

The Parable of the
Wheat and the Weeds
Matthew 13:24-30

PARISH BULLETIN St Kieran's, the Catholic Church

in Campbeltown and Islay

Ceann Loch Chille Chiarain

23rd July 2023

16th Sunday of Ordinary Time

St. Kieran's, Campbeltown, Kintyre

Sunday, 23rd July, 16th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Holy Mass, 10.00am.

Monday: Holy Mass, 6.00pm

Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: Holy Mass, 10.00am

Devotions: *Wednesday:* Mid-morning Prayer and Chaplet of Divine Mercy, 9.45am

Friday: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Mid-morning Prayer, 9.30am.

Saturday, 29th July, Vigil Mass, 6.00pm

Sunday, 30th July, 17th in Ordinary Time, Holy Mass, 10.00am.

St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Bridgend, Islay.

Sunday, 6th August, Holy Mass, 4.00pm

Sunday, 20th August, Holy Mass, 4.00pm

Psalm response

O Lord, you are good and forgiving.

Gospel acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
enlighten the eyes of our mind,

so that we can see what hope his call holds for us.

Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon

Behold, I stand at the door and knock, says the Lord.

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door to me,

I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me.

Hymns

Proclamation (Sunday Mass only)

404 O Lord, my God (3 – 10)(McLennan)

Offertory

34 Almighty Father, Lord most high (Keys[St Mark])

Post Communion

300 Let all mortal flesh keep silence (10) (Keys)

Final

175 God forgave my sin (10)(McLennan)



Take Five

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time.

Monday, Jul 24, 2023

MEMORIAL OF SAINT SHARBEL MAKHLŪF, PRIEST

Unburden yourself

With so many things to do, places to go, and people to see, how could the average busy person these days possibly relate to contemplative hermits? Maybe the holy example of hermits, like Sharbel Makhlūf, is exactly what our hectic times need to help us detach from all that consumes us. This 19th-century Lebanese saint was a shepherd-turned-priest who later became a monk and then a hermit. After his death, miracles were attributed to his intercession. At his beatification in 1965, Pope Paul VI said: “May he make us understand, in a world largely fascinated by wealth and comfort, the paramount value of poverty, penance and asceticism, to liberate the soul in its ascent to God.”

TODAY'S READINGS: *Exodus 14:5-18; Matthew 12:38-42. “She came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon.”*

Tuesday, Jul 25, 2023

FEAST OF SAINT JAMES, APOSTLE

Walk this way

Annually an estimated 350,000 pilgrims walk the Camino de Santiago — the Way of Saint James. The Camino has a series of medieval routes, but the French Way is most popular. On foot it takes 30 days, crossing foothills of the Pyrenees and many fields, towns, and villages before traversing Galicia. Each route leads to the city of Santiago de Compostela with its magnificent cathedral, believed to be the final resting place of Saint James the Greater, who brought Christianity to Spain. Pope Callixtus II declared in 1122: “The city of Compostela, through the support of Blessed James, has been made sacred for the faithful and a help for those coming to it.” Visit the American Pilgrims website to be inspired.

TODAY'S READINGS: *2 Corinthians 4:7-15; Matthew 20:20-28. “The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve.”*

Wednesday, Jul 26, 2023

MEMORIAL OF SAINTS JOACHIM AND ANNE, PARENTS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Honour your ancestors

Though we only know of Joachim and Anne from early Christian writings, not biblical texts, it is logical to give a place of prominence to those who, after all, were Jesus’ grandparents. It is said they struggled greatly to give birth until God, seeing their holiness, granted them the supreme privilege of parenting Mary, the mother of God. In the Orthodox Church, they carry a title of great

respect: Holy Ancestors of God. Think of the sacrifices your own grandparents likely made in raising your parents. Let your life honour them.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Exodus 16:1-5, 9-15; Matthew 13:1-9. “And he spoke to them at length in parables.”*

