Yousef Khashan the Lebanese monk was giving a spiritual training lessons, in our town Qamishly. He learned about my case, and he gave me a blessed oil from father Sharbel`s shrine. And also blessed me with a napkin having Saint Sharbel`s photo.

I slept and saw in my dream father Sharbel telling me: I gave you healing.

I woke up relaxed, and after three days, I got completely cured.

Thank God for his gifts. And thanks to Sharbel, for his intercession for me.

### **8-Sharbel in the United State of America**

Salim Ghantous from Florida wrote: I had diabetes, and my physician willed to put me in the hospital for my diabetes was so high which puted me in risk.

But I received a little piece of Sharbel clothes. I did put it in a little wrapping coat of clothe, and hanged it on my chest.

I vowed to pledge \$ seventy five, and to accumulate the (niner) Rosary for saint Sharbel. And since there are no (niner) Rosary for him. I vowed to confess and partake of the holy sacrament

fo reputed physicians, but without a benefit. They even saw that he was in a high risk of death, And the hope of his curing is out.

And since he had no children, thus he wrote to his brother Aalwan in Ayto, to come to America to inherit his wealth.

At that time Mershed was in a hospital belonging to one of the medical universitys. Right there, he saw in a dream , a monk conversing on the phone, with a physician of another hospital, asking him, <such a medicine for such a disease (and he named for him the name of the disease and its medicine),do you have that? Doctor answered: yes I do. At that point, Mershed woke up, and found no one around him.r nine successive Sundays. And I did.

After three days the Lord granted me the healing thru the intercession of saint Sharbel.

### **-I became like crazy**

Wardeh widowed of Ibrahim Sharbel from Bkarzlah, resident of Utica, New-York, USA. Wrote in July-4-1961: I had kidney, liver, heart, and -----طحال----- problems and-----حصر بول----- and -----سویداء----- . I kept seeing, numerous skilled and proficient physicians for fifteen years and my health was kept going from worst to worst.

This one day after fifteen years passed, one friend came and visited me. The fact she saw me as I was miserable, like a crazy! She had pity on me, and told me to take saint Sharbel as a shelter. And he is worthy to give you healing thru the the help of God. His wonders are widespread around the world.

This what had happened. Thru the intercession of saint Sharbel and after I asked him. I was heald and became well, and my health like before I was sick.

I do thank saint Sharbel from all my heart.

### **-A monk speaking on the phone with the doctor**

In 1955, father Antonios Aalwan testified: I remember an incident happened with some of my relatives in the United States of America, named Mershed Aalwan from Ayto Lebanon, resident of Bior, Ellinoyes.

This man caught a chronic disease. He was treated by lots of well reputed physicians. But with no benefit.

The hope in his healing was out. Physicians informed him of his condition and that he was in a high risk of death.

And since he had no children. He wrote to his brother Aalwan, in Ayto, to come to America to collect his heritage.

Meanwhile when Mershed was in this hospital belonging to one of these medical university. Right there he saw in a dream, a monk speaking on the phone , with another doctor then his, in a different hospital, and telling him about such a disease and such a medicine (and he named to him the disease and the medicine) then asked him: would you have that medicine? And that physician said yes.

At this point Mershed woke up and found no one around him.

He assumed that was saint Sharbel in the dream. Because he always venerated saint sharbel with a special exaltation. And have always sent to saint Maroon monastery in Ennaya, where saint Sharbel's sepulcher are, presents, oblations and vows.

Thus he understood that was a true vision from saint Sharbel, and that the medicine named by the saint, is what going to heal him.

He recited the dream to the doctor, in the hospital he is in. Then asked him to go to that other doctor in that other hospital. He was delivered by air, with his wife and a nurse.

Arriving there under a very critical condition. He met with that designated physician, and told him what he had saw in the dream. And asked him about the foretold medicine.

He gave it to him. He got heald.

### **9-Sharbel in Australia**

#### **-physicians were perplexed**

July-6-1955, Joseph Antoune from Sidney testified: I was crippled, always lying in bed, and couldn't walk but on two crutchs. Because of my left leg which was fully disabled.

It come to pass, that I was suffering severe pain for two weeks.

Then I told saint Sharbel: be with me oh Sharbel, to walk without a crutch, and to relief me from pain. The next day, I stood up and threw the two crutchs away, and start walking little by little. The physicians were perplexed seeing this happening.

I thank saint Sharbel for this grace.

#### **-her eyes dropp tears, days and nights**

December-15-1959 Gerges Khdair, Al-Baney from Sidney Australia wrote: I was on the street one day, when a sixty years old woman stopped me. Her eyes dropped tears days and nights.

She was seeing her physician repeatedly every week. Then he decided to pass her a surgery.

So I proposed to bring her, some blessings from Sharbel the great saint. And I recited to her, part of his life. She fully believed in him.

The next week I gave her, a small part of clothe of what I had. It was of the saint`s clothe, I brought it in with me when I visited his monastery.

She was heald when she rubbed her eyes with that holy piece.

The surgery was cancelled and the pain has gone, from her eyes.

### **10- Sharbel in the Argentina**

In Noken city, there are a hotel, called saint Sharbel one of the very modern hotels, owned by two lebanese people, Wadih and Emily, from Mayrouba-Kiserwan.

A pilot of a personal plain, had a reservation in the hotel, accompanied with three persons, whom arrived to the city to accomplish some transactions, with the state Governor, related to an orphanage and a shelter. Under the name of the evangelical school for orphans. And they spent three days in the hotel. Then time came to go back to their state. So they asked the hotel owners, why this hotel is called saint Sharbel? And who is that saint? They told them, that he is a saint from Lebanon and that he brought forth miracles around the world. The pilot and his associates said: we are expecting a possibility of some failure flying back. Therefore we may ask for some photos for saint Sharbel, so he may save us. And they gave them the photos.

The pilot name was Edwardo Morario, with the passengers, Hozey Befran, the engineer Antonio Morgio, and Benito Befran. Their airopplane was theirs, it was a just little Bayber.

Half an hour after their departure from Noken airport, they had a failure in the plain engine. The passengers screemed saint Sharbel save us! The plain crash and was destroyed. But they came out whole.

Pilot Edwardo Morario declared, that this was the first plain crash in the world with a distruction of the plain, that happen without bodily damages. And we are going to visit saint Sharbel in Lebanon to give thanks to him.

Also the Argentine news letters, wrote about the incident, on their cover pages, with photos of saint Sharbel and his biography.

**-Sharbel in France**

**-Ici Paris, Newspaper**

In year 1957, father Louis Wehbe wrote in Sharbel`s Magazine: I was lucky having the chance, to live in Ennaya`s monastery for several years, where I fulfilled a mission, nothing could`ve had pleased me as it did, which was: responding back to people`s letters.

The day I reached the monastery, was a Thursday in late september of year 1951, the monastery received 1422 letters, from all around the world, and eventually from France.

For better evaluation for the overflowing amount of letters that was answered from October-2-1950, untill august 1952, was 18483 letter.

In the beginning the most common subject of these letters was, discribing the different problems of people, like sickness, calamitys, spiritual or financial problems. Next we start seeing, people looking mostly how to grasp the grace, and rejoice and thank...

But thinking how father Sharbel news was spreaded to such a faraway localitys, we know how powerfull the capability of God if he will, to glorify those who glorified him in their lifetime.

We now give the chance to Ici Paris newspaper. The newspaper that was never intrested with religious news. Its reporter now is going to discribe to us one of the many factors, saint Sharbel worked through. That description was published in the copy of, 10-09-1951, under the title of: Father Sharbel have heald me in a miraculous sort.

We`ll translate the describtion from french to arabic by letter, ( a way to say, a precise translation).

Mrs B-B, from La Rochelle said: This is the Healing prescription, the whole city is waiting for.

When I reached the first floor, and the door was opened, I suddenly met a woman, she has a mighty head, she was dressed with old fashion clothes, and her face was beaming with clarity. She was the one father Sharbel had lavished to her a miraculous healing.

The miracle in this woman`s view, is a regular matter. She speaks with simlicity and certitude, just like receiving mail. She is about seventy two years of age. She narrated to me with all kindness, the solid miracles, which its echos are to peal on, in all the religious part of the west.

So she said: yes sir, it is the tender hearted father Sharbel who cured me. But the biggest miracle had happened with my daughter.

Me, I had joints illnesses for many years, and in the end I became a motionless. Suddenly the pain vanished, and here I started jumping like a deer! Oh! How affectionate father Sharbel is!

The joyfull tears was flowing of the eyes of this virtuous lady, and her face beaming with gladness while pronouncing the venerated name, her lips didn`t wanna give up kissing a photo for saint Sharbel displayed in the newspaper, untill the photo lost its shape and it was about to be ripted of.

Then she continued saying: yes, father Sharbel the affectionate, is so powerful, he heal the faithful and the ungrateful...and what is he capable of, men`s brain cannot figure!

Mrs B`s faith surpass the description. A strong faith, clear reigned over my feelings and moved deep my sentiments. In that little room, where things are in order, and silence govern, the supernatural feeling also govern, degrading the common scientific precepts. By then, entered the lady that received the greatest gifts of healing.

She`s a forty seven years old lady, she lost her husband, he was a deputy police officer, she is well shaped, with good appearance. And like her mother she`s calm and sober. She told me I was healed in a miraculous sort and by the intercession of father Sharbel the saint. And she started describing to me the manner of her healing, and how anyone who will, can receive the same miracle.

So she said: for many years I had pain from a swelling that appeared in the right side of my chest, and I was scared that will turn to a cancer.

And when physicians in my town, was not capable of healing me, I went to Poitiers, where there was a specialist of my case, who is doctor M... I felt better with the injections he gave me, but the tumor stayed as it was. Not long after the had pain gone, it came back much stronger, up to the degree were I lost with it my sleepiness.

Last April, I read in Ici Paris newspaper, an article of its accredited reporter, describing the strange healings that is happening in Ennaya. So it came to my mind to write to father Boutros Zahrah, the abbot of saint Maroun Ennaya`s monastery, in Lebanon. And I had the certainty that God`s care is going to put me on the salvation`s drag.

And here is the letter`s text:

Dear father, I read in Ici Paris weekly newspaper, the description of the miracles that is happening in Ennaya. And I am suffering great pain in my chest, were the most famous physicians couldn`t cure it for me. And since I have a strong faith, then my healing is of no doubt is eligible, if you grant me some relics of father Sharbel... I enclosed with the letter little bit of my hair, I did put it on the sick part of my chest.

No more than twelve days had passed, and I received the following answer:

Most respected lady I`m sending back to you the things you sent to us after we watered it with the miraculous sweat perspiring from saint Sharbel`s body. And we recognized you in our prayers.

Now what I sent for is in my possession! I blessed myself with the sanctified sweat, and some relics consisted of small pieces of red cloth, I didn`t hesitate to swallow them, moved by an irresistible feelings of faith. The rest of the relics I put it on the spots where I feel pain. After that I went to an adjacent church, the Savior, to pray before the Virgin.

The moment I started praying, the miracle started taking place, I felt like an electric circuit penetrating me, and shuddering my body. At that moment I started sweating and my chest started itching in a strange way.

At night I felt in my mouth a sharp taste of sweating. In the same time the abscess moved from the right side to the left, the inflation in my leg and in my hand that remained with me for a long term, had vanished away, and the heavy cough that use to strike me with much of spitting, I was saved from all of that pain! I was healed!.

This is what Ici Paris newspaper wrote, and it had wide echo in all parts of Europe, not much longer after that it reached America and Africa.

That gifted lady had worked tirelessly, to show gratitude to whom he granted her that grace. So she didn't stop spreading the miraculous news, not only in her town but in all towns and villages of the suburbs.

Now everyone that have a sick relative start feeling mooved by the power of faith and hope, to write to Ennaya asking for blessings, following the footsteps of Mrs B-B, by sending some of the sick person`s hair, with a piece of clothe that was layed on the sick or the painfull part of the patient.

### **-Letters from France**

France in 02/05/1952

The two pieces of relics you sent have done two great miracles: the healing of my prostate. And a healing for my mother for her liver.

Bordeaux, France in 02/15/1952

I received from father Sharbel, great spiritual and secular graces. He saved me from a critical panic situation, I happen to be in.

And a very severe migraine that put me in risk of loosing my mind. All my was dispersed away, as soon as I called for saint Sharbel. Therefore I always shelter to saint Sharbel and in fever, and I spread his news around me.

Lower Sein-France in 02/10/1952

I received in the month of December, relics for saint Sharbel from Ennaya. When my husband who have cancer had carried it, he start recovering in a strange way. Astonishment took over the physician who was in charge of him, after he gave up his healing.

Geronde, France in 02/21/1952

You have granted me in 03/01/1951 with a small fragment of clothe wetted with the perspiring liquid of saint Sharbel`s body.

I have a brother who had a surgery for his cancer in 02/20/1951. He was getting thinner every day, fearing death he called the priest.

But after he kissed the relics, few days passed, then he was able to leave the dispensary, where he spent two months. He regained quickly his power and his appetite. The surgeon who passed him the surgery was just perplexed, and he visited him several time.

Now my brother became very healthy, like he was never sick before. He returned back to his jobs. His weight returned just natural which is 98 kilogram

### **-Sharbel in Belgium**

O. de Munch – 94, Brussels, Belgium, in 10/26/1951

Most righteous father, I thank you so much for your letter that included Father Sharbel`s relics. I felt comfortable. I also gave part of the relics to a friend of mine, whom she was in pain, she benefited greatly from it. For me the traces of cancer, which was I feared had disappeared. So all my thanks to father Sharbel.

Charle-Roi, Belgium, in 11/21/1951,

My gratitude had driven me to write these lines.

I received back, ( the socks that I sent, to be blessed from father Sharbel`s sepulcher) the moment I put it on I never felt the pain again. After thirty four years full of intense pain.

This is just great in reality. That`s why I never get tired praying and thanking father Sharbel.

### **-Sharbel in Malte island**

Malte Island, in 12/30/1951

Father the Abbot, I thank you for father Sharbel's relics that I received. It has been pleasure to declare to you, that many of whom they shelter to saint Sharbel and carried his relics, they received special graces. Among them, a lady was risking death because her kidney was poisoned during birth delivery. The moment the relic was put on her exhausted body, the pain disappeared. Thus she called her new born: Alexander-Sharbel. The physician seeing this sudden change, he was nothing but astonished.

### **A-1 Sharbel in Bekaa-Kafra**

January-9-1960, the intellectual and poet Yonis El-Ebn wrote in Al-Aamal newspaper: And the teller, gone forth with the supernatural narration, and I am listening with a sense of humor, because naturally I don't believe, but what science has proved as solid concepts. But my narrator don't care much about my mocking smile, and he was kept moving zealously with what he was telling:

Few days before Christmas, father Gebrayel Sekkar the supervisor of saint Sharbel's house. The house that became a temple. He was praying in it and he was surrounded with some people of the village, when a strange light illumined the place, and a deep scent flares in, and from a cross made of ewers of cedar tree, dripped some drops of scented water...

In the same time there was some girls praying in the cave, where Sharbel use to lodge, to pray and stay in solitude, they have had the same phenomenon, light, scent, and water drops, glittered on the cheeks of a statue for the Virgin, hewed out of a white stone, and running of the ----- like tears. And in the same time, same kind of liquid with the same smell of scent, was dripping of Sharbel's photo that is hunged in the abbot's bedroom in the monastery. Shouting arises, bells runged, people came forth and started wiping out the dripping liquid, which they call, the bloody sweat.

Glittering and dripping was augmenting.

Hearing the bells ringing, people came from Bsharrey to see what happened, so they saw by naked eyes, the light and the sweat and they smell the strange scent! After that, miracles took place.

### **2-I have seen by myself**

I entered Bekaa-Kafra filled with the desire and curiosity, to get to know about the miracles which I'm going to see by myself.

It was about sunset, and I wasn't carrying a flash light for the camera, when I was opting to photograph the places where the phenomenons had happend before sunset, leaving conversations with the others untill night. I went to Sharbel's cave, and among the people accompanying me, there was this young lady named Badiaah Zaarour, she's twenty six years old, she dedicated her life to be watchguard for Sharbel's cave... Why!

She had stomach cancer, and had a surgery that failed. She had statements from four different physicians that proved her cancer.

They brought her one day, from death bed to Sharbel's sepulcher, where she slept one night. And in the morning she was consulted by many physicians, and they found no trace for the cancer.

Badiaah was one of the girls that was praying in the cave, the time the miraculous phenomenon occurred. She was guiding the group, and she was pointing toward the statue saying: this is the statue; and as I was pointing the camera towards the statue I saw two drops of tears rolling down the stony cheeks, and I thought that will be just a ruse, or it is a matter of humidity. I wiped out these two tears, and I waited, meanwhile people around me, knelt down praying in reaction toward a miracle taking place, which they became accustomed to. Then again, I was pointing the camera toward the statue; two tears occurred again...

I took the picture, and everybody around me was on their knees praying and chanting.

### **3-Sharbel have heald us**

And at night, people who have seen strange wonders, came and recite it to me, it was all meeting with the narrative, I have been told.

They presented to me Nahia Sahallita, a seventy six years old woman, it was said, she was one of the people whom Sharbel cured when these phenomenons occurred.

-what was the the sickness you was heald off ?

-My dear, ask them they all know me... Four years ago I fell off, of a berry tree, I broke my hand, and it became stiffed... I couldn't moove it, it has been four years... then when the light shined in saint Sharbel's house, I rubed my hand with the water that dripped from the cross, and I prayed then slept... I woke up and my hand was mooving, like it didn't have a problem before... and when everybody was confirming the truth of her story, she was lifting up her hands towards heaven, and she was saying gladly like a child: look my dear, my hand now is mooving.

Another lady in her thirtys walked forward:

-And you my lady?

-My name is Leila Antonios, two years ago, in one of my three sons body appeared a strange kind of pimple, then rapidly pimples developed and covered all his body then it was transmitted to his two brothers, and it covered their bodies from the noses to the toeses... and in vain the physicians treatments and their pills had gone.

Then the night the phenomenon appeared I wiped my sons` bodies with the bloody sweat, and I left them spending the night at saint Sharbel`s house, and I stayed all night praying.

-have the pimples disappeared ?

-it disappeared, look sir.

She pointed out three boys, who`s bodies have no trace of pimples, and said: the village residents all know them, ask them.

And they thirdly represented, she`s scared of me, and scared of the camera. Then when she knew I write about Sharbel, she stepped forward and said: I, Sharbel healed me. Her name is Mary Hawshab Makhoulf, she`s eleven years old.

-And what Sharbel have healed you of my little girl?

-Since I was born and I was afflicted with a constant shuddering in my hands. And when I heard the bells ringing, and miracles happening in Sharbel`s house, I ran with the runners, and threw myself before the Altar praying and crying, and I stayed all night before the Altar, and in the morning the shuddering had gone away.

