

July 18, 2010  
Bulletin # 29

## *Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church*

2216 Eoff Street, Wheeling, WV 26003

Rectory: 304-233-1688 • Fax: 304-233-4714

E-Mail: ololwv@comcast.net • Web Site: www.ololwv.com

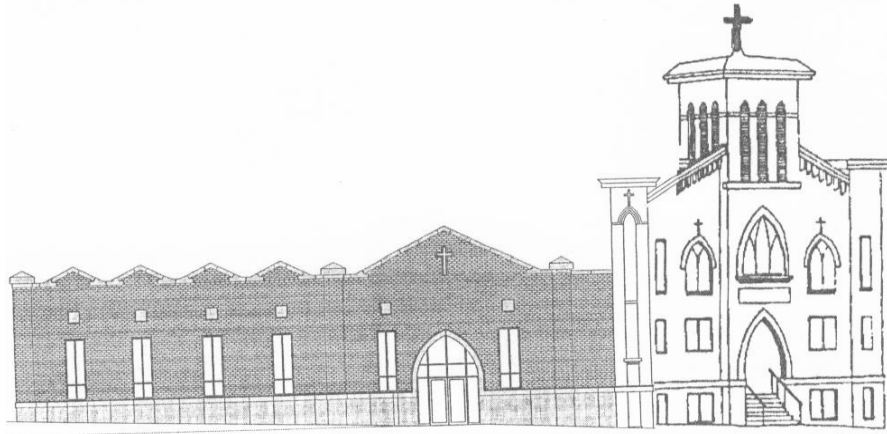
*Fr. Bakhos Chidiac Pastor*

Evelyn Ghaphery (Organist)

Charlotte Khourey & Thomasina Geimer (Secretaries)

*Saint Elias Feast Day (July 20)*

*Saint Sharbel Feast Day (July 23)*



### *Schedule of Divine Liturgies*

- \***Weekend Masses:** Saturday evening at 4:00 p.m.  
Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. [Rosary & Litany start at 10:00 a.m.]
- \***Weekday Masses:** Wednesday, Thursday, Friday at 9:00 a.m. [Rosary & Litany start at 8:40 a.m.]
- \***Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament:** 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month at 3:30 p.m. & 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after 10:30 a.m. Mass
- \***Confession:** Saturday: 3:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. or any other time by appointment
- \***Baptism:** Please phone the Pastor as soon as a baby is born; at least one Godparents must be Catholic
- \***Weddings:** Please make arrangements at least six months in advance before any other plans are made
- \***Sick Calls & Anointing of the Sick:** Please notify the pastor at **304-233-1688**
- \***Parish Council:** Lou Khourey 304-277-3230, Linda Duffy 304-242-6853, Tom George 304-336-7142,  
P.J. Lenz 304-242-5606, Carol Dougherty 740-782-0146, Rita Strawn 304-547-1692,  
Mike Linton 304-242-6969
- \***Choir Members:** Rita Strawn, Shirley George, Allison Duffy, George Thomas, Ted Olinski, Earl Duffy,  
Lou Khourey, Robert Vawter, Jody & Abbie Seabright, Tracey Dierkes
- \***Altar Boys:** Louie Khourey & Dalton Haas
- \***Cedar Club:** Linda Duffy, President 304-242-6853
- \***Women's Society:** Sandra Dusick, President 304-232-7395



- \***Bulletin Announcements:** Submit all Bulletin Information by Tuesday Noon every week.
- \***New Parishioners:** We welcome you with great joy and invite you to be officially listed as one of our parishioners
- \***Cedar Hall Rental Fees:** Call the Church Office **304-233-1688**
- \***Parking:** Saturday & Sunday, parishioners may park in both lots; Monday-Friday, park ONLY in the 3 ALLEY spaces
- \*Remember the Church in your Last Will & Testament – Her prayers will accompany you to heaven
- \*Please support Our Lady of Lebanon Church by patronizing our Benefactors and Advertisers
- \*If you support the Church and need a Bulletin mailed to you, please call the church office

## *Gospel Reflection*

Though they differ from one another in essence and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are nonetheless interrelated. Each of them in its own special way is a participation in the one priesthood of Christ. The ministerial priest, by the sacred power he enjoys, moulds and rules the priestly people. Acting in the person of Christ, he brings about the Eucharistic sacrifice, and offers it to God in the name of all the people. For their part, the faithful join in the offering of the Eucharist by virtue of their royal priesthood. They likewise exercise that priesthood by receiving the sacraments, by prayer and thanksgiving, by the witness of a holy life, and by self-denial and active charity.

It is through the sacraments and the exercise of the virtues that the sacred nature and organic structure of the priestly community is brought into operation. Incorporated into the Church through baptism, the faithful are consecrated by the baptismal character to the exercise of the cult of the Christian religion. Reborn as sons of God, they must confess before men the faith which they have received from God through the Church. Bound more intimately to the Church by the sacrament of confirmation, they are endowed by the Holy Spirit with special strength. Hence they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith both by word and by deed as true witnesses of Christ. Taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the fount and apex of the whole Christian life, they offer the divine Victim to God, and offer themselves along with it. Thus, both by the act, if oblation and through Holy Communion, all perform their proper part in this liturgical service, not, indeed, all in the same way but each in that way which is appropriate to himself.

Strengthened anew at the holy table by the Body of Christ, they manifest in a practical way that unity of God's People which is suitably signified and wondrously brought about by this most awesome sacrament.