Thursday, Jul 27, 2023

Blessed are those who are open and willing

The parables of Jesus will enlighten us if we approach them with an open mind and heart, ready to let them challenge us. If we approach them with the conviction that we already know the answer, then we, too, may look but not see, listen but not hear or understand. God's word can only take root in a receptive heart that is ready to believe and willing to submit. If we want to hear and to understand God's word, we must listen with godly fear and reverence. Do you believe God's word and do you submit to it with trust and reverence?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Exodus 19:1-2, 9-11, 16-20b; Matthew 13:10-17. “Prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it.”*

Friday, Jul 28, 2023

Blessed are those who hear the word

How good are you at listening especially for the word of God? God is ever ready to speak to each of us and to give us understanding of His word. This parable of Jesus is a warning to those who hear and who preach the word of God. What makes us ineffective and unresponsive to God's word? Preoccupation with other things can distract us from what is truly important and worthwhile. And letting our hearts and minds be consumed with material things can easily weigh us down and draw us away from the treasure that lasts for eternity. God's word can only take root in a receptive heart which is docile and ready to hear what God has to say. One lesson is clear: *the harvest is sure.*

TODAY'S READINGS: *Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 13:18-23. “The seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold.”*

Saturday, Jul 29, 2023

MEMORIAL OF SAINTS MARTHA, MARY, AND LAZARUS, FRIENDS OF JESUS

Even the saviour of the world needs friends

Martha, Mary, and Lazarus held a privileged place in Jesus’ heart. As a wandering preacher who had “no place to lay his head,” Jesus knew He always had a place to call home in visiting His three dear friends. Each gifted Him in a special way, as the

2021 decree combining their veneration from the Congregation for Divine Worship and Sacraments points out: "Martha generously offered him hospitality, Mary listened attentively to his words, and Lazarus promptly emerged from the tomb at the command of the one who humiliated death."

Cherish and nurture your dearest friendships; they are a treasure through thick and thin.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Exodus 24:3-8; John 11:19-27 or Luke 10:38-42. "Many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother [Lazarus, who had died]."*

Readings for the 16th Sunday

Wisdom 12:13, 16-19

God is the source of justice and the wellspring of clemency and kindness.

Psalm 86:5-6, 9-10, 15-16

The God who does wondrous things chooses to act with kindness.

Romans 8:26-27

The Spirit can manage what we cannot, for it knows the will of God.

Matthew 13:24-43

Weeds, seeds, and yeast are little metaphors revealing God's kingdom.

Words on the Word

One spiritual leader instructed his disciple to bring all the poisonous herbs he could find. The student returned empty-handed. Then he told him to fetch all the healing herbs he could find, but this time too the apprentice came back empty-handed. The sage praised the disciple's wisdom and replied, "Yes, any herb can become medicine and poison at the same time."

* *

The enemy sowed darnel. Apparently, this was a known form of revenge in ancient times – to sow weeds in fresh sowings. Roman law provided a punishment for such an offence. The parable of the darnel invites us to reflect on wisdom and patience.

The impatient person, sometimes gets irritated and ask: "Why does God allow evil in the world?"

God, on the other hand, gives a chance and time for both human weeds and bad people to reflect and convert.

We impatient people ask: "Why do so many criminals rule the world and destroy good people and put them in prison and kill them?"

We'd like God's flames to burn and destroy the evil now.

Rarely do we humbly ask if we ourselves are yet good wheat ready to enter the gates of the kingdom of God.

What would the Church be like without God's patience? What would happen to Magdalena, Peter and Paul? The Church cannot be grown in a laboratory but is filled with life. St. Ambrose had already remarked: "Take away the persecutions and there are no martyrs, take away the temptations and there are no saints."

It is worth comparing two methods of working on oneself and on the Church.

Savonarola (+1492) radically condemned everything that did not lead directly to divine worship.

Expensive jewellery and other luxuries were burned at the stake in Florence, but also works of antique art and sometimes valuable books were thrown into the fire. Ultimately, this led to people protesting. Savonarola himself, in the same place where "things of this world" were burning, died at the stake.