#### **4-New sweat**

At that moment, shouting arises; What? And I overlooked to where people gathered, when something like sweat was dripping of a photo representing Sharbel, and the same strange scent flared out, the one I smelled when I was in the cave. I wasn`t much interested with that phenomenon, but I preferred seeing those who are told of, they have been healed of sicknesses and disabilities, and hearing their stories. In vain I was seeking. And now praying time is taking place, the prayer after every marvel. I stood up watching the praying village, men and women, elders and children, young men and young ladies, all of them knelt down and praying together. They don`t stand up, but to switch from the monastery to Sharbel`s house, and from Sharbel`s house to the cave, then they return to the monastery.

#### **5- I experienced by myself**

A young pretty lady walked forward, she`s in her sixteenth, her name is Mary Shalhoub:

-I was on my knees praying together with my friend (girl) Nour Lattouf, when a bright light beamed in from Sharbel`s photo, so we escaped, and since then I couldn`t dare to enter the room, the light shined from, until I`ve seen the new miracles by myself.

But even though, yet I was still confused and skeptical, 1- perhaps the liquid is a result of weather reaction, even thinking that such a possible reaction did not occur but on Sharbel`s photos and the statue of the Virgin and the Crucifix! 2- Perhaps the strange scent, are just some new incense, getting lit somewhere. 3- And possibly that the healing is, but self deception.

But the next day, I stood up astonished like the rest of the astonished people, before two phenomenons, I experienced by myself.

The first phenomenon was this: The person that was hosting me, had litted charcoals for me for heating (Bekaa-Kafra, is a small distant village, with an altitude over fifteen hundred yards, having freezing weather), the result was, I got a headache and nausea, and I stayed untill dawn feeling like I was gonna explode.

At dawn, an old lady approached me, and said: let me wipe your head with Sharbel`s Sweat deer sir. And before I answer she wiped my head with a piece of cotton; instantly I felt like something heavy dropped off of my head, and all the pain vanished! Then when I asked her about that cotton and what`s in it, she said: I wiped with it the cross when it was dripping the sweat.

I could`ve never relate what I felt to a deceptive inspiration, because I didn`t think or prayed, nor I prepared myself to receive any charism.

The second phenomenon was this: I accompanied Mary Shalhoub to her house, to see the photo she said the light beamed out of, and when she hold the photo with her hand, I have seen a strange light, like lightning, and it shine for seconds. I checked well the photo and I didn`t see in it, anything can emit light! I asked Mary if she saw anything? She denied! Then when I straighted it to photographe it. The same light flahed again.

### **-My husband work as a labor man to make a living**

February-18-1961, Naquiyyeh wife of Brahim Ghaleb testified: my son Boutros was five months old, I noticed he is having pain in his thigh.

And when doctor Shedyak consulted him, he told me: your son is in need of a specialist in the faculty. So I took him to the faculty with the company of doctor Shedyak. After examination they told me: a surgery is a must for your son`s haunch, because the hip is mooved off, of its place, and it must be mounted with a special piece of metal, that coast three hundred L.P. . When I heard that I went crazy, because I am poor, and my husband work as a labor man to make a living.

And that physician told doctor Shedyak: if they don`t do what I said, he is going to suffer pain, and his leg is going to be shorter then the other, then kept silent. Doctor Shedyak said may God take care, and asked the surgeon: when will be the due time for the surgery? He answerd: in due time I`ll call after them, to bring in, the child.

After a while we was informed by the faculty, about the description of that piece of metal which we need to buy from a store in Bab-Idris

whom he have these materials.

I informed our physician doctor Shedyak, and he said; you need to hurry up to bring in, what is necessary. At that time my husband Brahim headed to buy the material, and I headed to father Sharbel, I asked him to heal my son without a surgery, and I prayed and I asked of him fervently.

Thank God, he responded to my petition, and immediately my son walked straight.

When his father returned back he was surprised, seeing him walking. He told me: I found the store closed, so I came back willing to go tomorrow. And I told him: there is no tomorrow nor after tomorrow, truly the only physician is father Sharbel and he healed your son!

We went to doctor Shedyak and he accompanied us to the faculty. After examination and radiology, they congratulated me for my son's healing.

And yesterday, we came to father Sharbel's monastery, my son, my husband, my mother in law, and I, to thank father Sharbel, we settled near his room where he lived, and we spent the whole night praying.

#### **-This night is judging between the life or death of your daughter**

November-7-1961 Rogina Salim El-Sheiah from Fern El-Shebbak wrote: my daughter May, spouse of Samir Hetteh, was under a definite risk of death, after passing her two risky surgeries, by doctor Khaldy, with the help of five physicians, among them was one American.

The night she was receiving the second surgery, doctor Khaldy told me: pray for the saints and don't neglect! Because midnight is judging between the life or death of your daughter. And added: pray for saint Sharbel.

He refreshes me, and I started praying for saint Sharbel, kneeling on my knees for six straight hours without stopping.

Midnight on the dot, my daughter called me and said: mom give me water. I was just surprised, because my daughter was out of conscience, she was cold like ice, and there was no hope of her healing. I gave her water, and I touched her with my hand when I felt the warmth came back to her. I informed doctor Khaldy who was staying up awaiting her news. He came and with astonishment said: what?! Have you prayed? And I said: yes I prayed for saint Sharbel. He answered: the faith the faith only have healed your daughter, peace to the saints and the prophets.

#### **-The retired first lieutenant in the syrian army Mhammad Helmy Irbelli**

The date of December fifth 1965, when I was home, in Al-Shraibat quarter Damascus, I saw on the lebanese television a presentation of father Sharbel Makhlof and his beatification in saint

Peter's Basilica, with the presence of his beatitude the Pope. I have seen all these spectacles until the end of the show on Beirut television.

The fact that I was very attentive watching all details with interest... it touched me deep in the soul. And an idea came to my mind, to speak with this saint in my while sleeping, and implore him to heal the pain of my foot which was wounded six years ago.

After I went to Germany several times for hospitalization, and I consulted many physicians among them doctor Shrouder, the physicians president in Louison hospital in Aven city, but all these treatments was of no benefit. Then I gave up taking all these medicines, and my hope in healing my foot got cut off.

That same night, I went to bed and said: oh father Sharbel Makhlouf, if you really are a saint, implore God to heal my foot and if he does, I will believe in your sainctity, and I fell asleep.

I have seen in my dream, an old man sleeping in a box, wearing white clothe and on his head, same like what the Pope have and a-----مقصب-----and on his chest a wooden Cross. He stretched his hand and cutted a small piece of my ear and said to me: that is not gonna hurt you, and truly I wasn't hurt at all.

The morning of December sixth 1965, when I woke up from sleep, I didn't wear the stretch socks that reduce the pain of my foot, like usual, because I said to myself, perhaps I was heald. Then I took a walk inside of my house, and I didn't feel any pain! I walked to down town for four hours and I didn't feel any pain like before. Now six months already passed and also I didn't feel any pain, and I walk on feet with all ease.

Now I sent you this statement not for publicity especially that I am a muslim person.

### **-I prayed to saint Sharbel and I got heald**

Father Ghassan the congregation minister narrated in 01/16/1966: A durzic women married to Ramez Hmaidan. She had some water congestion in her knee, and a severe pain in her left shoulder.

She tried all she could've, of medical ways to suck the water out of her knee, she benefited nothing. And the more the water was sucked out, the more the congestion grow.

Then physicians ordered to pass a surgery, that is to put an outlet underneath the skin, thus when there are congestion it will suck it out. She agreed, but did not appear at the apointment date.

The day of December fifth 1965 I went to the Church, and after Mass I passed by her house, so she asked me if saint Sharbel still preforming miracles. I answered yes and in fact today is the

day of his beatification in Rome, would you like to know about saint Sharbel? She said: yes definitely. So I gave her a booklet of saint Sharbel, I had it in my car.

Then the ninth of that month, it was a Thursday in the afternoon, about two o'clock, I passed by her, and she met me out by the door shouting: father Ghassan! father Ghassan! the tears were immersing her eyes. I said what happened to you have you gone crazy? She started bending her knee and twisting her left shoulder. I told who treated you? Have you had a surgery? She said Sharbel, Sharbel, I prayed to saint Sharbel and I got healed!

### **-Ali El-Hejjar**

A counsel member of the American inventors institute in -----Washington-----, and the general secretary for the Lebanese atomic research association.

-----Ali El-Hejjar is a muslim man, who understands saint Sharbel through muslim scriptures. The following is an anticipation of his stories, a proffer of koran passages:-----

In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate

Those who believed and did the goods, the Merciful is having cordiality for them.

Father Sharbel, a monk who dedicated his life to worship God day and night. So he found an abode for him in Ennaya's monastery. And did not take his religion for diversion, and life has not conceited him.

So he believed and beware - thus he prayed and fasted, and worked so he prospered and corrected, then died and not decomposed- challenging the law of nature.

The lord selected him to be a good example in an age, where people have rebelled against his obedience. God selected him as if he was aiming to attract people's vision to his chastity. So he bestowed his verses on some of the people as signs, perhaps people will be lead to the right path.

So it was from the Merciful to this sober and virtuous monk, that extraordinary miracles appeared on his hand which exceeded the concepts of science and art, however for anyone who visited him in Ennaya's monastery or have thought of him.

I myself have signed Down two miracles that have its reputed degree in mechanical science and medicine.

### **-The mechanical wonder**

Examination on Sharbel's body took place in 1950, in Ennaya's monastery, and it was found whole after fifty two years of his death.

One of these days when I was coming back from Trablos to Beirut passing through Jbeil, I saw thousands of people driving toward Ennaya's monastery to visit father Sharbel, so I also destined in my little Renault, to accomplish such a blessed visit. Upon reaching the village of Toarzayya, right next to a fountain, this one person advises me to cool down the engine before starting the old route that goes from Ehmej to Ennaya's monastery so the engine temperature won't go over heated, which will break me down, taking for example what happen often with others, because of the difficultys they face, very high hills, with an angle from 12 to 16% , no asphalt, dirt road full of holes, bumps, and stones, with an average speed up to 3 k/h, and you can only go on low Gear. I did not listen to his advice, and I kept driving untill I reached the turn to the route Ehmej to Ennaya's monastery, where I stopped behind a convoy of cars that stopped truly because of over heating, and the drivers was buying the waterb from people for that reason. I took advantage from the break and I boat a jar of water, and I asked the person to fill up my radiotor when I loosend the the down faucet to empty the hot water. Upon starting the cooling job, the convoy ahead of me mooved on, and the cars behind me started beeping, so I was forced to drive forward, forgetting to shut down the faucet. The water was leaking. Seeing that. right behind me colonel Sheikh Raad El-Hashem, he started blowing the horn, to let me know, then I stopped, but it was to late, the engine was completely empty. The colonel asked me to park the car aside, and stop driving, so the engine won't burned up. I looked at him, and told him: I am destined to visit father Sharbel whom God granted selection of miracles, and I'm going to keep driving without water in the engine, let it either get burned or it will take me to the monastery. So I kept going relying on the blessing of God, with a strong faith. Later on I met with two other colonels Najjar and the deceased Semrany at the last curb of the hill before reaching the monastery, were they stepd out of their car, the was a station wagon, because it was proceeding slowly and with extreem difficulty at that dangerous curb, they told me: look at your car how stongly it is mooving! I answered them: it is mooving in God's willing without water in the engine relying on father Sharbel. It sounded strange to them and they willed to verify if this was a mecanical miracle. They reached me at the end of the hill, where we uncovered the engine before hundreds of visitors, and we was all astonished, finding the engine just cold, when it was expected to look reddish because of the heat and its oil boiling, burning and smoking, theese are factors that could easily happen even if the car was driven for a shorter distance, and on flat areas.

The present people wanted to be certain there is no water in the engine, they brought a jar of water and filled the radiotor when everybody saw it absorbed its whole amount, and that made them be convinced of a miracle occurrence.

### **-the medical wonder**

The end of the year 1965, I got stricken with an accident in my right hand and shoulder. And that caused me an unbearable pain, it stayed with me for five months, even with the radiology I received in Hotel Dieux hospital, and the medical treatments supervised by the famous specialist doctor Joseph Hajjar. And with diversity of arabic medicine treatments, I attain no positive result. I couldn't drive my car but with difficulty, and only with my left hand, and never I could've write.

This one day of January 1966, I took a ride in my car along the road Beirut-damascus accompanied by Mr Elias Qerbaney from Baabdat, and I was driving with my left hand. The pain in my right hand and shoulder was increasing.

While driving we was conversing about the miracles that occurred on father Sharbel's hand, amongst it, the mechanical miracle that happen in my car, the year 1950, then Mr Qerbaney said: since you believe strongly in father Sharbel, why don't you ask him for healing? So I said: my lord heal me through the intercession and the honor of the good father Sharbel, were if I got heald, I will visit him in Ennaya`s monastery, driving with both hands.

The next morning, in the way to my job in the Civil and Provincial Order Directorate, located in Al-Makased Islamic Organization building in Al-Berej Beirut. And upon my arriving to the elevator in the southern section of the building, arrived a monk, I asked of him to enter first, he did, then I entered after him, and I told him: to what floor you are heading father? He answers me: to what floor you are going? I told him to the fifth, he said: go ahead.

While going up he was looking at me with a sublime modesty and chastity. So I looked at him and I saw on his chest a round patch of clothe, written on it in arabic < saint Sharbel's monastics>, and in his face I recognized the countenance of father Sharbel as he appears in his photos. So I said to myself: oh glorious God, yesterday we was remembering father Sharbel and asking the healing of God; and today what a coincidence I meet one of his monks, plus that he look like him. It was a pleasure to me to invite him to my office for a coffee, were I can recite to him the mechanical miracle happened in my car in 1950, in order to register it in the memorandum of the monastery, but unfortunatly I arrived to the fifth floor and I walked out of the elevator, when the monk stayed in, and I missed what I willed of, inviting him in; I started thinking that was a mistery, and I assumed he dominated over my mind, and made me forgot everything.

Then I entered my office and I started writing with my right hand for a while unusually, as it was healthy, and the pain disappeared completely, and for good, without even noticing.

Then when it was clear to me, the healing was a strange matter and miraculous. I thanked my God, and I was in a state of astonishing, thinking about the monk who accompanied me in the elevator, and that between his presence with me, and my quick healing, there are a misterious relation, and the missing of inviting him to my office was a bigger mistery.

Later on I willed to make a quest of the core of this mystical medical miracle. So I asked of one of my assistants, Mr Elie Farid El-Khoury from El-Naaemeh to investigate about that monk if he ever went to any of the managements of the civil or provincial order, or to any of its departements, for a job that belongs to him or to Ennaya`s monastery. So Mr Khoury did ask all the departements, and it appeared that no monk came to do any job, nor for him or for Ennaya`s monastery. Beside that Mr Khoury informed me that it is forbidden for the monks, to put on their chest the writings 'Saint Sharbel's monastics' or any other sign, and so the writings that I readd on the monk`s Chest was nothing but an indication, that it was him the monk Sharbel.

Sunday January-30-1966. I bounded to Ennaya`s monastery, to check about these misterys. So I met with the honorable abbot Tobiya Zyadeh the monastery president, and I recited to him both

miracles the mechanical and the medical one. So he was greatly astonished of the appearance of father Sharbel in the elevator, and my complete healing that came right afterward. And he confesses to me, he didn't happen to send to the Civilian and Provincial Order Directorate any monk. And it is out of question that any of the monks can have on his chest the writings < Saint Sharbel's monastics>. He then certified that the writings and the quick healing is an indication of the appearance of father Sharbel himself in the elevator. Learning that of the repeated cases, of his appearing in many similar occasions, that produce increasing of faith and certainty.

### **-no need for the surgery**

Habib Aby Khalil from Hrajel wrote in 07/10/1966: An indisposition happened to my mother, her intestin got knotted. I carried her to the hospital. After consulting her doctors Joseph Karam and Fawzi El-Aadaymi, the owner of Our lady of Lebanon's hospital, in Jounieh. They urged to pass her a surgery rapidly. They asked me to rush to the blood bank in Beirut, and get her the needed blood.

Right in spot they took my mother to the operations room, to prepare her, and I rushed to Beirut.

In the way there I asked deeply from my heart, saint Sharbel to heal my mother and save her from a surgery, and if this happen I go visit him in Ennaya.

When I got to the laboratory, I found that a phone call preceded me saying, there is no need for the blood because there is no need for the surgery.

I went back very happy. And I found my mother recovered completely of her illness.

### **-the healing of blood disease-----زلال-----in 07/20 1966**

Mr Brahim Merhej testified: A -----زلال-----in the blood happen to me to the degree of 245, when the average level goes between 20 and 40, therefore doctors lift up their hands off of me and gave up hope of my healing. They even prepared me the coffin, because doctor Shamy said: his case is over, may God bless his soul. And they request for a Holy Communion for me and he last anointing, and upon his arrival reverend father Toubiya Khalil, the superior of -----انطوش-----Jbeil he gave me some blessings of saint Sharbel, and the Holy Communion; the moment the Holys touched my mouth, my spirit was restored inside of me, I mooved and I asked for food, after I was motionless and my mouth was just close.

### **-A healing of a-----شهوة-----in the neck in 09/10/1966**

Asaad Farah testified: my mother Henoud was born and in her neck an apparent -----شهوة-----  
flagrant and undesirable to be seen. And every time she look at it she cry and she ask God to take  
that sickness away from her. And now she`s sixty and still she have that-----شهوة-----in her neck.

And when she heard about saint Sharbel`s miracles, she prayed for him a special prayer, and  
she was asking him days and nights to take away her sickness.

Then she visited Sharbel`s monastery in Ennaya, and had a drink and blessings. And she  
started rubing her neck of the blessings she had from the sepulcher, for one month. After she  
putted a condition on him that he have one month to take away that defect.

Then a month passed and was taken away comletely.

### **-American physician Statment**

I Alexander Thomas the under signer, registered in Boasten Massachusetts # 3789, in the year  
1963 as expert in Corpses and Death Burial Administration. I have seen the corpse of the blessed  
Sharbel in August-15-1966.

I stood up astonished! The body liquid covering his body. And that liquid was a combination of  
blood and water, and its thickness is three inches, his clothe looked reddish.

In all the years that I transfered dead bodys from a coffin to another, it was all decayed, and the  
decomposition had formed its distruction in it.

When the honorable father Tobiya Zyadeh the monastery superior, told me: father Sharbel  
reposed sixty eight years ago in year 1898, astonishment reigned over me. He look like he died  
twelve to thirteen weeks only. The blood and water in the shroud, is clear red-----قان-----, and the  
body liquid is similar to the blood that is extracted of a corpse during the taxidermy operation.

What was left of Sharbel`s body was intact. A whole body, and in good condition comparing to  
the number of years he have been reposed, and so his clothes. I never experienced in my years of  
experiments anything that can rival to such a keeping intact, like this miraculous body, and that  
holy scent emanated from it!