## *Mass Intentions*

### **This WEEKEND, July 17-18: Feast of Saint Sharbel**

#### **Saturday, July 17 at 4:00 p.m.:**

James Dellget (Anniversary) by Rex & Rita Strawn  
Walter Elwartoski by his son Richard

#### **Sunday, July 18th at 10:30 a.m.:**

LaVerne Thomas (mother of Diane Frenn on her Anniversary) by Dr. Adel, Diane, Andreah & Justin  
Frank Gray (on his 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary) by Shirley & Jim George

### **Weekday Masses**

**Monday, July 19:** No Mass. Pastoral visits and office work

**Tuesday, July 20:** No Mass. Pastoral visits and office work

#### **Wednesday, July 21 at 9:00 a.m.:**

Mike & Sadie Thomas & Deceased Relatives (MN) by Ervin & Rosemary Splatt (WI)  
Yvonne Truelove by LuAnn Truelove

#### **Thursday, July 22 at 9:00 a.m.:**

Sam Elias by John & Carol George & Family  
Michael Joseph by Josephine Joseph

#### **Friday, July 23 at 9:00 a.m.:**

Sam Elias by John & Carol George & Family  
Michael Joseph by Nettie Seidler

### **Next WEEKEND, July 24-25: 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

#### **Saturday, July 24 at 4:00 p.m.:**

Special Intention  
Mary Parravani by Kay Garvey

#### **Sunday, July 25 at 10:30 a.m.:**

Sam Khoury by his wife Esther  
Mum Mum, Pop Pop, Aunt Clara, Edwina, Uncle Tiny & Uncle Lou by LuAnn Truelove

## ***Our Lady of Lebanon Calendar of Parish Events***

Date	Event
Monday, July 19 to 24	<b>MYO Workshop in Latrobe, Pennsylvania</b> –see information at <a href="http://www.maroniteyouth.com">www.maroniteyouth.com</a>
Sunday, July 25	<b>Women’s Society 50/50 Monthly Raffle</b> – following Mass
Sunday, August 1	<b>Mahrajan Raffle – Early Bird Drawing</b> – from all entries received by Saturday, July 31
Sunday, August 15	<b>Feast of the Assumption &amp; Mahrajan</b> – at Oglebay Park
Sunday, October 3	<b>Fall Spaghetti Dinner</b>

### ***Cedar Hall Rental Calendar***

Our Cedar Hall is reserved by individuals for events on the following dates and some individuals may have requested to come the day before the event to set up for it:

Date	Set-up Day	Event	Booking Is:
Saturday, July 31	Friday, July 30	Wedding Reception	confirmed
Saturday, August 7	Friday, August 6	Wedding Reception	confirmed
Saturday, August 21	Same Day: Saturday, August 21	Wedding Reception	confirmed
Sunday, October 10	<i>Undecided</i>	Wedding Reception	confirmed
Saturday, October 16	Friday, October 15	50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	confirmed

### ***Heat System Fundraising to Replace Old Church Furnace***

H.E. Neumann Company has removed the old boiler. Gary Weisner power washed the boiler room and he is insulating it for fire protection. The final installation of the new boiler will take place when that room is ready. The whole project of heating and cooling the church and the rectory is \$32,850. We raised \$30,346 so far. We are short \$2,504 to finish this project. We need your help and donations to finish this job. A plaque will be installed in the church to commemorate all the donors toward this project on three levels: Diamond, Gold and Silver. If you would like to raise your level of donation or make a donation in any amount toward this project, please call Fr. Bakhos at 304-233-1688.

*New donations in July: Jim & Shirley George (\$100), H.E. Neumann Co. (\$100),*

### ***MYO Workshop*** (Monday, July 9, - Saturday, July 24)

Our youth will be represented by Emmalena and Louie Khourey at the Maronite Youth Workshop in Latrobe, PA, this week. Please keep them in your prayers this week.

### ***Women’s Society Bi-Monthly 50/50 Raffle*** (Drawing: Sunday, July 25, after Mass)

Our next 50/50 Raffle drawing will take place in the Cedar Hall after Mass on **Sunday, July 25<sup>th</sup>**, from ticket entries received during **June and July**. Complete and return ticket stubs from those placed at the church entrance or printed in the Weekly Church Bulletins. Congratulations to Peggy Justice who won the April/May prize of \$55 and graciously donated it to the New Heat System. May the Blessed Mother grant her a long and healthy life.

### ***Mahrajan*** (Sunday, August 15, at Oglebay Park)

**Souvenir Ad Book:** Many Thanks to Janet Shutler for the artwork of the Mahrajan souvenir ad book. Last date for submitting ads is July 15<sup>th</sup>. No ads will be accepted after that date because the book will be sent to the printer. Mahrajan Donations in any amount will be appreciated and will contribute to the success of our Mahrajan. You may request that your donation be used to sponsor the singer for \$1,000; the Dance Troupe for \$500; be a Booth Sponsor for \$250 or other Donations will be recognized at the levels listed below. Thanks to the following individuals who have made donations toward our event:

--**Diamond Level (\$100 and above):** John & Dee Shiben; Dr. Rajai & Nahla Khoury; Dr. Adel & Dianne Frenn; Dr. MaryAnn Cater & Dr. Rob Vawter; Lou & Charlotte Khourey; Orval & Clara Carter; \$100 In Memory of Suzanne by Husband Mike; \$100 in Memory of Frances Linton by Husband Joseph & Sons Steve & Mike; \$100 In memory of Fr. Bakhos’ Mother Sadie & His Father Adib & His Sister Mona by Joseph, Steve & Mike Linton;

