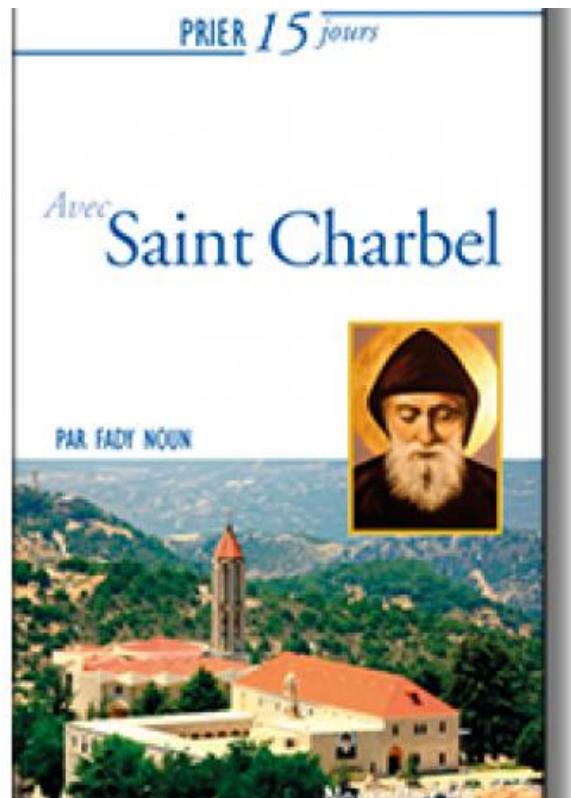


Praying with Saint Charbel, a model monk, a symbol of unity for Lebanon

Journalist and writer Fady Noun has published a prayer book dedicated to a leading figure of the Maronite Church. The 128-page tome will be available on 6 June. His life was "so out of the ordinary that we are obliged to believe that only God's grace made it possible". Over time, "many miracles" were obtained "through his intercession".



Beirut (AsiaNews) – Lebanese journalist and writer Fady Noun, assistant editor of L'Orient-Le Jour, has released a book dedicated to one of the most important figures in the Maronite tradition.

He writes that "There is something disconcerting in the life of **Saint Charbel**, a Lebanese public figure of the highest rank in the Maronite Church. We are in the presence of a hermit judged without standing by some, but whose life is so out of the ordinary that we are obliged to believe that only the grace of God made it possible."

Published by Nouvelle Cité, the book, titled *Prier 15 jours avec Saint Charbel* [Praying 15 days with Saint Charbel], runs for 128 pages and will be available in stores and online starting 6 June.

According to the author, the book explores the spiritual path of the Lebanese monk who was born in 1828 and died on Christmas eve 1898.

Considered a **saint** across Lebanon, a symbol of unity for the country and heir to the experience of the founder Saint Maron, he was beatified in 1965 and canonised in 1977 by Pope Paul VI.

"Guardian of the heart and watchful observer of the rule of his order," writes Noun, "he was a model monk, guided to an elevated and intimate union with God".

From all the Christian and Muslim villages around the monastery of Annaya (Mount Lebanon), people "came to his hermitage to be heard in confession, to solicit his prayer and to obtain holy water".

The author mentions the "many miracles" obtained "through his intercession, both in his lifetime and following his death".

A few months after he was buried, some witnesses reported a dazzling light around his tomb. His incorrupt body apparently exuded blood mixed with water in an inexplicable phenomenon that is still the subject of debate.

These events led to "a popular devotion" that has grown and become stronger over time. Various miracles have been attributed to him, crucial in the causes of beatification and canonisation, including the miraculous healing of Sister Mary Abel Kamari of Iskandar, Naim Obeid of Baabdat, and Mariam Awad of Hammana.

Muslims too have entrusted themselves to Saint Charbel, **and have obtained miracles and healings.**