Father Sharbel`s clothes was supposed to absorbe the bloody liquid throughout these years in  
the coffin.

I also learned that the coffin was opened to the public in the year 1950, right there his body  
was suppose to decay and fall into ashes.

My only interpretation for this phenomenon, is that it is made by God`s hand the almighty.

### **-the sanctification Miracle**

Maryam Aassaf Aawwad originally from Shakra, Isra, Dara, Syria. Resident of Hemmana, Lebanon.

She`ve had three surgerys for cancer, between 1963 and 1965. one in her stomach second in her intestin, and third in her right side of her neck.

These surgerys did not succeed, in extracting all the cancer of her body.

So Maryam started praying to the blessed Sharbel...

After that her two glands was infected by cancer, she was suffering pain from them, and had big difficulty swallowing, and her voice started diminishing. They became very red and inflated like the size of a walnut. She rejected all treatments and radiology. But she was asking of saint Sharbel either the healing or the power to resist that sickness.

One day when she was sitting in her bed. She raised the following prayer to saint Sharbel: will you grant me the healing of that sickness, you are the great saint who heald, the blinds and the cripples! And when I`m heald of that sickness I go give you thanks in your shrine".

She did ask for healing at night and before sleep. The next day the healing took place, she became whole and healthy.

And Maryam came to saint Maroun`s monastery, to saint Sharbel`s Sepulcher to fulfill her vow. She came thanking and testifiying to the greatness of God`s work through Ennaya`s saint.

And pope Paul the six proclaim Sharbel saint in October-09-1977

### **-Sharbel baptizing a baby the night of his sanctification**

A boy was born in Australia for a lebanese family and have a heart problem. He was in a critical condition. Therefore a nun in the hospital asked the boy`s father to get a priest to give him the Sacrament of Christening, before death.

So the boy`s father rushed to saint Sharbel`s monastery in Sidney Australia, and asked the monks if any of them can and give the boy the Christining Sacrament. The monks apologized one after the other saying: we cannot leave the Church the night of the sanctification, because of heavy crowds of people in the monastery, plus a part of the monks went to Rome to Participate in the ceremony of the sanctification in the Vatican.

The father lost hope of his child`s Christening. And started awaiting the bad news of his son`s death within hours.

During the night no one had contacted him, and so in the morning. About noon time the father called the nun asking her about his child's condition? She said: he became well since one of your monks baptized him, here the father was astonished and said: no one accepted to do the job!? She answered back: yes, a priest came, he has a white beard, he gave him the sacrament. The father realised, and gone to the hospital, he understood it was him saint Sharbel who baptized and heald his son. The boy became a young man, still vigorous full of life, and work as a bulldoser driver.

### **-Sharbel is blessing the crowds**

The day of sanctification October-09-1977, after a crowded and impressive walk from Jbeil to Ennaya, that lasted for over five hours, sister Jaqueline narrated in Parish Magazine: I was standing up praying and my eyes fixed on saint Sharbel statue, which upright in Ennaya's monastery square, when his up lifted hand mooved and draw the sign of the cross slowly, I thought this is because of the tireness in my eyes, and I rubed my eye with my hand, but the hand is back again mooving before my sight. I looked at my sister nun, and she whispered in my ear: he is mooving and blessing! Some people started kneeling others started chris crossing themselves. When the same moove was repeated from the blessed hand: shouting was raised: he is blessing! The young man Antoine K who participated in the walk says: I had a camera in my hand and when I got close it was stoped. And every time I was seeing the hand mooving, I was taking a photo, the time he stretched his hand over the crippled boy, whom was heald, I took two photos to the stretched hand. Some people have seen the statue's eyes blinking, others saw eye drops.

Astonishment crying and rejoicing reigned over the majority of the presence.

Reverend father Boulos Azzi who was present the night and the day of sanctification in the confessing -----booth----- in Ennaya told us: the most important miracles was repentance, lots of people came to confession with tears, and numerous was those who hasn't confess for decades, also came forth.

### **-incense in El-Nabaa**

#### **-stones was transfered to incenses**

October-17-1977, I father Hanna Iskandar was a ----rossafore---- monk, in Kfifan monastery back then, together with the -----rossafores----- brothers heard two storys about the incenses miracles in El-Nabaa (a little town adjoining Beirut). The first story was from father Youhanna Marcos the superintendent, who entered the class room, carrying in his hand a sum of little stones and said: look, these are stones. We looked and saw, it was stones. He brought a lighter and burned one of them and said: look Sharbel changed the stones to incences in El-Nabaa. We was astonished! He gave each of us some. I examined my part that stayed with me many years. It

is stones the way it appear from the outside, and if broken, likewise from the inside, but it has light weight and burned as incenses.

The second story was from the reposed father louis wehbeh, who back then informed us about the story of the miracle, he said: a sheeite muslim father of a family, had vowed to saint Sharbel to offer him incences, the equal amount of the weight of his sick son, if he got heald.

But the poverty of that family prevented them from paying off the vow.

Then It happen to pass that the boy was playing in a wreck place, where there are remnants of some barricades from the days of war. Saint Sharbel appeared to him and told him: why your parents haven't take you to me to pay the vow? The boy answered: we do not have the money to buy incenses that equal my weight. So the saint told him: this area here is full of incenses. The boy looked, when every thing around him was transfered to incenses, the stones, the gravels, the sand, the bags of sand (of the barricades), the car tires, so he shouted miracle! People bursted and started picking up the incenses. Miracles of healing also occurred, and because of the heavy crowds, some people couldn't arrive, so they picked up some gravels from afar hoping it will be blessed, then upon reaching home they found the gravels changed to incenses! What is more strange then that, was some who couldn't reach the area, and while walking, they were submitted to the road conditions, rain from above, mud from below, angry when a car pass by a pad hole, it was showering their clothes with mud. But quickly their anger turn to joy when they saw the mud on their clothes turning to incences!.

### **-a strange power**

Hasna Mansour-Karm-----saddeh-----narrated: a splinter of a bullet hitted my elbow and landed in. Then burned my bone and paralyzed my left hand completely. Some physicians saw that it will be better cut it off, so the bones will not splinter in, which may poisoned my body and cause me death. But I refused to have such a surgery, so on my husband and my family.

This one day, when the news about El-Nabaa miracle was spreading all over Lebanon, I willed to go there, seeking healing. Then when I reached the place, where there was a large arosed photo for saint Sharbel. Then I extended my right hand to touch the photos for blessing and to ask for healing, I did that three times. What happened was, the moment I begin to extend my right hand, I begin to feel in my paralyzed hand a strange power, that started from the finger nails all the way to the shoulder, and stop.

That night, saint Sharbel appeared to me in my dream and spoke to me saying: lift up both of your hands together, like I do before you, so I did what he told me, then he continued saying: the three fingers are going to heal right away, but the thumb and the index are going to heal gradually. And this what happend.

### **-a grain of incense in the hand of a new born baby**

Father Antoine Sadaqua testified: Maria De Nazareth, living in Bresil, was barren. Medical methods did not succeed in making her pregnant. Such a fiasco increased, her sadness and despairing.

One day she met with this lebanese lady that arrived recently to Bresil from Lebanon, she was carrying with her some incense, as blessing relics from saint Sharbel. And she started narrating about abundant miracles performed at saint Sharbel`s hand. Among these miracles was: granting the grace of bearing children for sterils women, Maria was touched, and wished the lord grant her a child. Then the lebanese woman gave Mariah some incense and asked her to pray and cense.

What she did she swallowed one grain of that incense. She then got pregnant. And she couldn`t wait to see her new born.

When her time came, she went to the hospital for delivery. When she was delivering the baby the doctor was astonished seeing the boy closing one hand and opening the other, the doctor was surprised, he never seen such a thing before, so he did begin opening the boy`s hand fearing something happened to his hand, then he was more amazed finding a grain of incense. It was that grain the mother had swallowed intending pregnancy.

### **-the joy of faith**

#### **1-Nouhad El-Shamy**

#### **-I wish I live his life**

Mrs Nouhad El-Shamy testified: I have seven sons and five daughters. I use to fulfill my religious dutys in a complete way. Attending Sunday Mases, praying the Rosery daily with procession for the Virgin together with my children, kneeling before their sight. Praying the Rosery in the morning, and at noon the -----proclamation-----of the Virgin, the common habits for most people.

My first meeting with saint Sharbel was at his appearance in 1950, when I saw the tools, saint Sharbel used at his cell, I was deeply touched and I cryed, I was twelve years old: my mother asked me why am I crying? I told her, I wish I live his life, I don`t want money, nor I want beautiful houses!.

Time passed then I got married, and I mooved to Al-Mzaryb (a distant village) even I am a resident of Jounieh (a modern city). And I lived the life of a villager, with all its difficultys: cooking and washing on woody fire, making our own bread the ancient way called < El-Tannour >, carrying trees for fire from the the woods, washing clothes with ashes in the river, cultivating, and taking care of cows sheeps and chickens, plus I had two aged persons, one of them my

mother in law, who disturbed my life, and lately no one want to give her service, but when she became infirm. I forgave her and served her with the best of my ability.

And I used to gather the youths of the village, and teach them the Our Father and Hail Mary, the----repenting order----and the Creed. My husband use to object me taking responsibility gathering these kids. But the Virgin always looked after us. And we used to pray to her the Rosery every night, and celebrate her procession. Then when I mooved to Halat, people start bringing me a sick child or any other sick, for healing. And as the recommendation of the Virgin, I pray on water three times the Creed and one time the Our Father and the Hail Mary for the Christ wounds, then dip the cross in that water, and many was getting heald.

### **-first surgery in the kidney**

I had a stone in the kidney that measure one and a half centimeter it was causing me infection. I use to get treated for that in the hospital for straight week, then go home, and before accomplishing twenty four hours, I got to go back to the hospital.

Doctor Antoine El-Shamy the owner of Saint Martin hospital, decided to pass me a surgery, but the fact that I delivered a baby not too long ago, he cancelled it.

So I went visiting Ennaya`s cell, I prayed and took some soil from before the cell and swallow it.

That night, in the dream Sharbel came and called me: Nouhad! Nouhad! Are you awake? I answered : yes. He told me : sit ,what kidney bothers you. I said the left one. He cutted me and, I was scared when I saw the flesh, but without blood. I screamed to the Virgin: oh Virgin shelter me, how is he going to give me surgery without anesthesia? He answered me I am Bouna (father, as a priest in home dialect ) Sharbel I passed you a surgery for the stone. My husband rushed to me surprised: what`s the matter with you so you screamed like this?! I answered him: saint Sharbel came and passed me surgery for my kidney. He approached and saw the trace of the surgery, a red spot perspiring a liquid. And I got completely heald.

### **-( Falej la taalej ) means: a stroke don't bother treating**

January-09-1993, I got a stroke, my hand and tongue was paralyzed to the left side. I entered Saint Martin hospital in Jbeil, Doctor Joseph El-Shamy received me. A specialist for heart, -----vains and tendons----- . He rushes me to the intensive care unit, and started treating me together with doctor Nashanakian and the family physician doctor Majid El-Shamy. After the treatments, the radiology and the examinations, the results was this: the vain in my neck, is dry with a degree of 80% in the left side, and 70% in the right, which caused me paralyzing half of my body, that is stroke. And there is no treatment for such a case. Like the doctor said: ( falej la taalej )!

They recommended to me to go home for three months, then go to Hotel Dieux hospital to get a new X-Ray, then perhaps they can pass me a surgery, to exchange the cloged vains in my neck, with plastic ones.

### **-a touch from saint Sharbel**

After that my elder son Saad went to Ennaya`s monastery, and prayed of a wounded heart before saint Sharbel statue. And brought me, a blessed oil and soil from saint Sharbel`s sepulcher. Then when my daughter annointed me with this relics, I felt numb in my hand and leg. Then I came out of the hospital after I spent nine days. At home I stock in my bed. My husband give me lift to the bathroom, and my childrens give me food and water with a hose or a straw.

I spent three days in this situation after leaving the hospital

### **-admonition and regretting**

Next, I was sleeping, I saw myself walking upstairs the cell in Ennaya, and attended the Mass with the monks, were saint Sharbel gave me holy Communion!. And in the forth day, Thirsday night or Friday morning which was January-22-1993, I felt pain in my head and in the right side of my body. So I prayed and demanded of the Virgin Mary and saint Sharbel, and said to them: I, what have I done? why have you crippled me in bed? What is my sin? I raised a family of twelve children, with fatigue, in praying and persevering untill they grew up. I am not trying to force my will on you, but if you are willing to heal me, do so, or finish my life, whatever you will I am contented! Death is a must and don`t let my house family suffer my case!. But then I regretted and said: forgive me oh Virgin, I must carry the cross and not flee the pain. With your passion oh Christ.

### **-I am coming to give you a surgery!**

My husband and children left me to sleep and rest.

At eleven PM while dreaming, I saw a ray of light entering my room and two monks heading towards my bed, and saint Sharbel approached me and uncovered my neck and putted his hand and told me: I am coming to give you a surgery! So I looked but I couldn`t see his face because a radiant light was beaming from his eyes and his body. I was perplexed and said: father why you want to pass me a surgery, physicians did not recommend one. He said: yes you need a surgery, and I father Sharbel, coming to pass it for you. I looked to the statue of the Virgin that sits next to me and said: oh Virgin you are my shelter interceed for me, how theese monks are going to pass me a surgery without anesthesia and give me stiches! Then I looked to the statue I saw that it came and sat between the two monks. It wasn`t just a rigid statue, but it was beaming with

light, and animated full of life. At that moment I felt great pain under saint Sharbel`s fingers that was rubbing my neck... After saint Sharbel finished the surgery, saint Maroun approached, took a cushion and sat me then putted it behind my back, he took the cup of water that is next to me, and took away the straw from it, then putted his hand under my head, and said: drink this water. I told him: father I can`t drink without a straw. Saint Maroun again said: yes, we passed you a surgery, you can drink, and now you are going to drink this water and stand up and walk. Then approached and held my head with his right hand and had me drink with his left.

### **-the tears of joy**

After that I woke up from sleep and the water was running down my throat naturally, and found myself sitting the way the monk sat me, I looked at the Virgin statue and found it back in its place on the table, I felt burning in my neck, and without noticing I putted my hand to see what is happening in my neck, then I noticed my left hand the paralyzed one became just natural, and I felt my leg is moving like usual under the blanket. So I asked my daughter who was sleeping in her bed next to me with her new born baby: what time it is? She said: two in the morning. I stepped out of my bed, and without full conscience, I knelt before saint Sharbel`s photo and the Virgin to thank them. It was the first time I could`ve kneel on my knee because it was inflicted with stiffness, when a physician had indicated to cut it out, to minimize the pain. I walked to the bathroom and I saw my neck have two cuts one to the left one to right, and each cut was about twelve centimeters. Then I walked to my husband`s room that is next to mine, and turned the light on, my husband was praying the rosary, he looked and screamed with loud voice: woman how did you come alone? Now you may fall down and it will be an ordeal over an ordeal, not for my sake but for yours. I lifted up my hand and told him: don`t worry, saint Sharbel passed me a surgery and I walked! My husband fell down passing out! I approached him and smacked him several times ( in order to wake him up ) calling him: oh Simon! Oh Simon! Then when some of my children knew, they fell down also. They started informing each other on the phone, then they gathered, while crying the tears of joy.

### **-I had cutted you by the power of God so they see you**

In the morning I went to the cell together with my daughter and husband to thank the saint for his graces. So I met that day with the cell`s superior, father Michael Mghames, and when I spoke to him about my story and showed him the cuts, he said: this cut is not for you only. This is a sign for the whole world. And you must tell the radios to spread the news, and go step forward on the televisions. My husband answered: we thank God the woman is healed and saint Sharbel need no advertisement.

We attended Liturgy with him in the cell.

Then after coming back home, it was the big surprise for the neighbors and the relatives whom was visiting me as crippled.

The next day, I woke up from sleep, and three stiches appeared in my neck on the right side, and two on the left. Doctor Majid EL-Shamy pulled two of them, but couldn't pull the rest, because he was getting stricken with electric shock every time he was touching the string.

Then physicians declared that my healing is a result of the medicines they gave me for the migraine I had. And after they were asked about the cut in my neck: they answered: that is because of too much scratching from the pain!...

LBC television came and filmed, and the news was spreaded.

Visitors came from all Lebanon and from the outside. And our house was packed with thousands of visitors. After one week passed on my catastrophe, Abdo Yaaqoub the priest of our congregation in Halat likewise doctor Majid El-Shamy told me: we want to send you afar to your son's house so you can rest for couple of days. I was subjected to their order.

But at night saint Sharbel appeared to me and told me: don't leave the people, keep your belief, I had cutted you by the power of God so they see you, because some had gone far from praying and from the church and from venerating the saints. And you cannot do anything to people! But whoever need anything from me, I father Sharbel am present in the cell always. And I ask you to visit the cell every twenty second of each month, and attend Liturgy all your life...

### **-photos dripping oil**

I kept in force the procession to saint Sharbel in my house in Halat

every Thursday, the day the miracle appeared. And in August-15-1993 when I was in my village El-Mzaryb, saint Sharbel appeared to me in my dream and told me: Nouhad I want you to make the procession for the rosery every first Saturday of every month, for a year on behalf of your family.

I woke up in the morning like usual and offered incense before a venerated little chapel at home, and I litted a candle and started my prayer, and when I looked to saint Sharbel's photo, I saw oil perspiring from it, and still untill today. And when I was making the procession of the rosery, as recommended me saint Sharbel, I was accompanied by a flock of visitors and faithfulls at home, and it was the first procession, happening in November six, saint maroun's photo started perspiring oil, and still untill today.

The day of September second, saint Rita appeared to me in a dream, when I was before a chapel for the Virgin, near our house in the village, and she layed her hand on my shoulder, and kissed my forehead, and told me: I congratulate you for this faith! So I looked at her to tell her what happened with me, so she told me: I know saint Sharbel passed you a surgery and saint Maroun gave you a glass of water.

### **-the oak tree leaves**

Like every year habit I set the Christmas cave and we use to adorn a pine tree which we do cut it from the woods. But that day the government prevented cutting pine trees for Christmas. So I asked my son Yssam to bring me a branch of an oak tree instead. He did, and that branch looked beautiful, dense with leaves, and had the shape of a bell's collar.