--**Gold Level (\$50 to \$99):** *Esther Khoury, Cecilia Ammar, Columbia Sales, Julia Tappe, Rita & Rex Strawn,*

--**Silver Level (up to \$49):** *Bob & Fran Saseen, Suzanne Crall, Chamse Rahi, Rita Castle, Cecilia Ammar,*

**Raffle Tickets:** This year, during the Mahrajan at Oglebay Park, in addition to having a chance to win the \$100 Early Bird Prize on Sunday, August 1, from all entries received by Saturday, July 31, your Raffle Tickets will also give you the chance to win one of the following prizes:

**Grand Prize: \$1,000 Cash; 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: 32" Plasma TV** (donated by Drs. Rajai & Nahla Khoury, Dr. & Mrs. Adel Frenn and Drs. MaryAnn Cater & Rob Vawter); **3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: \$100 Gift Certificate** redeemable at **Nicky's Garden Center; 4<sup>th</sup> Prize: Olympus 12 mega pixels Digital Camera** (donated anonymously); **5<sup>th</sup> Prize: beautiful hand-appliquéd, floral-patterned Quilt** (donated anonymously). A very BIG "Thank You" goes to Gold, Khourey & Turak for generously sponsoring our Mahrajan Raffle Tickets.

(Please Note: The numbers below indicate the total reserved tables – not the actual table assigned)

### **Table Reservations:**

**Under Tents: maximum 24 tables [No More Tables Reservations Available under the Tent!!!]**

*#1Kay Garvey, #2Michael David, #3George Lewis, #4Tom Carroll, #5Don Ruch Jr., #6Dr. Adel Frenn, #7Sandra Dusick, #8Chamse Rahi, #9Dr. Rajai Khoury, #10Dr. Nabil AlKhouri, #11Prizinski Family, #12DorothyFenton, #13Angela Nagem, #14Dianna Vargo, #15&16Youssef Chahine (2), #17Coram Family, #18John Shiben, #19Mary Stees, #20Ray Palotay, #21Dr. Cater, #22Lisa Stewart, #23Bonita Batross Baum, #24Sue Simonetti*

**Open-Air:** *#1&2Kathleen Ackerman (2), #3&4Peggy Palmer (2), #5Fred Shia, #6Emily Vince, #7Jim George, #8Rita George, #9Eva Powell, #10George Taylor, #11Tom Brock, #12Lou Thomas, #13Lucille Gibbons, #14Duffy-Fadoul, #15&16&17Edward Bowman Sr. (3), #18Donna Wasemann, #19Mary Palmer Gioia, #20Carrie Carey, #21Joe Gonot, #22Rich & Judy Dierkes, #23Ken & Sandy DeMuth, #24&25Joe Dager, #26&27Philip Hankish, #28Jack Coram,*

## **Sunday School Classes** (Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup>)

Sunday school classes will take place every Sunday starting September 12<sup>th</sup>. We ask the parents to call Fr. Bakhos to register their children. The church needs some volunteer teachers. If you are interested in helping, please talk to Fr. Bakhos.

## **Bible Study, 1<sup>st</sup> Communion, Confirmation Classes** (Wed., September 15<sup>th</sup>)

Fr. Bakhos will provide the following classes this Fall: Bible Study (adults); First Communion (7 years old or over), and Confirmation (over 13 years old). Classes will take place every other Wednesday evening starting September 15<sup>th</sup>. Please call Fr. Bakhos at 304-233-1688 to register.

## **Arabic Language Classes** (Wednesday, September 15<sup>th</sup>)

Fr. Bakhos will give spoken Arabic language classes to those who are interested every other Wednesday evening starting on September 15<sup>th</sup>. Please call Fr. Bakhos at 304-233-1688 to register.

## **Maronite Young Adult (MYA) Workshop** (Friday-Sunday, October 29-30)

In order to help establish a Maronite Young Adult – MYA group (ages 21-35) at our church we are willing to sponsor one or two parishioners to represent our Lady of Lebanon at the "MYA Second Annual Leadership Conference" in Miami, Florida, scheduled Friday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, thru Sunday, October 30<sup>th</sup>. The MYA goal is to assist young adults to increase their appreciation and involvement with their faith and service for the gospel and others needs. If anyone is interested in attending, please contact Fr. Bakhos at 304-233-1688.

## **Acquire Your Lebanese Citizenship**

If your father or your grandfather (on your father's side) was born in Lebanon and you know the name of the village or town where they came from, you may be eligible to get your Lebanese citizenship. The Maronite Church is helping all Lebanese Christians to register in Lebanon in order to help Lebanon keep a more accurate balance of citizenship between the various religious denominations. Please call Fr. Bakhos at 304-233-1688 so he can help you or call direct to 1-888-627-6866 or 1-800-147-8963 for more information.

