



# Saint Sharbel Maronite Catholic Church

Saint Sharbel, Pray for Us!

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[www.stsharbel.org](http://www.stsharbel.org)

## Aug 23, 2020

### Preaching the Word



### Next Sunday

*Heeding the Word*

1 Thes 2:1-13 (Paul's Ministry Among Them)

Lk 10:38-42 (Martha and Mary)

## Your Gifts To God

*Offering Report for Aug 9th - 15th*

Online.....\$1,105.00

Collection.....\$230.00

Weekly Total.....\$1,335.00

YTD Total.....\$51,921.29

YTD Goal.....\$59,072.00

YTD Difference.....**-\$7,150.71**

## Liturgy Intentions

Sunday, August 23rd 10:30 am

10:30 + Joshua Allam

12:00 + Maria Garcia Abrigo

Monday, August 24th

Available

Tuesday, August 25th

Available

Wednesday, August 26th

Available

Thursday, August 27th

Available

Friday, August 28th

Available

Saturday, August 29th

Available

Sunday, August 30th

Ursula Kelly and Lil Zubrinsky

*Adoration/Exposition every Sunday at 9:30 am before the morning Liturgy.*

*Confession every Sunday at 9:45 am before the morning Liturgy.*

*Also join us to pray the Rosary on Sundays at 10:00 am before the Liturgy begins.*

## Altar Sponsorship

Sunday, August 23rd

Redmond Family

Sunday, August 30th

Available

# Parish / Community Events

## Parish Council

+Bruce Ashford  
(Treasurer)

Charlie Ashou

Gus Bekahi

Nick El Hajj

Agopos Ghossein

Adib Karam

+Claude Karam

Anne Marentette  
(Secretary)

+Doug Raab

+Thaddeus Rask

Nadia Redmond

Mitch Siekmann

Laif Waldron

Ex Officio

+Deacon Tony  
+Deacon Wadih

+Finance  
Committee

Sunday, August 23, 2020, 10:30am

We're doing things a little differently this Sunday. Rather than sending out a link to a specific video, we'll be sending out the link to the Youtube Channel itself. Then Parishioners will just have to click on the video with the corresponding Mass date.

Channel Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi8CEQIEnX-VeERKBMqhKRA>

We'll be using this same link every week since it connects to St. Sharbel's Youtube Channel. The only thing that will change is that each week new videos will be added to that channel. Some changes are being made to the streaming process this Sunday so we've had to adjust for the changes.

## COVID MASS POLICIES

- You will need to come with a mask. Mask may be removed to receive Communion obviously. We don't have masks to give you so please bring one.
- I cannot give Communion outside of Mass – this means in your cars, on the sidewalk, etc. Communion for the homebound is suppressed also at this time.
- Sit only in spot marked on pews. Remain physically distant as you enter and exit the church through the basement entrance only.
- No lingering after Mass, you will need to leave directly.
- If your name is not of the sign up list the ushers cannot allow you to come in. We will need to be strict about this and apologize in advance for problems that might arise.
- I request you only use the downstairs entrance, below the main stairs, the other doors will be closed, this will help us to be able to clean commonly touched surfaces.
- We will not allow use of missals, or other books in the pews. Do your best with the responses.
- Only people who are members of the parish are eligible at this point to attend our limited Masses. If you have been coming regularly, and are not registered elsewhere but have not registered with us, now is the time to do this. Archbishop has asked that we keep people going to the parishes they are registered as a way to respect fair and equitable access to all.

# Reflection

The monastic fathers in Syria were known for their amazing, severe and mythic-sounding practices by which they intended to grow closer to God. Our father in faith, St. Maron, was one of them. Through prayer, fasting, solitude and exposure to the elements, St. Maron sought to leave the things of this world to focus on the glorification of God. Another Syrian monastic who lived at about the same time and place as St. Maron was St. Simeon the Stylite, whose feast we celebrate this Sunday, September 1. He was called a stylite because he sat on a *stylos* (Greek for pillar) for nearly forty years. The natural question arises why do we venerate a man for sitting on a pillar for a really long time, and what does that have to do with God?

The prayers in our Syriac tradition tell us that the great ascetics, like St. Simeon and St. Maron, labored in the spiritual vineyard of the Lord and achieved victory in their athleticism against Satan. Intuitively, however, it might seem like they did little by fasting and isolating themselves, whether on a pillar or in the mountains. After all, it is odd to think of St. Simeon sitting on a pillar as a victory or triumph. But it is because we have lost a sense of this asceticism that it strikes us as odd. Even Christ, Who is God Himself, withdrew to the desert in solitude and fasting to give us an example, and to fight against Satan (Matt. 4:1-11).

What, then, is godly about asceticism? Angels are not the only beings that do not eat: demons too abstain from food. Isolation or not eating in itself is not godly. The difference is in what is done with solitude or fasting – angels, for instance, glorify and pray to God, whereas demons distance themselves and mislead humans. St. Simeon removed himself to a pillar for an extended period of time because he sought God so greatly he speaking to Him to be his only task. He fasted, both as a physical sacrifice of things of this world and so that pleasures of this world should not distract him from speaking with God. His triumphs and victories in the spiritual race were fought in the same spot: standing upon the pillar, praying to God to glorify Him and have mercy on others. Prayer and fasting are not a last resort or inactivity, but our greatest recourses – when we pray we invoke the Almighty Creator of All Who has power over life and death. If anyone can help us in our endeavors it would be Him Who knows all before it happens. We celebrate St. Simeon because he is an example to us – we are called to participate in the same diligent labor in the spiritual vineyard of the Lord, the same rational athleticism, and the same victory over Satan.

Does that mean we must all go sit on a pillar for forty years? Absolutely not! Just like “fasting” (i.e. not eating) does not help demons grow closer to God, sitting on a pillar would probably actually be a distraction for most of us in trying to approach our victory (i.e. intimacy with God). St. Simeon fasted and retreated to his pillar of solitude to remove himself from the noise and distractions of the world to be closer to God in prayer according to his own strength and God-given mission. In our own ways we can do the same, even though they might not make stories of such mythic proportion. If we look at our phones two hours a day, perhaps we can cut out ten minutes and read the Scripture to know God better. Instead of an hour of Netflix or television, we could have a one-thirty minute episode of prayer. Rather than having a \$5 Starbucks every day, we could sacrifice it even just once a week and give the money to a charity that feeds the poor. Through these little steps we can daily ascend our own pillars towards God.

O Lord, equip us with Your truth and perfect us with Your hope as You perfected the athleticism of just St. Simeon. He was equipped like a warrior in the physical combat not in vain, and he joyfully endured the pillar for a long time in external and interior war. Make us worthy that, like him, we may triumph over all our opponents who adversarially stand against Your truth. Let us receive total victory from You, and we shall offer glory and thanks to You, and to Your Father, and to Your living and Holy Spirit. Amen.

(Trans. from the Syriac Maronite Morning Prayer for the Feast of St. Simeon the Stylite)



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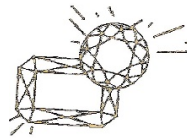
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