The night of Epiphany, father Sharbel came together with saint Maroun to me in a dream, and told me: we want to bless the tree. I knelt and prayed together with them three times the Our Father and the Hail Mary, and he chanted a hymn in Assiriatic language it was so beautiful. When we were done with the prayer, he brought a bucket of water with a sprinkler in it. He put it on the carpet, and light shined from it. He sprinkled the cave with the water, the oak tree branch and he continued sprinkling the house, then backed. I was still before the cave with saint Maroun, and he told me: do not throw this in the garbage (the oak tree branch), this you will give to people as blessings. He continued: I will tell you how they can use it, let them put three leaves in a small pot in the name of the holy Trinity and bring it to a boil, then the leaves will be taken away and burned, then the water will be, blessed water, they can drink of it, and pray one time Our Father and one time Hail Mary, for Christ's wounds, who sacrificed his blood, to his people. And let their sick drink of it. I did not take these words seriously, because people are going to say Nouhad got crazy and start doing strange things. I was living in fear of people's mouths. And I stayed two years living this fear. Saint Sharbel kept encouraging me in dreams and telling me: don't be afraid, God chose you from among his people, to be a sign here on earth, and many of his people are going to come back to faith and prayers at your hand, don't resent from people. He added (greetings) blessed be every year a cave and a Christmas tree.

### **-don't be afraid of passing the oak tree leaves**

I took out the oak tree leaves, and burned the branch like he told me, but I did not dare to give anyone of these leaves. And I already told the people who come to pray daily in my house, the story of the dream I had, and the oak tree leaves. They were taken from it.

This one night a lady of our group told me the following: one of my neighbors named Nawal Eid was sick and they were willing to take her to the hospital, so I decided to visit her in the morning. In the morning before I go visit her she came visiting me and told me <she got an asthma attack and her family wanted to take her to the hospital> so I told my daughter get a pot and put three oak tree leaves of what we got from Nouhad and boil them. Then after she drank of that water, she felt she got healed, and later she didn't have asthma anymore. Don't be afraid of passing the oak tree leaves, I myself was very disturbed and when I drank I felt comforted.

### **- she had a twin**

One time a-----children physician-----visited me named Caroline Abou Jawdeh. She stood before saint Sharbel`s photo that perspire oil and cried with fever, I asked her: what`s the matter? She said: I don`t have children. I told her: may God give you some. She said I gave up hope, I was treated a lot, and I was subjected to implant twice and I didn`t bear any! And now I`ve been married for twenty years, and I don`t have hope of having any. I told her God is powerful of anything, and I gave her of the oak tree leaves. After one month she called me on the phone and told me she got pregnant, and we started praying for her, and she had twin a boy and a girl. This miracle was repeated hundreds of times with familys who had no children. But their faith in God on saint Sharbel`s hand, gave them.

And I became the Godmother for about four hundred fifty of them.

### **-a trip to Mexico**

Sharbel`s Fame was well spreaded in Mexico, he his everybody`s beloved. His statues was all over the place, in the churches, and in the hospitals, in the houses, and at stores. His photos was everywhere, even in taxicabs. And if anyone having a surgery, will not accept entering the operations room, unless he kiss saint Sharbel`s statue first.

Nouhad continued: the Lebanese community called for me through bishop Bsharah El-Raahey, to go to Mexico.

I went and they had a festival for me, we had a mass in the central stadium because of the large number of people. And I started anointing people with saint Sharbel`s oil for about three hours. Many miracles occurred there, and this is some of it: a thirty years old man was crippled walking on crutches, he was heald, left the crutches and walked away. A little nine years old girl, had cancer in her uterus, she was completely heald. A pregnant women with a cancerous baby, she wanted to abort it, so I advised her to rely on God and keep the baby. Then a day before I left Mexico she returned and told me, God has responded and heald the baby, her physician assured that for her. And during the last liturgy that was held in Lady of Guadaloupeh`s Cathedral, a blind woman walked in, ledd by her two daughters. I had her swallow a small piece of cotton wetted with saint Sharbel`s oil, and I wiped her eyes with my hands, and I asked of saint Sharbel with a burning heart, to have pity on her. The moment they took her back to her place she shouted loud and said: I am seeing, people was crying and started applauding.

### **-Sharbel at the muslims**

#### **-Sharbel, the beloved of the children**

A young muslim lady testified: one very cold night in 1994, I was with my little brothers at home alone, when my mother was with my little sister in the hospital, and I was so scared

because I was eleven years old. An elder man entered wearing a black robe and a bonnet, and his beard is long white, he said to me: don't be scared!

The heater was off, because we did not have oil for it, so he brought the empty tank and filled the heater! and litted it up. In the kitchen there was a pot that has some milk, my mother was willing to make some rice putting with it, he entered the kitchen and cooked the rice putting. Then came back and taught my little brothers, while he had his finger on his mouth and kept saying don't be scared! (the next day was our exams we all had A+)

Several hours later my mother came back home. And when she opened the door, the elder walk out rapidly. I told my mother: have you seen the elder that was with us?! She said: no! who is that elder? I told her: he cooked the rice putting, litted the heater, taught my brothers and told me don't be scared! So my mother went to the kitchen and felt the pot of the rice putting it was hot still. So she said thanks to God for everything.

After a little while, we went with our mother to a friend of hers, a christian lady who had saint Sharbel's photo hanged on the wall in the living room, so I pointed with my hand to the photo, and told my mother: this is the elder that came to our house that night!

How charming you are saint Sharbel! You are the scared little children beloved, you warm them, teach them, cook for them, and you stay with them untill mom comes back!.

### **-Sharbel, the wounds binder**

A muslim lady wrote: how lucky are we the lebanese, that we live in Lebanon, Christ the Lord foot steps, the symbol of peace and healing, Lebanon the groundwork for the saints mainly talking about saint Sharbel, the saint of Lebanon and the friend of all the lebanese. I am a muslim woman from El-Bekaa, I adore lord Jesus, that he sent for me saint Sharbel.

I was living with my children a very poor and desperate state, when that caused me loosing my daughter!

One day, three months after her death, our situation became unbearable, and I couldn't resist the poorness and the hunger, so I decided to commit suicide, by throwing myself from the roof! But my neighbor saw me and prevented me doing it, and she brought me back home.

And as miserable as I was, I saw saint Sharbel near the room door, standing above the Ground about thirty centimeters in the air, and in his hand a staff with a golden ball in its end. He came to the corner of the room where there are the (venerated Coran) he took it in his hand and went back near the door where he was standing first. And I was surprised of how he held the Coran in his hand. Then he redd the following: in the name of God the Mercifull the Compassionate, wi'll inflict you with little of some fear, hunger, shortage of money souls and fruits, and preach the patients whom they if inflicted with an ordeal, said we are for God and for him we are returning.

On those are prayers from their Lord and mercy and those are the well ledd (chapter Al Baquara verses 155-157).

The word well ledd attracked my mind, so I knew saint Sharbel is going to lead me to the right path,since he appeared to me personally in these difficult days.

And I don't know how to tell how situation and my job has changed! And how I came to raise my children with grace and wisdom, with generosity and courage.

This is who is saint Sharbel, the wounds binder and the friends of all lebaneses.

### **-Sharbel the beloved of the grieved**

This same muslim woman continued: a week later in a second appearance, I was sitting near the window looking the at kids playing in the courtyard, I rememberd my deceased daughter, I was grieved and so sad that she is not playing with them. Saint Sharbel came to me carrying in his hand a white pigeon, he approached and wiped my tear and said to me: don't cry (he called me by my name)...! Every time you miss her i`m gonna send her to you. And since that far incident, every time I remember her I see the white pigeon flying in front of me. And some times I see her standing at the house terrace. Thi is who is saint sharbel the beloved of the grieved.

### **- Sharbel the good and tender**

Again the muslim woman continued: in a third appearance, when we was passing a surgery for my youngest child. The pysician in charged said: the patient is not to leave the hospital, but with a thirty seven degree fever.

The next day the fever was forty one degree according to the nurse. So the doctor prevented us from leaving. And at sunset I started praying lord Jesus to do some of his miracles, that he is the only one according to the (venerated Coran) can do miracles, because I left my little children home alone. In the same time I heard Majidah El-Roumy (the very famous lebanese singer) chanting to saint Sharbel, so I said with a loud voice, where are you saint Sharbel?! And all of a sudden I saw my child has changed, so I said in an innocent way: Oh God! Oh saint Sharbel how beautiful you are! And I called the nurse when she was saying now he is thirty seven degree. Then there was an argument between her and the doctor about such a high and quick Varying in fever degrees! So I stood up quickly and arranged the situation and told them frankly: this is one of saint Sharbel`s miracles! And it happened that we left the hospital.

What can I say about saint Sharbel the sweet, the kind, the good and tender the messenger of Christ the Lord, in Lebanon. And he is assuredly the friend of everybody.

## **-Sharbel in Africa in 1995**

A person of a very pious family decided to go for a trip from Borkina Fasso where he resides, to a distant region. And even with his mother's firm objection, she couldn't convince him to turn away from this dangerous trip. She had no choice but to put a photo for lebanon's recluse under her son's car seat. And after driving couple of hours to the place he was destined to, he ran out of gaz, in an area where a human been have nothing to do but count the last moments of his life, because it was an isolated area. Many die there every year because of robbery and predators.

And when fear and suspense was preoccupying that young man, he saw an elder man getting near him, carrying In his hand a tank. Right away he ask the young man the reason of his stopping in that place. And he offer him the tank he was carrying, and asked him to fill up the car tank, because its amount will enable him to get to the nearest station.

When he reached the station he asked the employees to fill up the tank, and when they opened it, they started looking at the young man displeased, and told him: are you moking us, you're asking us to fill up the tank when it is over the full.

When the young man returned from his trip, he told his mother every thing that happened to him, so she hurried and went and pulled the recluse photo from under the seat, right then the young man got to know whom he saved him from a definite death. And now this young man became the first believer among the christians in the region.

## **-the show representative Hiyam Abou Shedid**

I wrote in Sharbel Rafqua Neemtallah's Magazine edition # 276 in 2002:

They said; a saint from Lebanon!?! I went thinking and saying what are these lies? Every thing is used for advertisement in lebanon: the greenish of our mountains, the beauty of our weather the everlasting Ceaders and now they invented a new "fashion" the saint...all this propaganda is to conceal the bitter reality we are living in lebanon.

And I started my story with this saint without anticipation nor expectation or preperation!

I stayed for a month and a half suffering a tremor in my voice untill I lost it completely. I was consulted by a physician, he gave me a treatment, and asked me to keep strictly quiet for two weeks.

Then fear and doubt started troubling me. I said to myself, it seems that I'm suffering a chronic desease, it could've been a cancer in my larynx, especially that tremor accompanied me for several months.

One day my neighbor and friend, Rachel told me:

- Mrs Maarbis asked about you, and ask me to tell you to go visit her.

- who is Mrs Maarbis?

- the lady who`s saint Sharbel`s photo is dripping oil in her house.

-where?

-in Raifoun not to far from here, would you like to accompany me Monday to go visit her?

Now that I was someone who fear saint Sharbel`s site, I told her without showing the least impression:

-if you will, w`ll go. But what is she want from me?

-she saw something in her dream, she need to tell you about.

We visited Mrs Maarbis at her house. And she told me, saint Sharbel had told her in dream that I do not need to fear a cancer because I don`t have it! Not to mention, Mrs Maarbis and I, have never knew each other before, nor she was aware that I lost my voice!?

So she gave me a little piece of cotton wetted with miraculous oil to swallow. I did and at the same moment my voice came back like it was before the illness. And there was no tremor at all in my larynx!?

Since then, shy and worrried I begin to know more about that saint. And I quit talking negatively about him, untill I heard about the miracle that happened with Nouhad El-Shamy.

The twenty second of one these months, I visited saint Maroun`s monastery, along with my friend Rachel. I used to call this monastery before saint Sharbel`s.

I saw from far away Nouhad El-Shamy standing, and the people bursting towards her asking for blessings, they were carrying napkins with their hands maybe they could`ve get a drop of blood from the miraculous cuts in her neck.

Without making any effort, and without been blocked off by the praying crowds, I felt like a wave of people carried me and put me before her.

I looked and examined her shining faith, the beauty of her face the clearence of her eyes, her peaceful smile, and her contagious joy. She touched me deep in the heart, and gave me a sum of peace, I don`t know how I kept it with me.

Since then that saint started tickling my feelings by the site of Nouhad El-Shamy`s face, and I no longer fear him. So I prayed, and first thing I asked in my prayer was, forgiveness. I confessed to him with a shy face, <how the doubt was driving me to think of him in contradiction of his reality>.

Then by the effect of that incident, my foot steps was driving my life to this saint, without meaning and without any effort.

A lot of people seek to see Nouhad El-Shamy to tell about saint Sharbel`s miracles, so I kept listening believing and ask for more.

And one day I prepared a talk show about the danger of Jehovas Witnesses, with witnesses whom was former Jehovas then converted to the faith. And after advertising about that episode, some V.I.P contacted the T.V management, and with whatever power and authority did represente that person he asked to cancell that episode! and it was so!. He was one of the high ranks of Jehovas. Then the management asked me to prepare another subject, as quick as possible, that we had only four days left for the show. It was the holy week and Thursday the Sacramental was the day of my episode. Sleiman Abou-Zeid the producer who is a good friend of mine, thought of having me talking about a religious subject, and told me: what do you think if we prepare a show about miracles?

-Sure if we wasn`t able to talk about the ennemies of Christianity, let us talk about the graces we receive through faith, like this we will carry out our mission more powerful.

I can not tell how the show was prepared? I`m sure it was the arrangement of God! with the help of the monasterys superiors, in Ennaya, Jrebta, and Kfifan. And this how the saints of Lebanon was gathered, Sharbel Rafqua and El-Hardyni, trough my hosts, Nouhad El-Shamy, Andrey Najem and Sylin Rbeiz. The show was greatly successful.

After that I prepared a special show with Nouhad El-Shamy at the feast of saint Sharbel. The doors was opened unto clarity love sacrificing tolerance and peace. And I realy felt, saint Sharbel had pickd Nouhad El-Shamy a sign for God`s presence in our life.

### **-magdelene in June-22-2002**

#### **a mortal sin**

Rafqua was eleven years old when her father died. She grew up and many problems grew up with her.

When she became eighteen, she had relation with Mansour, she always thought, that was true love which was going to be crowned with marriage.

The fact that her sister had a car accident, and was In critical condition in the intensive care unit, the mother was then so busy with her. That gave the chance to Mansour to find her lonely at home and taking advantage of her by seducing her, and taking her to bed, and made her loosing her virginity. Their relation stayed on, for five months.

After that she went to the doctor together with Mansour and found she was pregnant! She was disturbed and so scared, knowing that her family object that firmly, and her two brothers may dare to kill her if they know that, according to her testimony!

She willed to have abortion, but Mansour assured to her he`s gonna marry her. But he kept adjourning the wedding untill she started her fifth month. Then her mother told her one day; Rafqua why you are getting weight?! She answered mom i`m healthy, thank God. Then Mansour started pulling himself away, then finally refused plainly to marry her.

It was a big shock for her, she did not know how to escape her painly and dangerous fact, because she lost her love toward Mansour who lyed to her on one side and now she`s exposed to a scandal and to possibly been killed on the other side.

She searched for a solution with many doctor then found someone who accepted to give abortion after supplicating him. That night she stayed at her grandmother. The next day she had to go to her job like usual, under all that oppression.

### **- a momentarily solution**

She met Mary and she told her about her story. Then Mary called her to go out at night with friends, and right there she offered her a cigarette of hashish (drugs) and told her: this will make you forgetting your troubles! So she smoked the first cigarette then a second then tripped it. That was making her forgetting her problems, untill the cigarette effect ends.

Now because of too much going out night time she started getting late to work, and started coming out with excuses. And one night one of the guys putted heroin for her with the soda, she asked him what was that? He told her; Just drink. She dranked and felt a long ecstasy never had it before! He said: isn`t it tasty? She said yes. The next day he putted the heroin for her with the whisky, again she asked him what is this? And again he said: just drink, and the same thing happened again. And here her life started changing, she got adicted to heroin, it became her daily bread, she couldn`t stay away from it.

The young man who gave her the heroin did that aiming to trap her so she, by her turn give it to other guys, and thus he can sell better, and make more money!

### **-the hell of pleasures**

Now that she stay up nights, she started sleeping in the days, and missing work which ruined her relation with her employer, then she resigned. But with such a very high expense, around hundred dollars per day for heroin, she started selling her body, putting aside her religious practices, after she was a member of a famous church choir. She shuted down the voice of God in her conciense, more then that she was rejecting listening any hymn.

She thought with the first attempt that this the true joy, she stepped from pleasure to pleasure, and from rapture to rapture, but she didn't harvest except distress, misery, sadness and emptiness. She lost trust in everybody and dislike everybody, she saw that nobody love her but they love themselves next to her at night, and in the morning they deny her, more they talk behind her!

Hait, lies, enmity and rebellion against God and people filled her heart, and on the top of all she was practicing devil worship with her friends, they were celebrating the black mass, in which they use the sacrificed candles for lighting, and the -----sacrificed bread to scorn and humiliate it, by spitting and blaspheming on it, and exercising fornication next to it----- . She was disgusted from her life, she attempted suicide five times! She took big quantity of analgesic pills at once. Her parents knew about two times she was delivered to the hospital because of it, her blood pressure went down to six.

The end of the spring of 2002 and after two years of her addiction to heroin, she took a decision of committing a final suicide, but after enjoying the whole summer.

### **-the prayer of the mother**

June -22-2002, Rafqua's mother knew that Rafqua and her friends are going to visit saint Sharbel, so she asked her to light up a bunch of candles on behalf of her children. Her mother's love was the only one left in her heart, that what made her hesitating in committing suicide so she don't grieve her mother. So Rafqua agreed apparently knowing this is one of the lies she commit every days to her mother with her friends.

They headed to Ennaya. Rafqua was surprised when she saw saint Sharbel's big photo that is in the woods, now is above the road, she was stricken! And said :what am I coming to do hear?! Liers! We agreed to spend the night in Kaslik! The young man driving answered: a quick visit only. Rafqua screamed: who saint Sharbel think is he? What saint Sharbel have done for me? You keep telling me Sharbel Sharbel Sharbel!and she pointed her finger to his photo mocking saying: look at this picture! Her friend interfered: why you talking like this Rafqua? Don't speak like this about saint Sharbel! Rafqua reacted more negative and said <tozz tozz twice and tripped>! (means she forted), we did not see anyone who went to the next life and came back to tell us what's in there! Who is he saint Sharbel? It is the people who made saint Sharbel. Where is God? where is the justice? ( she said that in retrospecting what had happened with Mansour, how he left her and she aborted, plus that she was poor and couldn't afford fixing her teeth, but now she possess lots of money). The conversation was over and they arrived to the cell. They ask Rafqua to come in for praying, she objected, they insisted,

Then she said: the church is closed, I don't wanna come out. But because they insisted firmly, she stepped out, took off her high hills, she picked it up and started knocking the shoes against each other, saying again: toz toz twice and tripped. Her friend putted his hand on her mouth and made her stop talking. She arrived to the cell and putted down the candles by the door and refused to light it. Her friend litted the candles. Rafqua mocked her saying: you litted the candles?! Heh (the sound of mocking) what had changed?! Her friend did not answer her.