You have to go through life with a sword but directed against your own vices and your own misery, and not against the sins of others.

Holy people are demanding of themselves in everything. They are extremely understanding towards the weaknesses of others. The wolf must be converted, not destroyed and killed, said St. Francis of Assisi (†1182). Strict with himself, he was lenient even to the weaknesses of the body, diminutively calling it the "donkey".

In the face of evil in the world, hope is necessary above all. Christ's parable about the weedy field of wheat says that evil will die only at the end of time. The first Christians had faith and hope when they said to each other in the times of the tyrant Julian the Apostate: *nubicula est, transibit* (it is like a cloud, it will pass). The tyrants of today are also passing away. The tyranny of evil worldviews and ideas pass into oblivion. In the end there will be good, love and peace. This we firmly believe is the promise of Christ.

* * *

*There is wheat and tares,
Good and evil –
We do both.*

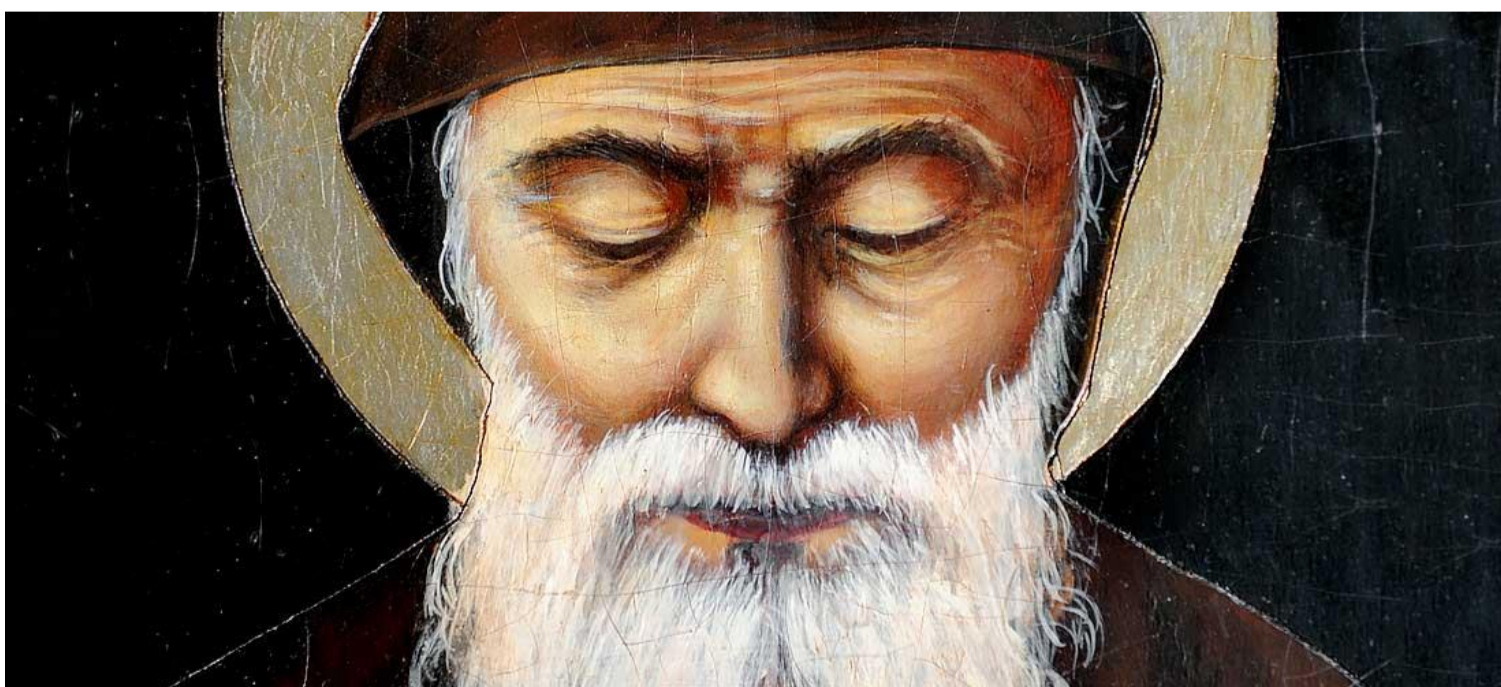
*There is light and shadow
One cannot exist without the other
But the light is not responsible for the shadow,
And we are responsible for ourselves.*