## ***Please Pray for Those on Our Prayer List***

### **Please Remember Those Hospitalized Recently in Your Prayers:**

Patti Hoffman, Fred Shia, Josephine Joseph, Cecilia Ammar, Joanne Hill, Pearl Shutler (mother of Janet), Louis Coury (brother of Lucille Gibbons),

### **Also Please Pray for Those Who Asked Us to Pray for Them:**

Mary Jo Mattes, Peggy Justice, Eileen Foster and her mom Barb Sobota, Dorothy Kupchak, Mary Law Thomas, William Calvert (cousin of Jim & Sue Brubach), Miah Downs, Tim Wrixon, Don Stoflinsky, Sylvia Long, Patty Billick, Charles and Donald Gibbons (sons of Lucille), Andy Kaminski, Frank Lish, Theresa Snedeker, Dolores Palotay, Bob Dougherty (brother of Bill), Rosella Saseen, Laura Wellman, Virginia Khourey Bryan (aunt of Lou Khourey in Toledo, OH), Manell Brice (Arlington, VA), Rose Mary Bris-Roybal (Albuquerque, NM), Pat & John Vawter (mother & brother of Dr. Rob Vawter),

## ***Happy Birthday***

July 18: Lois Hammond  
July 20: Shirley George  
July 22: Grace Klein  
July 24: Robert Hammond, Ron Burns  
July 26: Mary Daniel  
July 30: Dee Shiben, Susan John

## ***What's New?***

### ***Parish Condolences: John Ritts***

The pastor and the parishioners of Our Lady of Lebanon Church offer their heartfelt sympathy to the **Ritts** family on the loss of their beloved **John F.** John was married to Mary C. Bryan of Lebanese descent. Fr. Bakhos celebrated the funeral service on Monday, July 12. May the Blessed Mother intercede for him and lead him to the light of Christ. We extend the parish's condolences to his Family in their time of sorrow.

### ***Thanks from the Elias Family***

We would like to offer our heartfelt appreciation to our family at Our Lady of Lebanon church for all your love and support during the illness and death of Sam Elias. All the cards and visits, the prayers and phone calls meant so much to all of us. Sam loved his church and proudly served there as long as he was physically able. The Funeral Mass was beautiful, and the Ladies Society did a wonderful job on the Mercy Meal. Thank you so very much for all you do. We greatly appreciate everything. --Bernadine Elias and Family

### ***Thanks to...***

... Rose Kukula for the donation of a freezer  
... Sandra Dusick for donating bakery items  
... Cecilia Ammar for donating olive oil  
... Rex & Rita Strawn for donating lemon juice, walnuts, salt and onion powder

### ***Turn Cellular Phone OFF Inside the Church as a Courtesy***

--I want to thank our wonderful parishioners who turn off their cellular phones before entering the church and for being considerate and respectful to those who are praying. It is an act of courtesy --used currently in all public places within the USA and elsewhere. Please be aware that other people should not hear your conversations and often make complaints. I know that you are very important as well as those who call you, but please keep your cellular phone OFF inside the church and help others to pray. --Fr. Bakhos

### ***Poor Box***

Please consider sharing your blessings with the brothers and sisters of Christ. Some are in dire need, God alone knows what's in each one's heart. The Poor Box is located at the rear of the church near the Holy Water Font. Half of the money donated is deposited in our "Parish Families Assistance Fund"; the other half is

given to the Catholic Charity on 18<sup>th</sup> Street for the poor and homeless. May your good deeds toward the brothers and sisters of Christ shine in the kingdom of God.

## ***Your Church Support Last Week***

\$1,200	Collection
158	2 <sup>nd</sup> Collection Catholic University
32	Candles
5	Utilities
395	Parking
200	Hall Rental
400	Mahrajan (Ad Book)
125	Mahrajan (Tables)
475	Mahrajan (Raffles)
100	Fundraising (Heat System)
162	Reimbursement
\$3,252	Total Deposits. <i>May God reward you many fold</i>

## ***Around Us***

Father's Mom Pork Shop at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Ukrainian Church

When: Sunday, July 18, 2010, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Menu: pork chop, mashed potatoes, cole slaw, and dessert. Cost \$7.00 Adults; \$3.50 children

Location: Church Annex. Carry out available. Telephone 304-232-1777. Everyone is welcome!

## ***Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary***

One of the titles given to the Blessed Mother is Queen of heaven and earth. As she stood at the foot of the cross, Mary was given to all of us by her Son in the person of St. John. From that moment she became the Mother of us all. Her example of humility, being honest before the Lord, and obedience to God is something that everyone tries to emulate. The gentle command she gave to the waiters during the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee to "do whatever He asks," has been the same reminder she has given each time her Son has allowed her to visit us down through the ages. This reminder of putting God first and of seeking His Will, of course, is applicable to everyone's life. Praying the rosary, the litanies dedicated to Mary, participating in novenas which honor her can all be part of our devotion that strengthen our relationship with her.

Let us confidently go to her, speak to her as children speak to their own mother. In whatever situation or circumstance we find ourselves in, no matter what temptation or challenge we may be going through, if we turn to Her for help, she will always lead us safely through the darkness to the Light of her Son. This is what she does; this is who she is: our Mother.

People who do not have a devotion to the Blessed Mother or who may even belittle the need for it, are like people who set sail on the ocean without a life preserver. They are either too dumb or too arrogant to realize how vulnerable they are and so they try to "go it alone." The consequences of this kind of bravado are disastrous for the sailor and for the passengers. The simple prayer of Mother Teresa of Calcutta should never be far from the lips of us: "Mary, be a mother to me now!"

## ***Prayer to the Blessed Mother***

Dear Blessed Virgin, wait for me, I will be there soon.

I'm not coming there to see, I'm coming to fall on my knees.

To feel the Spirit as it descends on me.

To feel His presence very near. To be blessed as never before.

To change my life and increase my love. To pray with the saints in heaven above.

To prepare my soul for eternity. These are the things important to me.

Grant me, Mary, my heart's desire. Help me to set my soul on fire.