They went down to the monastery, it was about ten PM. Rafqua did not want to come down to the church, but she wanted to stay in the car, her friends insisted saying the church is opened pray and come back. Now she will to act before them just to satisfy them.

### **-the love of God**

She entered the church and before going down the stony stairs, she noticed a monk entering the door across from her, and got to go down the stairs, parallel to hers.

Here Rafqua testify about the miracle of her sudden change saying: I couldn't see but this monk! And I couldn't think but in confessing! I rushed toward him and before he reached ----- the confessing booth-----that is at the end of the stairs he was walking it down, I pointed to him several times to sit in the -----booth----- . He did, I knelt and blew out crying! Confessing my sins: adulteress, atheist, drug addict. When the priest heard the word drugs he whispered that, counsels will help me not. So he took me to the guiding department, and in spot, he offer to give me help. I thanked him and told him tomorrow, and I gave him my address. I felt weight in my head and body, I needed to sleep and not to stay up anymore. The next day the priest delivered me to a place, where I received complete healing, thank God.

Later on I fell in love with Paul, and got married with him. God gave us children which we are planting in their hearts the seeds of holiness and the free love, my lord Jesus and his disciple Sharbel have granted me, so we'll be a christian family, and an initial unit in the body of christ.

Today I knew the meaning of life! today I knew the real taste of love, I loved my children and my husband loved me! I felt the love of God, and had assurance that < he worship me, and not I worship him in reality >! I am the lost sheep he went out searching for, and carried me on his shoulder joyfully. Thanks for the graces of God, the Father who is going < crazy > for his childrens love!.

In the end, I offer my life testimony, to every soul who walked the way of the sin, where evil brought it to a dead end. Perhaps this soul will find in my life story, peace and joy it was looking for, and it is not gonna find them but in the heart of Christ the redeemer of the world.

### **-there was nothing I could've think of but crying**

Claude Massouh testified: the year 2002, during my study in france, and while working inside the college laboratory, I felt severe pain in my eyes. I went straight to the hospital. Physician treated me over there then I got back home. In my handbag there was a little bottle of blessed water from saint Sharbel's home-Bkaakafra, I opened it and wiped my eyes with full confidence, that I'm not gonna have any problem.

I recovered gradually the second and the third day. I thought this recovery is from the medicine, especially yet I wasn't aware of my eyes problem.

Then after a week passed, and I felt good, my eyes started to open, I went back continuing my job in the college laboratory. After four hours of work, I went shutting down the electric lights, the doctor walked in and told me: Claude do not forget to shut off the -----(ultra-violet)-----rays. I told him: which one is that? No one ever told me about it? and he pointed to the place where I worked. Then told me: this light is used to kill the germs, I was shocked hearing that, and started crying, but in the same time I had an inner feeling telling me don't even pay attention to that.

I took off my white robe, I told the doctor what had happened! He went crazy hearing, I worked four hours under the -----(ultra violet)-----rays?!

I called a taxi and headed to the hospital. Right there I met the same physician who treated me last time, and I told him: I'm having the same pain in my eyes, and I added my new information: four hours under the -----(ultra violet)-----rays. He first didn't believe, he gave me a serum unit for each eye. I was aware of how risky is the situation, knowing that staring on the eclipse of the sun per example for several seconds will put us in risk of losing sight, so of how worst is four hours!. The physician came back and ordered for me an examination of the retina. I entered the examination room, and putted my chin on the edge of the telescope, examination started and the doctor was shaking his head and biting his lip! I asked him: what? He didn't answer! I insisted, so he asked me saying: how did you come here?! I said: alone, you can tell me anything, I'm not scared! And I take anything. He told me: you didn't come here alone! Because you don't see! I told him: how?! I can see! He said there are black spots on the retina, and its cells are burned up! at that moment there was nothing I could've think of but crying and in a strange way! I didn't know why my tears flowed! He furthered if you stay seeing, see me in two days.

I went home with the same medicines, and I used the same blessed water, because I knew that was the medicine itself and nothing else.

After a week I came back to Lebanon, and went straight to the eyes specialist for examination, and he told me it is good, I insisted he check my retina, he did and said it is very good. Then added there is no need for all this examination!

I visited Sharbel and thanked him, and my life started changing, I started praying and from my heart, when before it was from my lips, I experienced that a little moment of praying from the heart, exceeded all what I prayed with my lips when my mind was away! And if I skipped a night without prayer, I feel lack of joy even in the happiest day of my life!.

When this changing happened to me I felt that life is meaningless, and nothing is required of us, but just sweeten our life with the presence of the Lord.

He is the one have said: I am standing at the door and knocking. We can open for him or not, freedom for us is something extremely important.

Usually we are troubled with material things, but today I see it insipid.

Now I become to know that my gardian angel is Jesus Christ, and he appear to us through his saints, and I started considering saint Sharbel, more then a friend, companion, or a father, in all cases he existed with me. I started feeling responsibility toward the healing grace I received, and that it is due to me to speak of what the Lord have done for me, people are deeply motivated with God`s supernaturals.

When the miracle took place with me I did not get tired speaking about it, nor people got tired hearing.

The presence of God in our life is a great matter!

I started visiting Ennaya repeatedly. And it happen to pass that a friend of mine -----bought----- a car and aimed to bless it with a visit to saint Sharbel. While riding it about midnight, the car slipp off of the road at a sharp curve, it hit a rock from the bottom and flipped over several times. We came out of the car just whole, him from my door and I from his door, we did not know how! We did only clean off our clothes from the dust. And with such a heavy impact of the accident not one glass was broken! We standed astonished before that site.

I thanked God`s care for our rescue, when my friend was worried the loss of his car! Later on after thinking and retrospecting the incident and how he escaped a death, he started noticing God`s care.

Thanks to God our father for every thing.

### **-Sharbel in the Phylippins 2005**

A young Phylippina lady, worke as a house maid for a Christian lebanese family in Beirut, called her mother on the phone in the Phylippines. Her mother was crying telling her daughter: I`m gonna die without seeing you, the sickness has distroyed me, and I am in my last days.

The daughter cried much the difficulty of her expensive trip to the Phylippines, and the fact she is poor, and she already signed a contract for two years, plus that the husband and the wife both worke and their are in real need of her, for their two little children.

She was crying much. The husband and the wife got tired comforting her. Finally they called her to visit saint Sharbel, she agreed thanking.

She arrived to Ennaya and knelt down at the sepulcher for two and a half hours supplicating and saying: you saint Sharbel, be lenient to my situation, and heal my mother! I need to see her before she die, and you know my deficiency and poorness! I cannot go to her...

She returned back with the family, and her eyes just reddish from crying!.

Upon arriving to Beirut, her mother called her and said:

- I thank you oh my daughter, that you sent me a doctor from Lebanon and he heald me.

- I didn`t send anybody!

- yes!( the mother insisted) he told me, you sent him for me from Lebanon!.

- ( here the daughter realized and said) how he look like? What is he wearing?

- he is wearing a black frock, and he got a white beard.

- (the daughter was stricken) at what time he came to you?

- At one fifteen PM.

- (the daughter rejoiced and trilled) that was saint Sharbel, he visited you, after I knelt before him

and that was the hour I was praying before his sepulcher, he was healing you in the Phylippines. The lord is glorified in his saints.

### **-Sharbel a soldier for Christ**

Susan El-Alam narrated: May-22-2007, I was going down to college in Dekwaneh. I felt asleep, and slept in the bus. Usualy I get of the bus in El-Mkalles then head to Dekwaneh. The bus kept going through, to Dawrah then head back to El-Bekaa. The driver tried to wake me up over and over! But in vain!. Then he took me to my parents, because he know them, he told them: your daughter is sleeping in the bus and she`s not getting awake. My parents was scared, my brother carried me home. They called the doctor and he told them: deliver her now to Khoury hospital in Zahleh.

In the way there I woke up in the car, a drop of tear dripped down from my sister`s eye on my cheek, I told her: why are you crying?! She said that I hurted my leg, she got to lift up my pant to show me the wound, I passed out again, and I heard the weeping in the car.

Arriving the hospital the doctor ordered for me twenty four shots of (Cortison-Octagon), each shot is a \$1000, and it is not available in Lebanon. They requested it from Qatar, and it was to take two days to have it ready, the doctor said: enough time to loose the young lady! Then he knelt on his knees and said: Oh God seventeen years old girl to be lost from among us! Help her oh Lord! Impossible you may permit such a thing to happen!

The shots arrived, some politician had payed the expenses.

My mother was crying, it was Thursday of the Sacraments of the holy week, she looked at Jesus, she wiped off her tears and told him: I`m not going to cry anymore, this girl you have

created her, she`s my daughter and I am in need of her! if you want her take her, but I, need her! She didn`t live her life yet, and yet she didn`t see anything of this world! She furtherd: let her suffer as much as I did or more! But the day of resurrection, I want her to resurrect with you!

Next day which was Holy Friday my fever went up to 43 cellcuse, my heart beat stopped then came back.

Next was the night of Bright Saturday and Holy Sunday of the resurrection (Easter), I was surrounded with my parents, my father, my mother, sisters, and brothers. My father was holding my hand, shaking it and tapping on it gently for a while. I was out of conciense completely. My mother was saying: God need her, he wants her!

Midnight on the dot, I woke up, I saw myself in a room in the hospital, I said: Mom! Dad! I`m here, my parents did not believe what they were seeing!

They called the doctor, he was in France having a conference. First he didn`t believe, then he asked saying: Susan El-Alam room 256, is heald?! They told him: yes and she even asked for salt. He said: if she asked for salt means she have no more any problem! Thanks for your goodness oh Lord!

After I woke up I said: mom there was a priest here praying. She said: no that was a nun from Beshwait she was praying and visiting all the patients. I insisted: there was a priest who look like saint Sharbel, and all the time that I was out of conciense, I was with him in heaven, a green square has birds and very beautiful. My mother answered: true because you died and resurrected! Your heart stopped, then started beating again!

We visited saint Sharbel to give thanks to him. During liturgy, I prayed in all piouty, and at the Holy Communion: the priest told me: take off that seed of your lip! I told him: there is nothing! I putted my hand on my lips, I felt a solid seed, I pulled it off, blood came out from my lip, it was a fragment of incense, the priest took it and told me: I am going to cense with it.

After Mass the priest asked me: Have saint Sharbel told you anything? I answered: he told me preach of me, there is none but one Lord in this world, who is Jesus Christ! And the other Lord do not exist! And saint Sharbel is a soldier for Christ.

I father (the priest) Hanna Iskandar, met Susan personally, in her parents`s supermarket in Baabdat, and I saw by myself, very shortly after I met her, soil, incense and wax (wax of candles) coming out from her mouth!

### **-Healings in 2008-2009**

-Sharbel Nasr was stricken with -----the brain electricity----- and entered in coma for fifty days. He was treated in Hotel Dieux hospital, at doctor Sandra Sabbagh. And after delivering him home on a wheel chair. His mother brought him to saint Maroun`s monastery, and clothed him

with saint Sharbel's frock. Coming back home when they were praying, he stood up and walked, then he gained back his health gradually.

-Elham Basil had cancer. She asked for saint Sharbel's intercession, then the disease disappeared from her body.

-Jalileh Ahmed Wehbeh, a sheeite muslim lady, was born in 1964. She had breast cancer, and had a surgery to extract the disease, in 2006. After a year and four months the disease appeared in her bones. They decided radiology for her.

She visited saint Sharbel's sepulcher and asked healing of him, and she putted her hand on its wall and said : don't forget me. She heard a voice saying to her: one moment. And the healing took place.

-Salim El-Hajj, born in 1945, had a permanent infection in his left ear then was spreaded to his right one. Pain accompanied him for twenty years.

He received a surgery for his ear in Al-Nekkash hospital from doctor Pierre Nawfal. After the surgery, infection striked him for another five years.

Then he visited saint Maroun's monastery, saint Sharbel's sepulcher, and asked him with faith and fever to heal him, and he annointed his ears with saint Sharbel's oil. He came out whole. That took place in March-2008.

- Secilia merdilli, from Aleppo, Syria, a Melkite Catholic, was inflicted with deformation in her spine, and became hunchbacked. And in July-31-2008, her mother brought her to saint Maroun's monastery- Ennaya, asking of Sharbel the healing of her daughter.

When she came back to the hotel, she felt an undescrivable pain in her spine. There was somebody treating her vertebrae one by one with his finger. She felt cold in her hands and her feet, her parents near her couldn't do anything to her. After an hour of pain, she slept in her bed. In the morning she stood up straight, complaining of nothing.

-Sophia Takla Abb Fersahasyn from Somalia, born in 1968, living in Beirut. She was inflicted with a stroke in the left side of her body for a period of two years. When she is the supporter of her mother.

She visited saint Sharbel's cell, and wiped her head and body with the blessed water at the entrance of the cell, then anointed herself with saint Sharbel's oil. She then got healed of her paralyzing.

-Antoine Abboud from Karm Saddeh, Lebanon, living in California, born in 1936, got afflicted with cancer in his stomach.

He had two surgeries, then the cut was infected. His situation became critical. The physician ordered for him the chemotherapy. So he prayed to saint Sharbel to exempt him from that. And while he was yet in the hospital, he saw saint Sharbel entering the doctor's room. After a moment the doctor came out to tell him the treatment is adjourned for one month. This event repeated twice, then Antoine was set free from the chemotherapy treatment, because every time saint Sharbel was appearing to him and heal him.

-Yvonne Michel from Menyarrah, Lebanon, Chicago resident fell from a ladder, and had several broken bones. Two years passed then she saw people are building a small shrine for saint Sharbel, so she asked them for a small photo for the saint, and an old woman gave her an ancient photo of his.

Then she asked him to look at her and heal her. After the demand she felt someone pulling her leg and shoulder. The healing occurred.

-Jimmy Njeim entered a state of coma for two days, caused by a pressure of the heart. He was treated in Hotel Dieux hospital.

Saint Sharbel appeared to him, and with the prayer of his parents and their vows to saint Sharbel, Jimmy came back to life.

-Rashideh Merhej from Quartaba, Lebanon, born in 1937, residing in London. She was stricken with

Pain in her Shoulder by the joint. She needed medicines for six months.

She saw on the OTV channel, the program < your faith had saved you >, the subject was a miracle by saint Sharbel's intercession. When Saint Sharbel's statue appeared on the TV screen, she asked him healing, and right away she was healed of her pain.

-Pedro El-Sheaar Rosa, born in 1999, a Lebanese immigrant in Bresil had cancer in the liver, in five spots. He was subjected to two surgerys, and yet he wasn` t heald.

His grandfather, of his mother side, Emilio El-Sheaar, from Hadath El-Jebbeh, Lebanon, prayed to saint Sharbel asking him the boy`s healing. Saint Sharbel together with saint Rafqua appeard to him, and the boy`s healing was accomplished.

- Jamy Najjar from Sedd El-Baoushrieh, born in 2007, was inflicted with two holes in the heart at her birth. Physicians discover the holes only four months after her birth, in Hotel Dieux hospital.

The night the show program of saint Sharbel`s miracles in 10/06/2008, her father saw the program, then he vowed on his daughter`s behalf for saint Sharbel, saint Sharbel appeard to his daughter, and she started pointing at him with her finger and knocking on her chest.

Next in 10/10/2008, her father took her to doctor Sharaf Abou Sharaf, in El-Roum hospital, it appeard that the holes disappear and the child was heald.

-Maria Kshouky living in San-Francisco, born in 1968, was stricken with cancer - February 2007, and a big tumor in her cheek.

She called her mother in Lebanon to send her saint Sharbel`s blessed oil, and when she anointed her cheek and her neck with the oil, the desease disappear from her body. And she deliverd the baby naturally.

-Susan Karam from El-Ghbatiyeh Lebanon born in 1970. She caught a cancer in her brain, in the visual and acoustic area in February 2008. She was treated in Hotel Dieux, and in Mount Lebanon hospitals. She was in a big risk of death. Physicians lost hope of her rescue.

She visited saint Sharbel, she drinked of his blessed oil and anointed her head and eat some soil of his sepulcher. She went back home and got completely heald.

- Sharbel Abou Eid, from El-Berbarah, Zahleh, Lebanon, living in London, born in 2008. He was yet an embryo when a swell appeared in his-----behind-----. In that swell passing the vessels of the legs and the tendons.

Physicians counsel his parents to have the mother aborte him, or otherwise he is going to born deformed with crippled legs.

The mother came from London to Lebanon, to saint Sharbel. She slept in the car facing the statue of saint Sharbel, asking him, her baby`s rescue.

Next she took with her blessed oil and incense, and a tape of maronite hymns.

While delivering the baby she ask to run the tape of the hymns, and at the moment of the birth of the baby she ask her husband to anoint him with saint Sharbel`s blessed oil immediately. After the delivery the baby he was carried to another hospital to remoove the swell. It was found, the swell is a -----bag-----of water!

-Madonna Kalash, a Greeck Orthodox from Betram, Lebanon, got ill with her -----glande endocrine----- . She needed a surgery to extract it. She prayed to saint Sharbel, end he appeared to her in dream, and told her: I want to pass you the surgery. He putted one hand on her head and the other on her neck. Whenshe woke up, on her neck appeared saint Sharbel`s finger print for an hour. She anointed her neck like saint Sharbel told her to do.

She went early to her doctor Hasan Harmoush in Al-Zahraa hospital. it appeared to the doctor ,that the surgery was passed and she was heald.

- Natasha Antony Watson, English lady, born in 1984, living in the United States, married with Johny Yssa From El-Kbayyat, Lebanon.

In 2006 she caught a disease of -----the shrinking of the cells. After the failure of long treatments, she came to her mother Labibeh Watson whom she live in Zouk Mkayel, Lebanon, at her request, to have her visiting saint Sharbel.

Upon arriving to her mother`s house and before visiting saint Sharbel, her mother gave her to drink a drop of saint Sharbel`s blood she was preserving in her house.

When she dranked it she felt severe pain in her body, and her nervous system cramped. The relatives and the neighbors started praying saint Sharbel asking for her healing. So she felt a person begin treating her starting from her toses to the rest of her body, including her lungs, chest and her head. And after an painfull hour, she was heald of her illness.

-Fady Abi Aabdallah, born in 1980, from Remhalah El-Shouf, living in Australia, was stricken with cancer at the age of five. The disease invaded him heavily, Physicians predicted he will last three days.

His mother Sonia sheltered to saint Sharbel, and asked him her son`s healing. And after the treatment her son was heald. But they told his mother he is going to be a midget, and mentally defected, and if married -----he cannot have children-----.

Through saint Sharbel`s intercession, fady became taller than his father, he work in stock marketing, he was married and got his eldest son. He Named him Sharbel Makhlouf.

-Lody Eid from Souk El-Gharb, Lebanon, was stricken with joint illness in her knees. She sufferd that illness for many years. She visited saint Sharbel`s cell, in the company with her brother Fouad who helped her kneeling. After finishing the visit, herr knees was heald.