*There is joy and suffering
Take one without the other?
There is no joy without suffering
As there is no night without day!!*

24th JULY – MEMORIAL OF SAINT SHARBEL MAKHLŪF

The Pride of Lebanon

At one point, while reciting the rosary, I saw a completely real figure through my closed eyes. I started asking myself: who is this? As the figure drew closer, I recognized Father Sharbel. He just said, "You wanted a miracle - you'll have a miracle", and he disappeared.



In the Acts of the Apostles we read: *And God did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 so that handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them (Acts 19:11-12).*

Today, God is working in extraordinary ways, among others, through the intercession of a humble Maronite monk from Lebanon – Saint Sharbel.

The Youssef Makhlūf, mentioned here, was born in 1828 in a poor family of Lebanese Maronites as the youngest, the fifth child of Antoun and Brigitta Makhlūf. His knowledge and love of the word of God nourished his love for Jesus and Mary. Youssef often retired to a grotto where he

prayed in solitude.

After years of elementary education, he began working hard on the land to help support his family. During this time, he finally recognized Jesus' call to live only for the kingdom of heaven (see Matthew 19:12b).

His decision was influenced by two hermit uncles, Augustine and Daniel, with whom Youssef maintained contacts. At the age of 23, he left his family home forever and joined the Lebanese Maronite Order, where he took the name Sharbel, which means "God's Story".

Immersed in God

Father Sharbel was fascinated by the love and mercy of God, who in Jesus Christ became true man, died and rose again for us and for our salvation, and is truly present with us in the Eucharist.

Prayer was the most important thing for him every day. He lived austere, undertaking hard work and mortifying the flesh in various ways.

Sharbel had a special friendship with Father Elisha from the hermitage of St. Peter and Paul – a place he joined 16 years later.

It was thanks to Father Elisha's that Brother Sharbel was admitted to theological studies. He was under the care of St. Nemetallah Al-Hardini, who became his spiritual guardian and teacher.

Throughout his life, Father Sharbel tried to remain unknown, hidden from the world, leading a strict hermit's life. However, God had a different plan for him, which he began to implement after his death. A few days after Sharbel's death, the superior of the monastery wrote the following prophetic words in the monastery journal:

"On December 24, 1898, the hermit Father Sharbel of Beka Kafra died, provided with the sacraments. [...] What he does after death is enough to testify in detail to his excellent attitude, especially the observance of his vows. His obedience was more angelic than human."

In fact, after Father Sharbel's death, unprecedented phenomena began to occur. For a month and a half, a bright light was emitted from his grave, visible for many kilometres, and an oily liquid with healing properties began to flow from his body.

About 20,000 litres have oozed out over 67 years. This phenomenon is inexplicable by science. Thanks to this liquid, many Lebanese people began to be healed, especially from severe and incurable diseases, and the fame of Saint Sharbel soon began spreading beyond the borders of Lebanon.

A year of miracles

After years of unremitting miracles, on April 22, 1950, in the presence of the patriarchal commission, the coffin with the body of Father Sharbel was solemnly exposed for public veneration.

Neither the appalling condition of the roads nor the difficulties in reaching this isolated place, in which is the monastery of St. Marona in Annai, nor any other obstacle, could stop the river of people that flowed there day and night.

Everyone came, walking through the mud and difficult mountain passes, and among them a multitude of sick people. Everyone tried to touch the grave or obtain a relic. The most interesting thing is that no one knows how these people found out that the coffin with the body of Father Sharbel would be put on public display.