## ***Maronites! Who Are They?***

***Maronites = Catholics of the East; Latins = Catholics of the West. We are all Catholics.  
Antioch, Roots of the Maronites (8)***

In fact, John Chrysostom advised a fledgling priest that one ought to pay out this support quickly and often, for the poor become brazen and problematic for a priest when their hunger grows severe, especially the poor widows, whom John claimed were one of the most difficult responsibilities for the clergy. In the early sixth century the patriarch Severus of Antioch (512-18) would find the financial strain almost unbearable. He begged for a restriction on ordinations because he could barely support the clergy Antioch already had. Yet Severus reported that a delinquent bishop from the provinces who had been disciplined for extorting money from his flock had remarked bitterly that he had been living in utter poverty while the clergy of Antioch received a generous stipend. If John Chrysostom portrayed the burdens of the priesthood as crushing, Severus described himself when he was bishop as “much harassed with many affairs and not able even to breathe.”

According to John Chrysostom, the priesthood was the primary meeting place of the divine and the human. The priest, he said, performs on earth the works of heaven and hence ought not fill the churches with murder nor split cities into factions. Indeed, the degree to which the liturgical and devotional activity of the church brought the whole people of the civic community into frequent and common connection across the lines of class, gender, and ethnic group is striking. But while John provides a moving image of the church gathered at the communion chalice—rich and poor, young and old, male and female, slave and free—he also makes clear that the divine and human intersected in the life of the church through other holy channels. The cult of saints, both dead and alive, was a vivid example.

The martyrs of Antioch had borne witness to their faith in the dangerous times of Christianity’s fight for legitimacy. Yet their work was not done. Around 350 the bones of the martyr Babylas had been moved to Antioch’s suburb of Daphne and there laid in a new martyrion in hopes of silencing the still revered oracle of Apollo. When the pagan emperor Julian had passed through the city in 362, finding to his dismay that paganism was on the decline, he had moved the bones back to the city’s cemetery. When soon afterward the temple of Apollo was badly burned by lightning, Christians claimed divine vengeance. As John Chrysostom solemnly pronounced “It is possible to move the bones of a martyr, but not to escape his hands.” John describes the new cruciform church built by the bishop Meletius across the Orontes to honor the relics of Babylas and how the whole city turned out for the internment of the bones, “as if to receive a father long absent who was returning from sojourn far away.” So, too, does John portray the great ceremony that attended the return of the relics of Ignatius, who, John said, having honored Rome with his martyrdom, honored Antioch again with a greater glory than his episcopacy. For “as some perpetual treasure,” the relics of Ignatius, like those of Babylas or the other great martyrs, provided the city a continuing place of divine witness, as well as of succor for those in need of healing whether bodily or spiritual. --(to be continued)

## ***Reflection: Simple & Real Friend***

- A simple friend has never seen you cry.
- A real friend has shoulders soggy from your tears.
- A simple friend doesn't know your parents' first names.
- A real friend has their phone numbers in his address book.
- A simple friend brings a bottle of wine to your party.
- A real friend comes early to help you cook and stays late to help you clean.
- A simple friend hates it when you call after he has gone to bed.
- A real friend asks you why you took so long to call.
- A simple friend seeks to talk with you about your problems.
- A real friend seeks to help you with your problems.
- A simple friend wonders about your romantic history.
- A real friend could blackmail you with it.
- A simple friend, when visiting, acts like a guest.

A real friend opens your refrigerator and helps himself.  
A simple friend thinks the friendship is over when you HAVE an argument.  
A real friend calls you after you had a fight.  
A simple friend expects you to always be there for them.  
A real friend expects to always be there for you!

## ***Question & Answer***

Question #005: **“What made God so great?” Maria B., 14**

**A.** His mere existence makes Him great. If you’re God, you are the greatest of all beings. Being the greatest is a requirement for the “job” of being God. Also, the proof of His greatness is evident all around us in His creation. Do you know one human who has created a real sunset?

## ***Saint Sharbel Feast Day July 23***

Saint Sharbel’s Phenomenon In Russia --By Anatoli B. Bayukanski

Russian writer and editor of "The Folk Physician" Translated from Russian into English by Natalia Sotnikova

This article embodies first hand testimonies on the miracles that occurred in Russia at the intercession of Saint Sharbel. The bimonthly newspaper "Lekar" (The Folk Physician) which is published in Lipetsk, Russia, was the first to introduce Saint Sharbel to the Russian readers. Subscribers of this publication reported hundreds cures and healings obtained through Saint Sharbel.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Together with my wife and son, I have been editing and publishing an all- Russia medical newspaper entitled "Lekar" (The Folk Physician) since 1996. The newspaper is published once a fortnight in the city of Lipetsk (500 km southeast of Moscow) and is distributed in 75 of the 89 regions of Russia with a population of about 100 million people. The newspaper has a modest circulation due to the unusual character of its contents which deal with unconventional methods of medical treatment. As editorial staff of "The Folk Physician" we boast of being the first to have introduced the phenomenon of Saint Sharbel to the Russian people.

Saint Sharbel has been healing and curing people for one hundred years or so. Through prayers and belief one could be granted health with Saint Sharbel’s intercession. Hundreds of thousands of people have received grace through this Maronite Lebanese Saint. We at the "The Folk Physician" wanted to make known to the Russian people this "means" of getting well.