-Pauline Sabbah born in 1978, living in Al-Mounsef. She caught blood cancer. Before starting the treatment, she visited saint Sharbel and ate grass from on his sepulcher, and the desease from her body.

## **Addendum – St. Sharbel’s Words**

By celebrating the Holy Liturgy, conducting prayers, holding conferences, printing tens of books, and by putting on formal and popular festivals and feasts, the Lebanese Maronite Order on the 10th of November 1994 - together with its counterpart the Mariamite Order - launched religious and civil celebrations marking the 300th Jubilee of its foundation. On that very night, as he was praying in the cold, open air, near Saint Sharbel’s hermitage, a young, married man had an experience, new to him, of God’s love, fatherhood and care (the purpose for which Orders are formed). That man was Raymond Nader, and here is his story:

...“I was praying, as was my custom of many years, and this time in front of St. Sharbel’s hermitage in Annaya ... I found myself in another world... everything had stopped: I could see neither the candles (which I had lit), nor the trees, nor the ground anymore... I could hear no sound at all... I could not feel my body. I started seeing - but not with my eyes - things I had never seen in my life. I stopped hearing with my ears, but started hearing things I had never heard before. And I started feeling in my heart what I had never felt before, as if my heart was no longer made of flesh and blood. I saw a strange and amazing light, unlike any light I had ever seen: it was a sea of light that extended from one end of the universe to the other. The sun would look like a small candle compared to that light... But it was not a natural light; despite all its strength, it neither dazzled nor burned... A soft and smooth light; gentle, yet strong and powerful

at the same time. It had a crystalline color, and an extremely clear and pure light. I felt as if I were a tiny drop, swimming in a very great sea of wonderful crystal light... I felt very safe, like a tiny baby swimming trustfully in the water of his mother's womb... I felt an indescribable joy and great amazement!

“I felt as if I were perhaps standing, sitting or swimming, or something else that I do not know. I was either present before a great being, or in the heart of a very powerful and marvelous being: the perfection of power, of knowledge, and of compassion and love....

“I felt as if I were in contact with someone: in a strange way, as if I was in contact with all the creatures of the universe - together and at the same time. It seemed the whole universe had become one, and I was a drop of it - as if the universe melted in this light and so did I... Then, in a strange way, I entered into a dialog with that light. He would talk to me without words, without voice, without language, but in a way clearer than any words, and more eloquent than any language. That light was talking directly to my soul, and addressing my mind and my heart directly - without passing through my ears or my eyes or any of my senses, of which I was no more aware ...

“I said to myself: ‘I must be dreaming.’ He answered me in His way and in His language which is devoid of words, sounds or languages. He made me understand - in a very clear way that can neither be misinterpreted, misunderstood, or wrongly explained - that I was not dreaming, as if He were telling me: ‘No, you are not dreaming.’ Yet, I repeated to myself: ‘I am certainly not conscious...’ In the same marvelous and clear way He explained to me that I was at the pinnacle of consciousness, and that I had never in my life reached a level of awareness of my existence and of my being as I had at that moment. It was as if He were telling me: “You are now more conscious than you have ever been in your life. You are at the most conscious moment of your life...”

“Then I started wondering: where am I? What is this light? Who is this talking to me?’ At that moment I felt the most awesome sensation a person can ever feel: a very great peace, an indescribable joy, an intense and absolute happiness... a complete and wonderful clarity... a pure and strong love that exceeds by millions of times the love that exists in the hearts of all human beings together... a great and tremendous love, yet unlike that of humans, a different one... a great divine love which only that light can grant... As I was overwhelmed by that wonderful feeling, and completely melted in it, I ‘heard’ Him telling me: “This is me,” as if I had known Him for a very long time: since my birth, or even perhaps before I was born....

“I felt as if He knew me perfectly, since I had been formed in my mother’s womb, and even before that... As if He knew each and every atom of my body; and knew each and every cell of my brain; and as if he knew the thoughts of my soul, and my feelings far better than I did... I felt completely naked in front of Him and I felt that the light went through my body from one side to the other... This light does not cast shadows; He passes through everything... I felt that He entered every corner of my heart...

“I said to myself, and thought, that I wanted that light to stay permanently, and that I remain in Him always, and that if He wanted to go away, that He might take me with Him. But He answered me in His way, as if He was saying to me: ‘I am always here and everywhere; I do not go anywhere... I am always in time, and out of it; in space and out of it... (Raymond Nader’s diary, pp. 69-73)’. So far, this experience has been repeated 22 times; each time, Mr. Raymond Nader receives a message. Here we are now publishing most of them. According to Raymond, six messages are not yet published. Here are their contents

### **1-Christ is the Truth of Love Incarnate**

“Before the beginning, was love. Everything came to be through love, and without love, nothing of what has existed since the beginning, or is now, or will be forever, would have come to be. In the very beginning was love; the basis of the universe - its law and regulations - is love. When all ends, only love will remain; all that is outside love will pass.

“God is love. God is truth. God is the true love. The world of God is the world of love; it is the world of truth, and there is no truth outside love. Man is not fulfilled except through love, and he does not reach the truth except in the world of God. Man belongs to God; he is the child of love, the child of God, and his real home is the world of God.

“There is a way to God’s world, and that way is Christ. Christ is the truth of love incarnate. He is the proclamation of the truth of life, and He is the way to God’s world. Every man, during his journey through this world to the other, is called to follow this way. And, as in every journey in this world, a man must take along provisions and weapons in his journey to the other world. The only provision for this journey is love, and the only weapon is love. This love can only be encompassing of all human beings, can expect nothing in return, can know no boundaries, and be only unconditional. That is how God loves you, so love each other with the same love, with God’s love.

“One cannot give this love from oneself, but can get it from God, through Jesus Christ, to be filled with it, in spirit. This is achieved through prayer. Only through prayer can love be obtained from God the Father, the source of love, through God the Son, Jesus Christ - love incarnate - and this love is the Spirit of God in man. Pray to obtain this love, to love all human beings without recompense, without boundaries, without conditions, as God loves, **and then you will become Children of God. Man came from the heart of God, and will return to God's heart.**” (St. Sharbel's Words)

## **2- And you will achieve the Objective for which God Created You**

“Why are people going downward, whereas the road to God is upward”?!

“People are carrying many loads and burdens that are causing their backs to bend; their foreheads are touching the ground, and they are no longer able to stand upright and raise their heads to see the face of their Lord. They are trying to free themselves and each other of these burdens; they throw them on each other and make each other carry them, making their loads heavier.

“Only Jesus Christ is able to free all human beings of all their loads, burdens and weights, for a slave cannot set another slave free. Man is born bound with ropes and chains, and shackled in bonds within which he is reared and lives, and very many are those who die in them.”

“People are getting used to these bonds which are becoming part of them, thus making it difficult to save them from them. The glittering of their bonds is dazzling them so that they can no longer see the face of the Lord, and the rattling of their chains is deafening them so that they can no longer hear the voice of the Lord. They boast of the glitter of their bonds, which hobble them, and delight in the tinkling of the chains which bind them; shackles remain shackles no matter how they shine, and the chain that binds you remains a chain of bondage even if it is of gold. Instead of polishing your shackles, shatter them, and instead of composing music from the tinkling of your chains, untie and break free of all of them.”

“The Lord is in pain seeing as shackled slaves looking for happiness in places in which they will not find it, the people for whom He became man to set free, and for whom he died and rose from the dead to give life and eternal happiness.”

- Your happiness in this world is not from this world. If you were from this world, you would stay in it.

- Your happiness is not in stones. Stones do not give happiness: Why does man seek after gold? Is it to give value to himself? Man is far dearer than gold, man is the child of God; his value is intrinsic. Gold does not set man free of his shackles, but only makes them shine more.

- Your happiness is not found in other humans either, for they cannot offer happiness as they do not own it, and no one can give something one does not own.

“Only Jesus Christ can give you true happiness. People, however, have become arrogant, living amidst asphalt and cement, their minds have become asphalt and their hearts cement. Their minds produce only dark and gloomy thoughts, and their hearts are hardened, cruel and devoid of love. People have become matter that moves without spirit, and some of them are mobile rocks spreading the stench of sin. People have become arrogant and they insist on finding happiness in sin. Sin only gives them anxiety, sadness, misery and emptiness. People have become arrogant; they boast to themselves, they boast to others and they boast to God. Are they not aware that God can turn them back into dust at the speed of lightning?

But the love of our Lord is great. Our Lord loves humans greatly because they are His children, and He has made of them a light to the world.

“Every person is a torch of light; our Lord created him to illumine the world. Every person is a lamp made by our Lord to shine and give light. Whoever gets a lamp, receives it to illuminate the darkness. The lamp was made to illumine the darkness. But these lamps are preoccupied with their outer frame: they are coloring their lampshades, painting them, decorating them and embellishing them. These shades that our Lord had made thin and transparent to protect the light, have become thick and hard, and they are blocking the light, and so the world has become immersed in darkness. These lamps that our Lord had made to carry the light, and illumine the world, have become works of art that are decorated, embellished and colored but unable to give light. What is the use of a lamp that cannot light the dark? A lamp cannot be seen in darkness unless it lights up. No matter how beautiful a lamp is, its light is more beautiful than it. The world is drowning in darkness and this while you are the light of the world. Your glass should regain its thinness and transparency so that you may **light up the world, and achieve the objective for which God has created you.**

“God made every creature to fulfill the purpose of its existence. Observe the creatures of this earth; each one is performing its duty with utmost precision and integrity, and no creature is miserable. The most miserable creature on the face of the earth is happier than the sinner. **At the day of reckoning, the sinner will not so much worry about the harsh reckoning as much as he will feel ashamed before the greatness of God’s love,** that love which created the universe and gave life.

“Love is the only treasure that you amass in this world, and which remains with you through to the next world.

“All your treasures, money, glories and achievements that you think you have owned in this world and believe are yours, will remain in this world; even your own bones are not yours. **Only love will go with you to the next world, and whoever gets to stand before the Lord devoid of love will die of shame,** and that will be the moment of his real death, not when he departed from this world.

“Man dies if he does not turn into love, for God is love, and only love is eternal. Let love reign over your hearts, and humility guide your minds. Pray and repent. Pray to Jesus Christ and He will hear you; open your hearts to Him, He will enter them and peace will come into them. But pray with all your heart. Do not mumble words that come from your lips while your hearts are with another lord. Our Lord knows what is in your hearts and He wants your hearts.

“Do not tire yourselves looking for the truth outside of Christ. There is no truth outside of Christ. Christ is the truth, and when you know Christ you will know the truth and become free; and Christ wants you free. Be not afraid, be strong and be sure and confident that Christ has defeated the world!” (St. Sharbel’s words)

### **3- Your Work in this World**

“Christ is the way; remain firm in Christ and follow the way, and do not let anything move you away from Him.

“Stop by every brother of yours even for a very brief moment, point the way out to him, point the light out to him: should he choose to walk by your side, then let him go before you, and should he ask you to hold his hand, then hold both his hands; should he try to move you away from the way, or push you back, then let go of him, for the road is long and the work is plentiful: your work is to sow the earth with prayer and incense. Sow the earth with love. Sow in the rock because crops will grow in every rock that has a grain of earth. Crush the rock that needs crushing. Keep striking at the rock and never weary, for if it does not break after the first and second strikes, it will after a hundred strikes. Do not weary and fall behind because if you do, someone else will crush the rock, plow and sow. One sows in season and reaps in season.

“Strike at the rock and do not be afraid because the arm is yours but neither the land is yours nor the sledgehammer is yours. Do not nag, grumble, fidget and complain: the wheat spikes undergoing threshing to separate hay from them do not grumble under the weight of the thresher, and because of the harshness of the threshing floor, for they are being prepared to become bread and nourishment. And the grapes do not fidget while being pressed, squeezed and crushed on the rocks of the press, for they become wine and joy. Without the cross there is neither bread nor wine. Whoever wants to become bread and wine must carry the cross. Carry the cross and go toward the light.

“In this world, man is moving from the shore of darkness and nonexistence to the shore of eternal light, and he passes through the seas of this world in a ship, and the ships of this world are many:

- 1- Some ships are very beautiful, very luxurious, and also very comfortable, because their sails incline to the wind, and their rudders sway with the waves. They face up neither to the winds nor to the waves. They have neither direction, nor destination to reach. Most people rush to embark upon these ships because they see nothing in this world except the journey, and all they want is their trip to be pleasant and their travel to be comfortable. But no journey in this sea lasts forever; the trip ends and the

passengers of these ships end up at the bottom of the sea, near the shore from whence they had departed.

- 2- Another type of ships has thin sails and weak wood; these ships are wrecked as soon as they are on the high seas, where waves rise high and storms gain strength, and the passengers of these ships end up somewhere at the bottom of the deep sea.
- 3- A third type includes ships that have strong wood, solid sails, and that look nice and inviting. But its captain is an impostor who takes the passengers from one shore of death to another. And so the passengers of these ships end up on some death shore from whence the return is impossible.
- 4- And there is the Lord's ship which has strong wood and solid sails, and whose captain is full of wisdom, courage and love. This ship sails across the deep seas, faces up strong storms and winds, and plows the high waves in the open sea: **The journey in this ship is rough, but its arrival is sure.**

“Hang on to the Lord's ship; do not be afraid of the storms and high waves. Do not let the luxurious and comfortable ships lure you into boarding them because they do not arrive. Be concerned more with than about the journey. Do not let the depths of the sea fascinate you and draw you to dive into them. The sea of this world is for you to sail upon rather than to dive into. And you cannot be at the same time on board the ship, and deep in the sea water, or in two ships at the same time.

“Hang on to the Lord's ship and help your brothers hang on with you: At every port you reach, invite people to join you in your journey so you may share the arrival with them; tell them about your ship and Captain and about the shore of light. But, rest assured that **it is not what you say that will make people embark on the Lord's ship, but rather it is your love for each other and your love for the Captain and your trust and your belief in Him, and the joy on your faces.**

“Rest assured also that the journey on this ship will only end on the shore of light in order to continue with the light, because man is a cosmic creature whose limits are the light and not an earthly creature whose limits are earth and water. Man is dust and light: Whoever lives in the dust returns to the dust and dies in the dust, and whoever lives in light, returns to light and lives in light. Do not let earth confine you, because the boundaries of your homeland in this world are the end of the sea and the beginning of heaven. Do not let earth enslave you; be free; freedom can only be in freedom from sin: If you are free from sin, then you are free and nobody can enslave you. But if you are a slave to sin, then you are a slave even if you hold the king's scepter in your hand.

“Keep the grace of love and the mark of humility. Be true witnesses of Jesus Christ. Confront evil with love, but do not use love as an excuse to avoid confronting evil; a farmer does not use rubble as an excuse to stop plowing. And do not be afraid, evil will destroy itself.

“Fully commit yourselves to the Church and all her teachings, and unwearily persevere in prayer. Honor our mother the Virgin Mary, and arm yourselves with the Rosary, because the name of the Virgin Mary drives away darkness and crushes evil. Be monks in the heart of this world, even if

without the habit. Sow the earth with prayer and incense. Be saints and sanctify the earth. The road of sanctity is long, but be sure that when the thoughts of God are in your minds and the love of God is in your hearts, then the strength of God will be in your arms and you will arrive. Rest assured also that whenever you are praying, I will be praying with you so that you may be sanctified and the name of the Lord be glorified. (St. Sharbel's words)

#### **4- Your Weakness is there for you to overcome**

“Every padlock has a key. And every door has a lock that can be opened only by its key. Death has closed Heaven's door and sin has locked it. The Cross is the key that undoes the padlock of sin, trips the lock of death and opens Heaven's door. **The Cross is the key to Heaven's door;** there is no other key.

“Heaven's door is where Heaven and earth meet, at the summit of Golgotha. This door is clear, tangible and visible, and every man with eyes can see it. Some think that it has no lock and opens to whoever pushes it. But when you approach the door, you will realize that it has a lock and it can only be opened with its proper key.

The true key cannot be recognized unless you put it into the padlock. There is only one true key: the Cross of Christ. Do not weary yourselves searching for keys aside from this Cross that open the door of Heaven, and do not in vain make another key. Many are the people who waste their lives in designing their own keys; they cast and strike keys reflecting their own designs, believing that these keys will open the door for them. And many are the people who mock the Cross of Christ. But at Heaven's door, the truth will be revealed and all other keys will fail.

“All the journey of your life is a trip toward this door; at the end of this trip, you either have the key and you will open, or you will stand there holding keys on which you have wasted your life, and which now have failed and disappointed you. Take up the Cross of Christ, and you will hold the key of Heaven's door.

“Take up the Cross of Christ with joy, determination, and courage, do not heed the mockers, do not stop and cry with the wailing, and do not lament when you fall along with the lamenting. Neither weeping and lamenting make the history of salvation, nor does beating on the chest and wailing open Heaven's door. The history of salvation is made through tears of true repentance. One tear of repentance opens the door of Heaven. The tear of repentance will roll down only on the cheek of the courageous faithful.

“Take up the Cross of Christ and walk in His footsteps, then the Blessed Virgin will be by your side as she was by His side. And every time you are wounded, say: with the wounds of Christ! And every time you suffer pain, say: with Your passion, O Jesus!. And every time you are persecuted, contemned and insulted, say: *for Your glory, O Lord!*

**“Your Weakness is there for you to overcome and not to use as an excuse.** When you take up the Cross of Christ, neither pain will bend you, nor will fatigue crush you, and you will walk with firmness, patience and silence. When you arrive at the door, the joy of your crossing over its threshold will exceed by far your pain and the exhaustion of your trip, and the happiness of your arrival will exceed by far the suffering of your journey.

“Your way to Golgotha is very long in this point of the world, and the Cross of Christ in the East is upon your shoulders; you have many enemies because they are the enemies of the Cross. Do not make them your enemies. Speak to them always in the language of the Cross, even though they are your enemies because of it. The coming months and years will be very difficult, hard, bitter, and as heavy as the Cross. Endure them with deep prayer from faith, with patience from hope, and with love from the Cross. Violence will fill the earth, the planet will be wounded by the knives of ignorance and hatred; all the peoples around you will stagger under the pain, fear will be over the whole Earth like a wind, and sadness in the hearts of all people. Ignorant and hate-filled people will control the destiny of their peoples and lead them to misery and death through blind hatred which they will call justice, and through dark ignorance which they will call faith. Hatred and ignorance will prevail throughout the world. But you, remain firm in faith and love.