Those who failed to obtain relics plucked the leaves of the oak under which he prayed beside the Saint Sharbel's hermitage. And so, the old oak was stripped bare, piece by piece. Its leaves were

boiled and given as a healing decoction to the sick.

Miracles attributed to the intercession of St. Sharbel have been written down by monks since November 11, 1926. Since the day his body was exposed to the public view, the number of extraordinary healings has increased by tens of thousands. This year was named the Year of the Miracles of St. Sharbel. Here are two of them from that period:

“I come from Majfuk. I had tumours all over my body that doctors couldn't heal. Then my aunt Annai said that the prior of St. Marona, the Father Butros Yunus, has a few drops of the blood of the servant of God father Sharbel.

‘Believe in his intercession, ask the prior for a little of this relic and anoint the bumps with it, and you will be healed at once. Then throw away the medicines, because you won't need them any more’, said my aunt.

So, I asked the prior for some of Father Sharbel's blood and rubbed it on my bumps as I went to bed, and in the morning I woke up healthy. The disease has completely disappeared!”

Butros of Bishara Salame

“My wife, Elizabeth (45), had been suffering from cancer for five years. At that time, she was treated by many famous Lebanese doctors. They decided to operate.

After the surgery, as well as after many therapeutic sessions, the disease had not gone, but had intensified even more. Then we heard about the miracles through the intercession of Saint Sharbel, and we felt that there was some hope for us.

We went to the monastery in the late summer of 1950. When the priest was walking in a procession with the Blessed Sacrament in the hermitage, Elizabeth asked God for the intercession of Saint Sharbel and healing. Suddenly, he appeared to her in front of the image of the patron saint of the hermitage, St. Peter, as if in a beam of light, raising his hand in blessing. Elizabeth then felt the pain that had pierced her back and belly begin to disappear and spread through her side like electricity. When the procession was over, the disease had completely disappeared. Since then, she feels great, like a newborn.”

Mansur Yousef Sabir, Elizabeth's husband

Not only Lebanon

The healings and conversions that Christ accomplishes through the intercession of Saint Sharbel, are a gift not only to the Lebanese people, but also to the Church throughout the world. One of the hymns in honour of the hermit goes: "The famous monastery in Annai Sharbel lit a lamp of light, and the Church all over the world prays and desires: Sharbel, pray for us!"

Over recent years, Saint Sharbel is becoming more and more well-known in Sweden, America, Russia, Poland, and on the African continent, as well as in Britain. Here are some testimonials of healings through his intercession from these more recent times.

“A few months ago, we experienced God's powerful protection through the intercession of Saint Sharbel. Our seven-month-old son, Michael, began to have symptoms that were initially diagnosed as so-called German measles, and then as pharyngitis.

Medication was prescribed, but his condition worsened. There were also other symptoms: increasing abdominal pain and problems with crawling. We decided to go to the hospital, where after some tests we were immediately referred to the isolation ward.

The results were very disturbing: systemic inflammatory response syndrome. It was the most severe case in the ward had ever had, and the doctors, despite subsequent tests, still could not find the cause of the disorder.

Then we started a prayer storm to heaven, also asking our friends to pray for little Michael. Full of anxiety, we gave his life to God, saying: 'This is your child, not ours. You take him under your care and take care of his health and life'.

Michael's godfather brought an exorcised cross, which accompanied us until the end of our stay in the hospital.

During the treatment, we rubbed Michael twice with Saint Sharbel's oil: once in the place of his kidneys, which at one point was diagnosed as the source of infection, and the second time in his left leg which had been operated on.

After rubbing the place of infection on the leg, an extraordinary thing happened: blood began to flow from it. The orthopaedic surgeon who saw it said that the wound had begun to heal.

We left the hospital after an uninterrupted two-month stay, with the discharge an endless list of the actions taken. One paediatrician, after analysing the results of our son's tests, said simply: 'Someone must have been praying a lot for you. Michael's life was probably decided by a few hours'.