In 1997, we printed a photo of Saint Sharbel with information about his life and sainthood. We asked our readers to share information in case the Saint helped them get rid of their ailments. Frankly speaking, there was hardly any belief in this miraculous power of healing, especially that the Russian people have become alien to such belief due to the years of religious oppression. However, we were in for a surprise, soon letters started pouring in from all corners of Russia, from Voronezh, Tambov, Penza, Moscow, Ekaterinburg, Kamchatka, Perm, Yakutia, Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Tomsk, Novosibirsk, Mahachkala, Kaliningrad, and Tula to name only a few even from the city of Vladivostok which is 12,000 km from the city of Lipetsk. The newspaper received thousands of letters with a request for a picture of Saint Sharbel. In response to this outpouring of demand, Saint Sharbel's portrait was produced five times in the newspaper and three times in a booklet with either five or seven pictures. The booklet contained excerpted translations from letters received by the editorial staff. People are quite right in saying that facts are more eloquent than pretty words. The following is a translation of selected letters written by Russians describing their own testimonies of cures obtained through the intercession of Saint Sharbel. The Folk Physician received over 5000 letters concerning Saint Sharbel and have documented 100 cures until the end of 1999. Even those few which you will include in this article present ample proof that Saint Sharbel is capable of relieving any disease.

### **II. TESTIMONIES OF MIRACLES IN RUSSIA**

The file cabinet has a file labeled "They to whom Sharbel has Rendered Assistance." In this file there are thousands of letters from Russia, the Ukraine and Belarus. Probably, we could compile a thrilling book of

letters written by the newspaper's readers and telling about miraculous healings through Saint Sharbel of Lebanon. The geographical origins of the letters to the editorial office from thousands of miles away is very impressive. The writers live in places as far away as the shores of the Pacific Ocean and the icy Barents Sea, the Peninsula of Kamchatka and the Caucasus Mountains. It is very likely that the saint monk really was enchanted by God because he was endowed with such a sacred power to heal people irrespective of their place of residence, nationality, or religious convictions. The following testimonies are picked randomly.

"I'm a retired teacher. I'm eager to tell you in what way Saint Sharbel helps me and my family. The saint monk has become a kind of relative of ours. His image is of particular help in relieving pains, and when applied to an aching pancreas, the pains disappear in a matter of a few minutes. Recently, I happened to hurt my hand and a blue swollen mark appeared. I applied the image, prayed, and it was gone in a few minutes. It was a pure miracle. The portrait of Saint Sharbel is also of use with my neurosis. Sometimes I contemplate his image for some time, murmur the Lord's Prayer, appeal to Saint Sharbel for help, beg Jesus to forgive my sins and then thank God and Saint Sharbel for the deliverance from pain." Mrs. V.V. Antoniak, Lipetsk.

"... Recently, the doctors began considering amputation of my leg which is highly undesirable because of my advanced age. As a long standing subscriber to 'The Folk Physician', I have decided to submit myself to the reviving power of the Lebanese saint. It was with profound faith in a successful outcome that I applied his picture to my sore leg at length, patiently pleading with God and Saint Sharbel to spare me from surgery.

Believe me, the non-healing [open] wounds began skinning over [scabbing]. There's no talk of amputation any more. This is why I'm making it public to 'The Folk Physician' that Saint Sharbel whose body is to be found so far from Russia is relieving the sufferings of the Russian people at such a long distance." Ivan G. Pokrovsky, a World War II veteran, retired secondary school director, and chairman of the local branch of the disabled persons' organization association gave a public testimony about his miraculous recovery. "I'm so very grateful to you for the Lebanese saint's image. Thanks to it, I've got rid of nutritional allergy." Tatiana Taganova, City of Tambov, Karbyshev.

"I, Vasina Liubov Petrovna, write this letter on behalf of the inhabitants of our block of flats. I have a daughter twenty years old, who was suffering with severe headaches and I suggested that she should apply the image of the saint which was published in the newspaper 'The Folk Physician'. At first my daughter refused point blank to do so, because she believed neither Tchumak, nor Kashpirovsky who are popular Russian mass media psychotherapists, and she was quite right in doing so. But then she agreed since the headaches became intolerable. Soon she informed me: 'Mummy, I'm feeling warmth in the back of my head as if some evaporation has started'. A half an hour later, the headaches disappeared.

Later, the bottom of my belly ached. I also applied the picture of the saint to the spot and prayed, pleading with God for help by means of Saint Sharbel. The pain lessened and went away. My husband was always mocking me but recently he was experiencing pains in his knee cap. I suggested that he apply the image of Saint Sharbel. Soon the pain subsided. I also would like to add that with the blessed help of the saint, I succeeded in bringing my elevated blood pressure down to normal. On the very day I intended to post this letter to you, my daughter started to feel pain in her left side. You may believe it or not, but our saint helped. I was told that it is not recommended to pass the image of Saint Sharbel on to other sick persons for it is likely to lose its power because diseases heap up, one upon another [sic]. Nonetheless, once I lent this 'medicine' to my neighbor Mrs. Yakovleva. And it did help her as well." The letter above is signed by A. Yakovleva, S. Diakonova, O. Gorbunova, T. Pyatich, Town of Tchapyghin, Lipetsk region.

"My dear Folk Physician: Thanks to your assistance, I provided four families with pictures of Saint Sharbel and they proved to be very helpful in treatment of different ailments. Here's just an example: "My child was running high temperature. A doctor was not available. I applied Saint Sharbel's portrait and, believe me, in some fifteen minutes the temperature was down. If it is possible, send us one and a half dozen of images of Saint Sharbel from Lebanon." Nina Plotnikova, Matyrsky Settlement, Lipetsk region.

"My mother is 72 years old but she finds help and solace only in the image of Saint Sharbel. The great Sharbel has become her irreplaceable doctor." Mrs. Valentina P. Pisareva, Voronezh.