“The face of the earth will be changed; you, retain the face of Christ. Borders, communities and human systems will be wiped out and written anew, and peoples will falter under fire and steel. **Let your love be without boundaries, your community be the Church and your rule the Gospel. Be the anchor that guides the ships straying in the raging seas, and let your hearts be harbors of peace for those lost, homeless, and seeking help. Through your prayers you will invoke mercy, and shower love on earth.** Pray that hardened hearts will be softened, dark minds will open, and calamities and horrors will be reduced. Do not be afraid, in the end the light of Christ will rise, the sign of the Cross will shine, and the Church will radiate light. Remain firm in your faith in Christ and be not afraid, and trust in the **God** of the resurrection and life; His glory is ever coming.” (St. Sharbel’s words)

## **5- Axis of the Universe**

“The whole universe revolves around the mystery of the Cross. Every man thinks that the universe revolves around him and that he is the axis of the universe. The Cross **is** the axis of the universe, and **whoever wants to be on the axis of the universe, will have to be with the crucified on the Cross.** He who does not live the mystery of the Cross cannot comprehend the mystery of the universe:

“Everyone has a form and entity in time and place, like a piece of ice, and people, in order to preserve their entity, are afraid to draw near fire so they will not melt: What is the use of ice if it keeps its form and entity? If it does not melt and become water it will neither permeate the earth nor water the trees or quench the thirst of people? Do not be afraid to draw near the fire that melts you because it will turn you into life-giving water to irrigate the earth. Let your love be

like a fluid permeating all places; do not keep it frozen and give it a form and design it because then it will not pass anywhere.

“The salt that does not dissolve will not make salty. Spoiled salt muddies the water that it is supposed to salt, and spoils the food. And good salt that dissolves, disappears in water and does not show in food any form, color or entity, but provides the taste. You are the salt of the earth; if you make your life your own property, it will then be very cheap. The more you give your life, the more its value will increase, and when it reaches its full value it becomes the property of all. The loaf of bread is the same, be it on the table of the rich or that of the poor. A tasty loaf does not ask who is going to eat it when it comes out of the oven; a loaf is meant to be eaten; a good person is a good loaf. The history of mankind is empty without the Cross, because it is a passing history, while the Cross is steady, unchangeable. And your own history will be empty without the Cross, because you are passing and only the crucified gives you life and confirms you in eternal life. It is the Cross that will sanctify you in time.

“The beginning of creation, the present time and the end of the world are all occurring, for God, at the present moment. Sanctify through love the present moment of your life; thus you will come to realize the mystery of eternal life in the presence of God. A man is immortal through love with God. Sanctify time, sanctify your life, sanctify every moment of your life. Do not get distracted by the ticking of the clock: you cannot stop the ticking of the clock, but you can be ready when the clock strikes. **Whoever removes God from his life, mind and heart, will be crushed by time and will drown in death; this does not mean that God no longer exists, but rather that he exists no more.**

As light reveals the existent to the eyes, Christ too reveals existence to the mind and the heart.

“Without light the human eye is blind to the existent, and without Christ man is blind to existence. God created matter and set order, He also created the mind and instilled the spirit and gave life; just as through logic and analysis, the mind comprehends order and understands matter, so too through faith, prayer and true worship, the spirit realizes the love of God and the mystery of the universe, and gives life.

“Some flowers are picked in spring for decoration, other flowers grow old and are left till autumn for seed, while other flowers let their leaves be scattered by the wind to deliver their scent far into the distance and fill the earth with their fragrance. God has wisdom in every movement; pray to understand God’s wisdom and live His will, and not to change His will. You Father’s will is always your good.

“Keep wearing the fragrance of oak and thyme, and do not take on the colors of this world and be filled with its odors. The touches of God’s fingers upon you are more important than anything the world would dress you up and decorate you. Walk firmly on the road of sanctity, and let Christ live in you. Then you will live in the heart of the mystery of the universe, in the source of light” (St. Sharbel’s words)

## **6- Your Journey in this World is the trip of your Sanctity**

“All people were given ears to hear, but those who do hear are few. And of those who hear, those who understand are few, and very few from among those who hear and understand are living what they heard and understood. Those who are heading towards the Kingdom are few and the door is narrow.

“Listen, understand and be witnesses. Listen to the voice of the Lord, understand the truth, and witness to the truth that you have perceived and live in it. Be silent so you may hear, and listen to the voice of the Lord. But be careful not to hear the resounding of the echo of your thoughts and listen to yourself: transcend your own thoughts, and let the word of God purify them, erasing what it erases and writing what it needs to write again.

“Man is a part of the whole; the part must listen to the whole. Just as the drop of water is to the river: a drop of water cannot be a river, even if it contained from everything that’s in the river, but the river is all drops of water on the same course. A drop of water in the river is a river, but the drop of water that is outside the river's stream, is drop of water. Listen to the course of the universe, for you are part of it. The whole universe is on a pilgrimage journey towards the heart of the Father, like the journey of the rivers towards the sea. Do not accept being out of this journey. The drop of water outside of the river can never reach the sea.

“Listen, understand the truth and let it permeate your spirit. Break all outer layers and break up all accumulations in which the world has wrapped you and which have covered you and blocked off God’s face from you. Humble yourself and relinquish the thoughts that blocked off God’s voice from you, even if some of them have formed you and made you. Listen with humility and let your heart be soft and your mind free. Listening without humility and repentance is like an echo lost in the valleys: no matter how strong the echo is, the mountain remains a mountain, the valley a valley, and the rock a rock. Listen with humility, understand the truth deeply, and bear witness with courage.

“Listen so you may understand and know, and live in accordance with the truth that you have known: it is not enough for you to know the way to arrive, you must walk it.

God will shed light for you on the pages, but it is you who must read; God will light your way, but it is you who must do the walking. Whoever goes up goes up using his feet, and whoever goes down goes down using his feet.

Wherever you arrive, it is your own feet that got you there. Be always in a state of listening and permanent examination of conscience. Redo your calculations every day, change your life and renew it. If you listen with humility you will hear and understand the truth and the truth will set you free. Free yourself from the ropes that bind you: your own thoughts, your personal beliefs and your passions tie you up like the ropes that tie the boat to the shore. A boat on the shore in a port is held by its ropes which provide it safety but prevent it from sailing. Let the word of God untie your ropes and cut that which needs to be cut, rope after rope, even if you suffer. Do not

live inside your own passions and thoughts even if they give you rest and security. **Security is illusion without the peace of Christ, and rest is a deception if it is not in the heart of God.** Do not fear to free yourselves from the shore and to depart from the port. Let God set you free, His word guide you and the Spirit fill your sails. Then you will reach the shore of light. A boat is meant to sail across the sea and not to remain in the port. In order for a boat to sail and reach to the far deep seas, it must untie all its ropes, and if even one rope keeps it tied, then the boat will remain in the port.

Keep only the ropes that tie your sails and guide you, along with the ropes of love and partnership that bind you to your brother in humanity. **Your journey in this world is the trip of your holiness. Holiness is a state of constant transformation from matter into light.**

“Pray to listen, pray to understand, and pray to live your faith, apply and bear witness. Pray to be transformed into light. Listen with prayer, understand the truth with prayer, live and bear witness with prayer. Let all your life be prayer and service: if you pray without serving, then you turn the Cross of Christ into a piece of wood in your life, and if you serve without praying, then you will be serving yourself only. Pray in your bedroom. Pray with your family. And pray in your Church community. Pray in your bedroom in intimacy with the Lord; then you will preserve your soul and open your mind to the mystery of God. Pray with your family; then you will protect your family and place it in the heart of the Holy Trinity. Pray with the Church community: then you will protect your church and bring the kingdom closer. Your personal prayer alone with the Lord will put you in the heart of God, your prayer in the bosom of the family will place you in the bosom of the Trinity, and your community prayer in the heart of the church confirms you in the body of Christ. Pray. **A person who prays lives the mystery of existence, while the person who does not pray barely exists.**

“Become experienced with silence; the kind of silence that is attentive, alive, and far from the silence of nothingness. Become experienced with silence, forge yourself in love, mature in sanctity. Listen to hear, humble yourself to understand, believe and have courage to bear witness, and **love so you may be sanctified.** (St. Sharbel’s words)

## **7- Christ is the Foundation of God’s Building**

“When the lamp dims into pitch-darkness, it is filled with oil. Now the lamp is dimming, its light is fading and darkness is pitch-black. Fill your lamp with oil before it goes out and darkness engulfs you.

Attend to the oil of the lamp by whose light you remain awake. Attend to the oil of the lamp that lights up your nights. The lamp that watches over you, watch over it. Your lamp is dimming and the light of your home has become darker. You are absorbed, looking in front of you, ignoring the light that lights up your darkness.

“Light up your darkness with your lamp as it is night; do not sleep in darkness awaiting the light of day to shine. When the light of day shines, another work starts and you will be asked about the night's work. If the light of your lamp dims due to lack of oil, fill it up with oil, do not stay up under your brother's light and leave your lamp to go out; you will be asked about your lamp under the light of which you should stay up, and that went out. Let the light shine in every lamp until the day shines. A lamp is filled with oil; it is neither filled with intentions and wishes nor with water for humiliation; take care of your lamp's light before your work and your production.

“**Reexamine your priorities.** Your ladder is upside down. The small rung is at the bottom and the big rung is at the top.

“See how the wise builder's building rises: the biggest stone at the bottom and the smallest stone at the top. Many people nowadays are building their walls in reverse: they no longer know the large from the small, the first from the last, and the important from the most important. And the wall whose smallest stone is at the bottom, and whose biggest stone is at the top, will crumble and the building will collapse. Many are the walls that are collapsing, and the bonds that are breaking due to the ignorance of the workers and the pride of the builders.

“You, raise your building with wisdom: build on the foundation of Christ, the essential stone for all your building that supports all your bonds. Place your large stones at the foundation and the smaller ones at the top. And if in one of the walls of your building you see a big stone in the high course and a small stone in the foundation, then take down all of your wall and build it anew: no matter how big and high your building is, you had better rebuild it from the beginning than to let it tumble down, collapse and fall down on your head, or on the heads of your brothers or your children.

“Rest assured that if Christ is not the foundation of every building, it will collapse and fall down. Do not be dazzled by the tall building based on man, for it will collapse no matter how high it rises, and time will erase it. If you have already built your building and have discovered of late that it is not built on Christ, then take it down and build it again. A course built on Christ is better than a high tower that tumbles down under the wind. **Christ is the foundation of the Lord's building, you are its living stones and the Holy Spirit is the keystone.** Christ bears up the whole building, and the Spirit gathers together all the stones of the vault and supports the walls. The Spirit is the spirit of love. Love is the keystone. If you remove the Spirit, you remove the keystone: the vault breaks up, the stones come apart and the whole building collapses. The Holy Spirit, the spirit of love, the keystone that keeps the covenant. Every stone in the building has its place; every stone in a course is supported by stones from beneath, supported on its side by stones which it also supports. Above it are stones that it supports. Every stone is cut to fill its place. The stone missing from a building leaves an empty space in its place, but leaves place for rain, air, dust and wind as well. The stone missing from a place lets in the elements. Do not leave a space between one stone and another, or else the building will end up weak. And also do not leave sand between one stone and another, for the rain will intensify and snow will accumulate causing the sand to slip and the building to fall apart. It is the power of the Spirit that holds the stones of the building together and not the sand which glues them together.

“Remain firm in the building of the Lord. Persevere in building up the Kingdom, and be living stones in the Lord’s temple: the stone that is not in the Lord’s temple remains a stone in a pile of other stones; it has volume but no shape, or place or role, just a stone thrown in a pile of stones.

“Surrender yourself into the hands of Lord, the wise builder, let Him smooth and carve you, let Him remove excess from you and complete in you what you lack, let the Lord give you the shape, the size and place. Whether you were a large stone or a small stone, you have your place to which size you were carved.

“Let the Lord build you and then you will take your place in the course. Do not put yourself in the place that attracts you: if you take a place bigger than your place, you will remain protruding and you will disjoint the whole wall, and if you take a place smaller than the place prepared for you, there will be an empty space around you. Fill your place, support what is above you, support those around you, and lean on the one carrying you. Christ bears all and the Spirit brings you together and leads you.” (St. Sharbel’s words)

## 8- Sanctity is Your Goal

“**Sanctity is your goal, and perfection in love is your ultimate end.** Do not stop at the means of sanctification, worshiping them. Do not make the means an end, nor the end a means. Do not turn the means into an end, nor the end into a means. Do not make the means of sanctification your goal and end, and do not let sanctity be your means to other ends. Prayer is there to sanctify you; do not sanctify prayer. Fasting is there to strengthen you; do not deify fasting. Mortification is there to purify you, do not worship mortification. Your hymns are there to glorify God; do not glorify your hymns. Do not replace Christ with talking about him, for then you would be worshiping your words, and do not replace the truth with expressions that express it, for then these expressions of yours will become “the truth”. A word is never more important than the idea it expresses, and the idea is never more important than the truth it is thinking. A safe is never more important than the treasure it holds, and a chalice is never more important than the wine. The tabernacle is never more important than the bread, and the monstrance is never more important than the host.

“Christianity is neither a religion nor a temple, it is not a book or a place of worship; Christianity is the person of Jesus Christ Himself. The mirror that reflects light is not the light. Distinguish between the light and the mirrors that reflect it. Do not focus your attention on the mirror, but keep your heart in the light. Do not escape from your selves to go to God, and do not go to God so you may escape from your selves. God wants you to present your selves to Him as they are so that He might elevate and sanctify them. Do not let the world push you toward God, rather let God pull you toward Him. Do not blacken through your writings the white pages that your holy fathers had written. The truth is always the same. In order for you to speak about God, you must be in the heart of God; you cannot speak about God if you are outside of Him. *And the Word was made flesh* is not a sound flying through the air. Carve in your mind every word you want to say, sculpt it in your spirit, and smooth it in your heart, bring it down from your mouth just as you set

a stone in its proper place in the course. And do without the word that does not build. Do not speak except when your words are deeper and more eloquent than your silence.

“Do not let your words about what is beyond the seas distract you from sailing. Go towards the essence, and distinguish between the essential and the superficial in your life, and between the fundamental and the marginal, between the core and the shell. In this world, you do not fill a basket with water, or a pitcher with grapes, or a jar with figs: just as you use the things of this earth for your service, learn how to use the things of heaven with wisdom from God for your salvation, and for the glory of God.

“Every land has its own soil and climate, it has its proper tools which you use to plough and plant it, and it has its plants which blossom there and yield fruit. You can neither crush rocks with a garden fork, nor plough the earth with a sledgehammer, nor chop wood with a pick-axe. And neither do cedar and oak grow in the sand of the coast, nor do bananas and oranges grow in the rocks of the mountains. With the tools in your hand do your work, and where the Lord has planted you, blossom and bring forth fruits. If you do not take roots you cannot tower.

“Accommodate your mind to existence, do not seek to accommodate existence to your mind; existence precedes you and will remain after you. The Spirit alone suffices you and brings you into harmony with God. You will understand the depth of the mystery of existence through the light of the eternal Spirit that is in you. Do not seek to comprehend the truth through your senses, for then you will be limited by the limits of these senses.

Know that your senses exist so that you may love through them, and not so that you may love them. When you love your sight, you start worshiping the creatures you see and forget the Creator Who is beyond the limits of your eyes. And when you love your hearing you start loving the melodies and sounds of the world, and forget to hear the voice of God in the silence that does not reach your ears. And when you love your nose, you start to give yourself over to the perfumes of the world and forget the flowers of the prairies (the source of perfume) that God has formed for man with His love. And when you love your taste, you become enslaved to food and drink and forget nourishment. And when you love your [sense of] touch you become enslaved to the outer and forget the inner. Transcend your senses and do not drown in them; reach through them to the truth as the ray of light reaches through crystal.

“If you harden your senses they will thicken, and the rays will bounce back from them like a mirror, and they will reflect to you images of the world. Do not sink into your senses, for then their joy will start deceiving you; True joy is not the joy of the senses, true joy is the one that transcends your senses, and goes past them to the heart of the light where you would drown in the heart of God, see His light and melt in His love. Go beyond your senses and go past them, go beyond yourself and then you will touch the edge of the light. Whenever you want to look to the outside, close your eyes and look to the inside, then start seeing the outside more clearly. And whenever you want to hear, cover your ears and listen to the inner voice; then you will start hearing better. **Guide your senses in order to glorify God, and do not let your senses lead you to glorify His creatures.**

**“Love to the point of self-sacrifice: love is the only ink with which love is written, and everything else is ink on paper. In Christ, every man is a word in the mouth of God so that all humanity becomes a song of love. And glory be always to God.”** (St. Sharbel’s words)

## **9- Your Future is the First Day in the Next World**

“Observe the birds of the sky how they carefully build their nests, gently lay their eggs, tenderly watch over their nestlings until they grow feathers and fly, and safeguard the trees of the Lord. You are building your nests, laying your eggs and hatching your young in trees the roots of which are struck by decay, mites are eating into their trunks and gypsy moths are feeding on its branches. If the tree falls, your nests will scatter, your chicks will disperse, and you will be left only with bare branches to lay your wings on. You are toiling and overworking to build strong and warm nests where your young will grow, grow feathers and fly, and nest - they too.

“Look after the tree just as you look after the nests. And just as you were entrusted with your nests, so are you entrusted with your trees. Look after the roots, look after the trunk, look after the branches and look after the leaves, and a few straws and a few grains of soil will be enough for you to build your nests; the branches of the tree will protect you and its leaves will shade you. Do not sink into your nests and raise their edges high so they give you security; work with the trust of the Lord, and the Lord will give you security.

**“As you race to ensure your future and that of your children, always remember that your future is not the last of your days in this world, but it is the first day in the next world.** You ensure your children’s future when you ensure heaven for them. Your children are for you to give them life, and there is no life except in Christ. Give Christ to your children, but if Christ is not in you, it is difficult for you to give Him to your children.

“If you do not sanctify yourselves, how would you sanctify your children?! **If Christ were not in you, how would you give Him to your children?!** If you do not give them Christ, everything else you offer them is useless and ephemeral, vanishes and will cease to exist with them. It is not with tall buildings and the guarantees of this world that you give your children security and a future. Give them your sanctity and prayers, and you will ensure their safety in this world and their future in the next world. You are seeking your success and your children’s success in life, while success in life is to stand before God without shame.

“Go down to the roots, look after them and be disinterested. Working on the roots is hidden, does not show and requires effort and self-denial. People see the tree, they neither see the roots nor see your work, but God Who is in heaven, sees and blesses. Look after the roots, guard the trunk, preserve the branches, take care of the leaves, and maintain the tree; God will keep your works. Look after the tree - which is enfolding, shading and housing you - from its roots to the tips of its branches, even if this is at the expense of the size of your nests.

“The same time passes for the good and the bad, and if the good do not fill up time with good, then the bad will fill it with evil, and time will be empty. Every moment of your life is a basket placed before you so you would fill it from your harvest, your reaping and your crops; it stays before you for an instant, then it disappears and passes behind you and you can never bring it back. If you stop and look back and observe your empty buckets, only the tears of your repentance by the mercy of God, from the grace of God, fill them up, and the grace of God is sufficient for you. And every second is a drop of eternity if you fill it up with God. Do not let the world seize the baskets of your life, then your baskets will remain empty, and you will pile up behind you sheaves of hay that time will burn and nothing of them will be left.