Our son is still under the care of doctors. We are grateful to God for saving his life and to all those who prayed for us, with Saint Sharbel at the helm, and we continue to ask for full healing with confidence and entrustment".

Mary and Peter

"I am a technologist – I have been running my own business for many years. The job requires me to be in control and decisive. I have always realised that only keeping my feet firmly on the ground and not succumbing to unnecessary emotions allows me to make rational decisions.

Often in key moments of my life I ask for the intercession of saints – recently Saint Sharbel.

At the end of February 2014, I felt very bad. The unfamiliar pain in my chest made me think it was something serious. I ended up in Accident and Emergency.

It soon turned out that I had suffered a massive heart attack. I was immediately subjected to a procedure, which unfortunately was not without complications. Twice my circulation stopped – later I found out that the second time the doctors had a hard time getting a pulse back.

After the surgery, my condition was severe, and the first ECG chart only confirmed the poor prognosis. However, despite all these experiences, I felt calm – although I was aware of the seriousness of the situation. My life was constantly in danger.

After another procedure, my heart started to work properly. As the hours and days passed, I felt better and better, until at one point I was disconnected from the machine. But all the time I was in the emergency ward with other patients.

Many of them were resuscitated – I heard how some people are fighting for their lives, and some are leaving this world . . . So I started praying for them, saying the rosary.

When my sister visited me after the surgery, she said, 'I have a visitor for you, a friend.'

I asked: 'Perhaps Father Sharbel?'

I was not wrong. I got a picture of Saint Sharbel. Then my sons, Adalbert and Matthew, came and prayed a healing prayer over me, and Adalbert anointed me with Saint Sharbel's oil.

At one point, while reciting the rosary, I saw a totally actual figure through my closed eyes. I started asking myself: who is this? As the figure approached, I recognised Fr. Sharbel. He just

said, 'You wanted a miracle – you'll have a miracle' and disappeared.

Amazed, I wondered if I had ever thought of a miracle before . . . Then I realised that apparently my recovery really did need a real miracle!

The next day I felt much better. It is true that the physiotherapist convinced me that I had to return to my daily activities very slowly, but after two days I was functioning normally.

Then I was transferred to another hospital, where another physiotherapist suggested that I walk slowly up the stairs. I got to the first floor of the building, and it didn't cause me the slightest problem. Moreover, my heart rate did not increase at all.

The physiotherapist said that my heart was functioning properly. However, I entered a year of cardiology care.

After a year, when the examinations were repeated, the doctor was surprised to find that although the damage to my heart remained after the heart attack, it was coping very well.

To this day, I do not feel any side effects of the heart attack: neither circulatory disorders, nor body failure, or even swelling of the legs. Dealing with stressful situations, especially those related to work, has become much easier for me since then.

Saint Sharbel really surprised me. He is concrete and unequivocal, and at the same time loving in his action". *Paul*

Saint Sharbel, like other saints, wants to support us in the fight against our egoism, pride and our other sins, as well as against the forces of evil. The saints teach us to believe and trust Christ in every situation of our lives and they accompany us on our way to heaven!

They want us, like them, to have only one most important desire – and that is the desire to belong completely to Christ. For this to happen, one must radically break with all sin and hate it, as well as pray persistently every day, entrusting oneself to Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Only in Christ is there love, joy and peace. Therefore, let's take as our own the words of Saint Paul: *Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him* (Philippians 3:8-9).

Prayer



Please pray for those who are sick, in need or have asked for our prayers: Connie Graham, Lilian Cox, Sarah Carmichael, Catherine Walker, Ailsa Stewart, Meg Douglas (Mull), Doleen Durnin, and Russell Carroll.

Please remember in your prayers John Giffen (2017), William Dunne (1967) **and all whose anniversaries occur at this time.**

News and Events

Tea and coffee in the hall after Sunday Mass. Our visitors are most welcome, please come along.

Coffee Morning: planned for 12th August. Please see Cathy Irvine if you can help on the day. Donations for the raffle or bottle stall can be left at Chapel House or the Hall on Sundays (baking nearer the date).



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