"The photo of Saint Sharbel has assisted me in recovering from a medium degree brain concussion. It helps relieve heart pain and colds. I have a profound belief in the saint's power." Lykova Raissa Semyonovna, Kirovsk region.

"Last year my daughter-in-law started bleeding. Her hands and feet grew cold. I knelt beside her bed and began praying. Then I placed an image of the saint from Lebanon upon her breast. In half an hour the young woman grew warm. The next morning, she told me that Sharbel's image radiated a powerful stream of warmth...." Tyrina Valentina Michailovna, Matyrsky Settlement, Lipetsk region.

From time to time to come across letters which tell about unusual cases of recovery by virtue of the saint's image. Here's a letter written by Anna Kiseleva from the ancient Russian town of Elets. She had a kid who died. Her husband told her to leave the body laying until tomorrow morning when he will bury it. The woman stayed next to the body and prayed over it and finally placed Saint Sharbel's image upon it and went to bed. In the morning the kid ran up to her bed and woke her up.

"Saint Sharbel rendered assistance to my father who was going to be operated on to remove a malignant tumor. Now he is still with us although his condition seemed hopeless. My daughter suffered from inflammation of the lymph nodes. After applying Saint Sharbel's image, she recovered completely. But I would like to tell in what way the Lebanese saint saved even our tomcat. It was dying. The veterinarian said that there was no sense in treating it. But I laid the cat upon the Saint's image, covered it with another image and sat down beside it while praying for about three hours. The breathing of the animal became regular. That night, our pet ran and climbed up into my bed. The tomcat is still alive. Thank God, Saint Sharbel and you, the employees of the newspaper, which introduced this phenomenon to us, the Russians. God bless you!" Mrs. Natalia Kudiaeva, The Settlement of "Vesyoly", the Rostov region.

"Recently, when I was staying at the hospital, I came across the image of Saint Sharbel in a newspaper. The nurses showed it to us. We became convinced in the healing power of this photo in which Saint Sharbel looked as if he were sleeping. I am writing about what I witnessed. An acquaintance of mine who was very nearsighted (she was not able to read at all without glasses) applied the photo to her eyes and, after returning home, she was able to read without her glasses.

Another friend of mine developed a lump from an injection that accidentally struck the bones. She applied the photo to the lump that, in the course of two days, had disappeared.

Another friend, who was having acute pains in the arm above the elbow and was not able to raise her arm, hired two girls to put wallpaper on the walls of her room. However, the night before she applied the photo of Saint Sharbel to her arm. The next morning she was surprise to have been healed and she able to the work herself.

Another friend could not practically see anything from one of his eyes. It was as if a mist covered it. After having applied the photo of the Saint, she can now look out and see with her defective eye. I burst out crying on hearing this from her." Evgenia Nickolaevan Vachrushina, Bashkortostan.

"I intended to take some holy water from the springs in our park, but slipped, fell on my arm and could not get up. The pain was so intense and I became frightened that I might have broken my arm. It took great effort to get home. I was given injections for a few days, the painful area was massaged and ointments were applied. Unfortunately, the pain did not subside. Then a strange feeling came over me, as if someone prodded my memory of the newspaper at home with Saint Sharbel's picture in it. I applied the picture to the painful spot a few times and I definitely felt better. Soon the pain disappeared completely." Mrs. Tchovzhik Irina Petrovna, Shevtchenko, Lipetsk.

"I would like to tell about the miracle associated with Saint Sharbel's picture which happened to me. All of a sudden I literally lost the power to use my legs. Namely my left leg was encased in a plaster cast following the surgery performed for transverse platy podia on my big toe. My right foot was sutured after the removal of part of a needle and this foot supported me with the aid of crutches. The sutured area of my right foot became inflamed, swelled, grew red, and started to ooze fluid. It was painful to touch and even more painful when I walked on it. I could only be patient and continue treating it. I covered the suture area with ointment and a piece of paper and then tied the Saint's image to that spot. I fell asleep and awoke at daytime, a couple hours later. I removed the newspaper with the Saint's picture and the paper wrapping from my foot. I was stunned to see that there were no redness, no welling, and no discharge. I had not felt any pain as well. I thanked God and Saint Sharbel with all my heart. From that moment on, I have never parted with Saint Sharbel's image." Mrs. Ivanova, Moskovskaya, Lipetsk.

We debated whether to publish this letter or not. It seemed to improbable to us, however we decided to make it public on the basis that if an adult person, especially a professional nurse, had wished to share it with us, what right have we to reject? The following is the content of that letter:

"I have been working as a nurse for many years and have seen a lot in my professional life. I have always believed only in conventional medicine, particularly in surgery. Forgive me, but I have never believed in cures by saints, and even believed less in cures by their images. Nevertheless, I am a believer and I often attend church. Quite by chance, a fibroid nodule was detected in my breast. I was sent urgently to the oncologist. Perhaps you understand how one feels when facing such a news and challenge. By accident — and probably not by accident because nothing in our lives happen by chance — I came across Saint Sharbel's portrait published in a booklet written by A. Bayukansky. I read it and decided that there was nothing to lose and no harm in trying this remedy. I started placing the picture on the nodule and prayed zealously. For a month, I kept Saint Sharbel's image near as I slept. I pleaded with God and appealed to the Saint for help. Believe me or not, a genuine miracle took place. I could hardly believe it myself when I was medically reexamined by ultrasound and various analysis. I heard the doctors exchanging opinions in an agitated way. The senior doctor said: "We are unable to understand what has happened. There is no tumor any more, it has resolved itself." I said nothing to the doctors. But on my return home, I thanked God and Saint Sharbel with all my heart. It is obvious that not everyone is likely to believe me, but this has happened. Maybe the tumor was affected by psychotherapy, but most probably it was removed by the monk Sharbel whose power I now trust infinitely." Ms. Natalia Lependina of Voronezh.