“Do not enter into a dialogue with the Devil; end your conversation with him before its first word, and keep your dialogue always with God. Tamp your roof after each round of rain and before it leaks, for if you slacken, heavy downpours, floods, and snow will come, and water will leak to the beams, and then the ceiling will collapse on your head and your family’s.

“No matter how tempting the temptation is, it does not justify sin.

“Fill your life from the love of God and sanctify the time you are in, then your harvest will be worthwhile and your provisions lasting. Only the master of time can fill the time. Only the lord of harvest and crops can fill your baskets. Offer your baskets to Him, and your crops will abound.” (St Sharbel’s words)

## **10- Do Good Untiringly**

“The journey of the universe is the construction site of the kingdom of God. It looks like the construction site of a great temple, whose stones are from the rocks of this world’s quarries, and people are the workers by the power of God and they are the builders according to His will. They extract stones from the rocks of the quarries in this world, they build them one by one, and one course after another, God gives them life and they become living stones in the temple building.

“A large number of people build their own temples with stones that they extract from rocks and they claim they own them, they build them one by one, and one course after another, but they cannot give them life and they remain dead, because only God gives life. These passing people leave the stones, the rocks and the quarries and depart from this world, and their small temples built from dead stones wear away and vanish with time. Ephemeral, they do not persist, and neither do their temples. Only the temple of the Lord is eternal and permanent because it is alive. Build the eternal temple of the Lord and be living stones in it, do not build your temporary little temples from dead stones that time will wipe out. Work with perseverance, joy, solidarity, and

love, work with patience, humility and obedience to the Lord of the Temple. Because you are working with His power, build according to His will.

**“Do good untiringly. Do not seek after rest- rest is a great danger for you.** If you see a worker not doing his work, do not criticize or judge or curse him, [but rather] take your pick-axe or your sickle and continue your work; your work will cause him to work. The building is yours and his, the harvest is yours and his, and all of it is for the Lord of the temple and the God of the harvest. Look at your brother in the same way you look at yourself. You have in yourself from everything you see in your brother, because every man is you with a few differences. And instead of talking about your brother, go talk to him or keep loving silence. Do not ever condemn and do not judge based upon what your eyes see. Do not judge the water you see in the pot, for you cannot know with your eyes whether it’s sweet or salty, fresh or stale, and wine casks look alike on the outside, even if the wine inside them differs. Look with your eyes at the outside and look with your heart to the inside. The heart does not condemn.

“Do not claim to have absolute knowledge and build temples the size of your knowledge, for they will collapse on your heads and kill you. Knowledge needs love in order to become discernment. No matter how much you know, if you don’t love you will not understand even if you know much. Love is greater than intelligence. The logic of love is more exalted than the logic of intelligence. Knowledge devoid of love is devoid of the spirit and destructive to man. Earth is a holy planet, where the feet of the God of the universe trod, which the lights of the Spirit lit and upon which the heart of God is.

“Human beings, through their knowledge void of love, have made the Earth ill: their food has become their poison and their drink their thirst, their medicine their illness. Their air is choking them, their rest is fatigue, and their peace, anxiety; their joy is sadness and their happiness suffering; their truth is illusion, and their illusion, truth; and their light has become darkness.

“Man has acquired more knowledge and less wisdom. Theories in peoples' minds have become like fog on the mountain and in the valleys, it does not allow them to see anything as it is: their theories are veiling their sight. Their buildings are rising, their morals are declining. Their possessions are increasing, their values are decreasing. Their words are increasing and their prayer, decreasing. Their interests are deep, their relationships are shallow. Their window displays are full, their inside is empty. Their roads are broadening, while their vision is becoming narrower. Their roads are numerous, but don’t lead them to one another. Their means of communication are many, but not bringing them to each other. Their beds are big, strong and comfortable, and their families are small, disunited and worn out. They know how to hurry but they don’t know how to wait. They hurry to acquire their livelihood, but forget to ensure their living and their lives. They rush quickly to the outside and neglect the inside.

“Prisoners, boasting of the luxury of their prisons; lost, bragging of the distances they have crossed; dead, priding themselves on the splendor of their graves; they are dying of hunger while sitting on bread bowls, poor while sitting on treasures they themselves buried. Why do you go down under the table to eat the fallen crumbs, while the table is all laid for you? People are sowing the earth with thorns which now are soft and tickling their feet, but when they grow and harden, they will tear and wound the feet of the coming generations.

“You chop wood, stack, burn, kindle, throw yourselves into the fire you set, and you wonder why you get burned?! Humanity is lost, man is ill, and the world is burning.

“God is love, He is the goal and guide for lost humanity; Christ is the medicine for the sick man, and the water of the Baptism in fire is what puts out the blaze of the world. Build every knowledge on Christ; every knowledge that is built outside the foundation of Christ will destroy you. Knowledge without spirit is ignorance. The more the building built on man rises, the more it will crush the human being.

**“Man will keep living in grief and worry, and will not be content or quench his thirst until he is united with himself in the heart of God.** Reach out to each other, look at each other, listen to each other, greet each other, console each other with words of love and encouragement, get out of yourselves [and go] to one another, and embrace one another in the love of Christ. Work in the field of the Lord untiringly and without wearying, let the sounds of your pick-axes fill the valleys and overcome the noise of the world, and let the sounds of your sickles remind people of the harvest season. Let your prayers to the Lord cleave the deaf rocks, and cause the dumb springs to gush out. Rocks do hear prayer and springs do speak, and they all pray and give glory to God.” (St Sharbel’s words)

## **11- . Walk the Path of Sanctity in the Joy of the Resurrectio**

“You are walking on the paths of your life carrying many loads, burdens and concerns, carrying jars and jars, some of which are needed and others that are useless, and you have distributed your treasures amongst your jars, mixing your treasures with your trifles, and you no longer know where your treasure is or in which jar. Some jars fall and break and treasures are lost, and you do not see or know because of the noise of your jars. And some people waste their treasures on the paths of their lives and arrive laden with pottery.

“Every jar that you carry which does not contain your treasure will be filled with distraction and excess weight that will hinder your journey and tire you out.

“Lay down the jars of drudgery to which the world subjects you, even if you have carried them [for] a long journey, exhausted yourselves for them, suffered for them, and perhaps have gotten used to them. Know where your treasure is and put your whole heart in it. Put your whole treasure in one jar and carry it well. Thus you will safeguard your treasure and arrive full.

“Carry one jar: the jar of Christ, and He will pile it up with love and carry it with you. No matter how full it gets it will still hold. And no matter how heavy it gets, it will remain light. And all the remaining jars are all clay, and even if they were empty, they are heavy and bend your back. Choose for yourself your ways in this world, do not let the paths of the world choose you, and do not carry the jars of this world, which burden you to distract you and tire you out.

“The more you increase your jars, the more you distance yourself from your neighbor. Every jar requires space, and the more your jars increase, the more space increases around you, and you start moving away from your brother to keep the jars from bumping against each other and break. The jars become more important than your brother. In order for you to safeguard your jars, you lose your brother and neighbor. Know that your treasure is very precious, but you carry it in pottery.

And every brother of yours has a very precious treasure, which he also carries in an earthenware jar.

“You make your jar with your hands and fold yourself inside it, you sit inside the jar and say that the world is clay; whoever sits inside a jar will see the whole world as clay. Get out of your jar and see the world as it is and not as you have fashioned it inside your jar.

“Let every one fill his jar from the treasure of Christ, because He alone is the true treasure. **In order for you to understand your brother, do not go toward him with an intellectual system created by your mind, but rather go toward him with love from the Spirit of the Creator which He has placed in your heart.**

“Be full grains of wheat on the threshing floor of the Lord, when the winnower works on you and throws you up in the air in order to purify you, you would be heavy and would fall on the threshing floor to be gathered into the barns of life, do not be light, empty grains like hay straws, carried away by the wind which will disperse them outside the threshing floor and scatter them. Rest assured that nothing will fill you up and give you weight except Christ.

“Fill yourselves up with Christ and you will remain on the threshing floor and come be gathered up. And as long as you are on the threshing floor, the winnowing fork will keep winnowing you, and hay and chaff will fly away. On the threshing floor every grain of wheat remains alone even if it was gathered, measure and bagged with the other grains, its sisters.

“The millstone, water and fire turn the grains of wheat into one grind and one loaf. From the field to the loaf the journey is long: pray for the sickle that reaps you, for the thresher that threshes you, for the threshing floor that gathers you, for the winnowing fork that refines you, for the millstone that grinds you, for the water that kneads you, and for the fire that bakes you.

**“The way of sanctity is from the field to the loaf, from the earth to the light, from the manger to the Cross and resurrection: walk it in the joy of the Resurrection.”** (St Sharbel’s words)

## 12- Sanctity is not Chance, Sanctity is a Choice

“People seek for miracles so they may believe and see, and for messages so they may hear and know, and for a road so they may walk and reach salvation and happiness. The miracle is the Eucharist, the sign is the Cross, the message is the Gospel and salvation is through the Church.

- 1- The most important, greatest and holiest sign is the sign of the Cross. The Cross is the sign of God's love for you; let it also be the sign of your love for God. The sign of the Cross is a sign of love not a sign of challenge. And the light of this sign will shine throughout the whole world.
- 2- The salvation of humanity is through the Church, the Church is the one who is carrying on the project of salvation which Christ had begun two thousand years ago and which will not end before the end of the world. All the waves of evil will break on the rock of the Church. Commit yourselves fully to the Church and all her teachings, and do not select from among them.
- 3- The most important and greatest message is the message of the Gospel, which bears the teaching of Christ, and not one jot of His words shall pass away before the world passes away. Whoever does not know the Gospel remains ignorant and living in darkness, even if he had all the knowledge of the world. And whoever does not live the Gospel, is not living; do not misinterpret to justify. The truth of the Gospel remains always as it is.
- 4- **The most important and greatest miracle is the Holy Eucharist, the body of Christ, the Paschal Lamb who takes away the sins of the world, the living God risen from the dead.**

“In vain you would search for signs more important than the sign of the cross. Do not ask for messages that you believe are more important than the message of the Gospel. Do not search for your salvation outside the Church of Christ. Do not be distracted, running after miracles that dazzle your eyes, greater than the miracle of the Holy Eucharist. Keep away from deceptive magic because it will lead you to emptiness.

“Avoid the sign that does not direct you to the sign of the Cross. Ignore the message that does not stem from the Gospel. Reject the miracle that does not lead you to the Eucharist. And through the Church you can discern them all.

“Through the Cross, the Church, the Gospel and the Eucharist, you will be sanctified. God created you so you might be sanctified and not so that you might die.

“**Sanctity is not chance, sanctity is a choice.** Do not wait for it to descend on you from without; you must live and attain it from the inside. The Kingdom of God is in your heart.

“**Sanctity is grace and will; the grace is from God and the will is from you.** You are a potential saint; strive to be an actual saint.” (St. Sharbel's words)

### 13- Love is a Light that Shine

“Love is not attachment, because love is freedom and attachment is bondage. God is freedom.

“Love is not a human emotion, love is a divine power of creation and a heavenly power of resurrection.

“Love is not an instinct stemming from the physical senses, it is a power of life flowing from the spirit.

“Love is not a dead habit that binds and attaches us, it is a power of perpetual renewal and it renews us and sets us free.

“Love is not a feeling directed in a specific direction, love is a light that shines in all directions.

“God is not a feeling, God is not a sentiment, God is not a habit, and God is not an affection, God is not an idea. “God is truth, God is life, God is the creator and giver of life.

“Love does not ask for a price or compensation for giving itself. “Love always goes to the end.

“Love that springs from a human being has for its purpose a return to the human being from which it stems. When a man loves from his self, he loves for his self, whatever be the type of his love or its strength. Love that originates from God, and which a man gets from Him, has the other for its purpose.

“If your love is from God, then it is for your brother, and if your love is from you then it is for you.

“The man whose love comes from his self, loves his self in others, and thinks that he loves them.

“Never confuse love and desire, love and sentiment, love and habit, or love and attachment” (St. Sharbel’s words)

#### **14- Confess your Sins and you will Kill the Evil that’s in you**

“When Christ ascended, the devil fell. Those people clinging to him are going with him, and whoever is standing in his way is subject to falling. Do not hold on to him and do not stand in his way.

“His entire concern is to falsify the image of God in your mind and heart, and falsify your own image in your sight. He wants you to know God incorrectly and see yourself wrongly. He falsifies, distorts and deludes: he tries to magnify you when you should diminish, and diminish you when you should be honored. He tries to stop you when you should walk, and make you walk when you should stop, to make you speak when you should be silent, and to silence you when you should speak. He tries to persuade you to hurry when you should slow down, and to walk slowly when you should hasten. In every case, he wants to mislead you. The devil is the biggest deceiver, the greatest forger, a vicious crook; the Lord and teacher described him as liar and the father of lies.

“The devil never comes in his real image, never does he come under an ugly image; he knows what humans like and are attracted to: he tells you about things you like to hear, shows you things you like to see, gives you things you like to touch, and feeds you things you like to taste.

“When crooks forge gold, they forge it with something that resembles it: yellow and shining. And so too in order for the devil to fake the image of God – who is Love in your life - he uses the things that people call love and mixes them up with God, who is Love. The feelings arising from instinct, passion, the bonds of affection, and the enslaving habits, are all used by the devil to confuse man about the truth of God, the life-giving love.

“The devil’s sole concern is to impede those walking up toward the Lord. On your way toward the Lord, the devil wants:

- 5- Either to push you off the road: he will create a goal for you that would attract you and toward which you would head, so that you might go astray and be lost.
- 6- Or he will cause you to fall so you would stop: he will set you a trap in which you would fall.
- 7- Or he will push you back: he will weary you and discourage you so you would retreat and go back. The important thing to him is that you do not make it.

“Everything that gathers and unites around good is from God, and everything that divides and scatters is from the devil. The devil prevails over people through the things of this world; the more man rids himself of them the more he is shielded against the evil one, and the more he clings to them, the more he would be under the influence of evil. The Devil is the master of this world. The more you are submerged in the world, the more you come under his power, and the more you detach yourself from the world, the more you free yourself from him. Do not forget that you are not of this world! Do not immerse yourselves in it! Sail through it, rise above it, and raise it to the Lord by the power of Christ elevated on the Cross.

“In the beginning the Devil makes a man laugh, in order to make him cry in the end. And he always takes a man to hell while he is laughing, but there, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The man who is now laughing with the Devil will surely weep in the end.

“God might make you weep in the beginning, but with God you will always laugh in the end. God always makes you weep in order to discipline you, while the devil comes to make you laugh and lead away you from Him, and when God makes you laugh, and the devil comes to make you weep, do not let him fool you.

“The devil hates the image of God, he hates the man who is taking on the image of God, and wants to distort this image that is in him. The only way Satan can deform the image of God in a person is for him to stop the work of God’s Spirit in him. Then, the only image that remains in this person is the image of the animal. The devil’s desire is to give to the human being the image of an animal.

“The first and essential weapon against the devil is truthfulness; **Every word of truth you say is an arrow you shoot into the heart of the evil one. And every honest confession of sin is a spear with which you pierce his heart.**

“And the next essential weapon is humility. Sincerity and humility mean confession. **Confess your sins and you will kill the evil in you.**

“The Devil’s only concern is to distract you from God. Beware! He tries to distract you from God even in the matters of God: he distracts you from the meaning of the word that you are praying with the word itself, and he distracts you from praising the Lord, with the melody of the hymn with which you are praising Him. He distracts you from God with the prayer that you are praying to Him.

“Remember well that you cannot stand in the face of the Devil if you cannot kneel before God. The Devil does not come through the windows and apertures that you keep watch over and close well. The devil comes through the door that you open.” (St. Sharbel’s words)

## 15- Motion and Life

“There is a big difference between motion and life. A person can be in motion without having life in him. And he can also have life in him but not movement. Man is motion and life. The universe with its many galaxies, stars and creatures is full of movement but not all of them have life. Life is only in God the creator. God is life.

“Every movement in the universe is doomed to die, but life is eternal. Every motion has an end no matter how great it is, but life has no end. Life is eternal because life is God, and God is eternal. Motion will pass away but life will not. Man has in him motion and life; motion is limited by space and time, but life is neither limited by time nor by space. Human movement is doomed to die and has an end no matter how long it lasts, but the life that is in him is eternal.

“Christ has come to give us life, and to sanctify the movement that is in us. Christ gives eternal life because He is the Son of God and life is from God. **Without Christ, our motion is doomed to an inevitable death. And with Christ we have eternal life. And** there is no option in between: either death, or life.

“Sanctify the motion that is in you through life from Jesus Christ. Do not seek immortality in this world, in the time of this universe, by extending your motion in time forever, because even time is destined to die and has an end. Immortality is only in eternal life in Jesus Christ, and there is no immortal and eternal life in time because all of time is not eternal.” (St. Sharbel’s words)

## 16- Every Family is a Holy Family

“The human family on earth is the image of the Holy Family in heaven. The family passes on the plan of God from one generation to another. It transmits the love and word of God through the generations. The collapse of the family means the collapse of God’s plan in humanity. It means the breakup of the message of salvation and sanctity to humanity. **Every family is a holy family because it is the image of God the Trinity.** The corruption of the family means a corruption of the image of God. The family carries the torch of light and passes it from one generation to another so the world may remain lit by the light of the Lord.

“The family is the rope that binds humanity together through time, binds generations through history, so that humanity may grow and increase. And if this rope which binds humanity together were broken, and humanity gets separated from its history, it would be no more than lost generations which have neither history nor identity. The family is what gives people their human identity and impresses the image of God in them. The family is what preserves the memory of humanity; humanity without family is a humanity without memory. A person without memory keeps turning in place, and a humanity without memory will stop in history and die.

“The family is the basis of the Lord’s plan. And all forces of evil are focusing all their evil on destroying the family because they know that by destroying the family, the foundations of the plan of God will be shaken. The war of the Evil One against the Lord is his war against the family, and the war of the Evil One against the family is the core of his war against the Lord. Because the family is the image of God, from the beginning of the creation of this universe, The Evil one is focusing on destroying the family, the foundation of God’s plan.

“The family is the place where a man communicates with God and with his brothers in humanity. Without the family, this communication is broken and nothing can ever make up for it, and if man attempts to reconnect the broken contact using his human means, it will become fragile, weak and twisted, and humanity will become ill and warped - moving towards a slow death.

“Guard your families and keep them from the schemes of the evil one through the presence of God in them. Protect and keep them through prayer and dialog, through mutual understanding and forgiveness, through honesty and faithfulness, and most importantly, through listening. Listen to one another with your ears, eyes, hearts, mouths and the palms of your hands, and keep the roaring of the noise of the world away from your homes because it’s like raging storms and violent waves: once it enters the home, it will sweep away everything and disperse everyone. **Preserve the warmth of the family, because the warmth of the whole world cannot make up for it.**” (St. Sharbel’s words)