"Thank you very much indeed for bringing to our knowledge the phenomenon of Saint Sharbel, for your sympathy with humanity. I have already written telling you how helpful the Saint's portrait is to me, but I have to add something. I had been undergoing treatment for my eyes — I was suffering from an opaque lens. Upon completion of the treatment, I visited the doctor. During the examination, I learned that vision in the left eye had improved and the cataract had disappeared. The doctor was at his wits' end. He said: "I really don't know to what I should ascribe this spectacular improvement. You have not got a cataract at all, you are just myopic!" I said nothing to the doctor about the portrait of the Saint which had initiated this miracle." Ivalentina Ivanovna, Tambov.

"Saint Sharbel helped me immensely. I was suffering with acute pains in the foot. I did not know in what way to mitigate the pain when quite by chance I came across a picture of Saint Sharbel. The pain subsided after a single application of the picture on the painful area. I felt better. Consequently, I have applied the picture to my foot for long periods with that the swelling lessened and the pain disappeared. It do not know how explain it but I am thankful with all my heart to Saint Sharbel. His dead body not only sweats but perceives the plight of the sick as well. Accept my gratitude for publishing the photo of hermit who after his death is still doing good for people. God bless you for this act of kindness?"

"I am a retired colonel of the space forces. When I was still in the military service, I took part in the creation of the "Soyuz-Apollo" space systems and the spaceship "Buran." Now, I carry out a treatment of numerous diseases by means of Saint Sharbel's image. I even managed to develop my own techniques to treatment. First I concentrate upon one disease, pray to God and plead with him to aid me through Saint Sharbel. Then I proceed with another disease. It is the only way for me because neither medicine nor doctors proved to be any use. I have deep gratitude for this Lebanese monk who is still aiding people after his death." A. N. Besedin, Town of Tchaplgyyn.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

Three lessons we have learned through this wonderful experience. One is that people will not reveal their ailments openly, however when it is healed, the joy and blessedness urge them to share their miracles with friends and even with strangers.

Second lesson concerns a bit of hype on behalf of some Orthodox Christians in Russia who were disturbed about promoting a Catholic Saint while the Orthodox Church has plenty of its own. The lesson was that God's gifts of healing are for everyone and that we need to pray and work for the unity of the Church. Maybe Saint Sharbel is uniting the Church in his own way.

Third lesson is that Saint Sharbel emanates power and healing energy and that with faith and prayer one could be healed though his intercession.

## *Joke (007)*

### *Selfishness*

An old woman died and was taken to the Judgment Seat by the angels. While examining her records however, the Judge could not find a single act of charity performed by her except for a carrot she had once given to a starving beggar.

Such, however, is the power of a single deed of love that it was decreed that she be taken up to heaven on the strength of that carrot. The carrot was brought to court and given to her. The moment she caught hold of it, it began to rise as if pulled by some invisible string lifting her up towards the sky.

A beggar appeared. He clutched on to the hem of her garment and was lifted along with her; a third person caught hold of the beggar's foot and was lifted too. Soon there was a long line of persons being lifted up to heaven by that carrot. And, strange as it may seem, the woman did not feel the weight of all those people who held on to her; in fact, since she was looking heavenward, she did not see them.

Higher and higher they rose until they were almost near the heavenly gates. That is when the woman looked back to catch a last glimpse of the earth and saw this whole train of people behind her.

She was indignant! She gave an imperious wave of her hand and shouted, "Off! Off, all of you! This carrot is mine!"

In making her imperious gesture she let go of the carrot for a moment –and down she fell with the entire train.

### *Love*

The little daughter of an engineer was killed by a neighbor's dog. The cruel loss turned the community against the dog's owner and drove the father almost insane. At first it shattered his faith. Shortly afterward the region was stricken with famine conditions. The engineer took some of his meager supply of seed corn and planted it in the field of the neighbor whose dog had slain his little daughter.

Here is the love of enemy Jesus talked about. Nothing sentimental or philanthropic about it. Just the Grace of God can come and reward even those who have been shoved to the outermost port of great sorrow.

### *Love*

A guru asked his disciples how they could tell when the night had ended and the day begun. One said, "When you see an animal in the distance and can tell whether it is a cow or a horse."

"No", said the guru. "When you look at a tree in the distance and can tell if it is an apple tree or a mango tree."

"Wrong again," said the guru. "Well, then, what is it?" asked the disciples.

"When you look into the face of any man and recognize your brother in him; when you look into the face of any woman and recognize in her your sister. If you cannot do this, no matter what time it is by the sun it is still night."

### *Manipulation*

A wealthy Jewish farmer burst into his home one day and cried out in an anguished voice, "Rebecca, there is a terrible story in town: the Messiah is here!"

"What's so terrible in that?" asked his wife, "I think it's great. What are you so upset about?"

"What am I so upset about?" the man exclaimed.

"After all these years of sweat and toil we have finally found prosperity. We have a thousand head of cattle, our barns are full of grain and our trees laden with fruit. Now we will have to give it all away and follow him."

"Calm down," said his wife consolingly. "The Lord our God is good. He knows how much we Jews have always had to suffer. We had a Pharaoh, a Haman, a Hitler –always somebody. But our dear God found a way to deal with them all, didn't He? Just have faith, my dear husband. He will find a way to deal with the Messiah too."