



*St. Sharbel Mission,
Family Club and Youth Club*
10325 RANCHO DESTINO RD
LAS VEGAS NV 89183

PHONE: 702 616 6902 - FAX: 702 616 4032

<http://www.stsharbel-lv.org/>



March 2009 Newsletter

COMMUNITY ANNOUCEMENTS

- 1- Parish Council to be elected; We will soon be sending out letters with forms listing activities and areas required to be filled.
- 2- School continues on Saturdays until we decide a suitable date and time.
- 3- Station of the Cross every Friday @ 6pm followed by Bible Study @ 7pm. The theme for next Friday March 6: Bible Introduction Old Testament.
- 4- Chapel renovation is on the work please stop by after Mass and take a look.
- 5- A movie premiere of Paul The Apostle will be showing @ Church Hall on Tuesday March 10 @ 6pm

RENOVATION OF ST. SHARBEL CHURCH

**We thank all those helping in the renovation
of our small Church**

We need urgent donations and your help to complete the work
Building material – Electrical – Sound System
Station of the Cross Pictures etc.
For more information please contact Fr. Nadim

THANK YOU

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For confessions, blessings of your home or business, baptisms, engagements, weddings, funerals or visits to the sick and elderly, please contact Fr. Nadim at 702 616 6902 (702 824 1444 Emergencies Only) or abnadim@gmail.com

DAILY MASS: MONDAY-FRIDAY 8:00 AM
SATURDAY MASS: 5:30 PM ENGLISH
SUNDAY MASSES: 11: 00AM ARABIC | ENGLISH - 5:30 PM ENGLISH

ST SHARBEL CATHOLIC CHURCH
VIEWING MOVIE PREMIERE – BIG SCREEN

YEAR OF ST. PAUL



TUESDAY MARCH 10 @ 6 PM

SAINT SHARBEL CATHOLIC CHURCH MARONITE MISSION LAS VEGAS

Proudly Invites you to celebrate
YEAR OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE 2009

You are cordially invited
For a special event with St. Paul The Apostle
Bishop Joseph Pepe,
& The Knights of Columbus

Opening Prayer & Guest of Honor Speaker:
HIS EXCELLENCY BISHOP J. PEPE
Diocese of Las Vegas

Followed by refreshments
Date: Tuesday March 10
Time: 6PM SHARP
6:30PM the New Movie **PAUL THE APOSTLE**

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Rev. Fr. Nadim Abou Zeid

The Power of the Sacrament of Confession

Following the teaching of Our Savior and His Apostles, we believe that the Sacrament of Repentance cleanses the soul of the repentant Christian and heals his spiritual ills so that after the absolution of his sins, he once more becomes innocent and sanctified, as he was after Baptism. Confession reinstates the living ties between the Christian and the Body of Christ, i.e. the Church. The power of this Sacrament comes from the blood of the Lamb of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who because of his infinite love and compassion toward us took upon Himself all our sins, nailed them to the cross and suffered what we had to suffer as transgressors of God's commandments. Freed from the burden of sins, the Christian once again rises to spiritual life and gains strength to strive for moral perfection. To receive the most from the Sacrament of Repentance, a person must prepare for it with prayer, reading of Scripture and introspection. Fasting is an old and a helpful tool for repentance and spiritual renewal.

From the external aspect, the Sacrament of Repentance consists of two parts: a) the verbal confession of all sins done by the repentant, and b) the prayer of absolution administered by the pastor-confessor. The loud articulation of one's sins, i.e. confession, is an indispensable factor of true repentance because it forces the penitent to overcome pride, which is the source of most of our spiritual ills. Besides, the acknowledgment of one's faults and bad habits draws a person closer to overcoming them. This is a well known psychological fact. Many non-religious people go to psychiatrists and receive help just by openly discussing their inner difficulties. The Sacrament of Confession, beyond the psychological, has a sacramental aspect, because through it operates the healing power of the Grace of Jesus Christ.

Repentance, to be effective, should not be limited just to awareness of one's sinfulness or to a cold admission of unworthiness. It should be accompanied with a deep feeling of regret and a sincere desire to become a different person. It requires the decision to battle with one's evil inclinations and the will to correct one's way of life. The penitent opens his soul to God, the true and loving Physician, and asks for mercy and help in the battle with bad tendencies. Such heartfelt contrition is necessary so that the effectiveness of the Sacrament will extend not only to the removal of committed sins but also to bring the Divine remedy into the receptive soul and strengthen it against future temptations.

Upon finishing his confession the penitent kneels before the cross and the gospel, and the priest-confessor places the stole upon his head and prays for the absolution of sins. The priest requests the heavenly Father not to turn away from the repentant as He did not turn away from the prodigal son but to again make him a new creature and a worthy member of His Divine Kingdom. At this time the invisible Grace of God descends upon the Christian and renews within him the spirit of righteousness.

Jesus Christ spoke twice of the Sacrament of Repentance. The first time He said to the Apostle Peter that He will give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven so that whatever he will bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever he will loose on earth will be loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:19). Some time later He gave the authority to forgive and to retain sins to all the apostles. This was done in conjunction with their task to resolve problems among the members of the Church: *"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the Church. But if he refuses even to hear the Church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven"* (Matthew 18:15-18). The Lord solemnly established the Sacrament of Confession soon after His Resurrection. He appeared to His disciples and said to them, *"Peace unto you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained"* (John 20:21-23). The apostles transmitted this power to absolve and to retain sins to their disciples — bishops and priests — who were to continue their task of saving human souls.

St. John Chrysostom, commenting on the authority given to the pastors of the Church *"to bind and loose,"* wrote, "What the priests determine on earth, God affirms on high in Heaven. Here the Master conciliates with the opinion of His servants." However, the priest-confessor does not absolve sins by his own power, and there is nothing mechanical in the prayers of absolution.

The priest-confessor is only a witness of one's repentance and a mediator of Divine Grace. God appointed him to be an instrument of His mercy. Ultimately it is up to the repentant to make his soul receptive to the healing Grace. By its wide magnitude and power, the invisible work of Grace in the Sacrament of Repentance covers all of man's lawlessness. There is no sin which is beyond forgiveness. What is crucial here is to have sincere regret for committed sins and to decide to become a better Christian. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "*I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*" (Matthew 9:13). New Testament Scriptures are full of examples of God's mercy to sinners. Great was the Apostle Peter's sin of denial, but when he repented, Jesus forgave him and reinstated him as an Apostle. After the Pentecost, when the Apostle Peter started to preach the Gospel, he called to repentance even those Jews who crucified the Messiah (Acts 2:38), and later he called to repentance Simon, who was a sorcerer and at the end became a heretic (Acts 8:22). Saint Paul, before becoming an apostle, hated the Christian faith, persecuted the Church and took part in the death of the first martyr, the deacon Stephen. Later he was forgiven by God and received from Him abundant grace. Remembering God's infinite mercy, St. Paul once absolved a person guilty of incest, subjecting him first to temporary excommunication (2 Corinthians 2:7). With all this one should remember that absolution of sins in the Sacrament of Confession is an act of mercy, not of thoughtless pity. It is given for the spiritual benefit of man "*for edification and not for your destruction*" (2 Corinthians 10:8). This fact places a great responsibility on the priests when they perform this Sacrament. The Holy Scripture mentions instances or conditions in which sins are not forgiven. Specifically, it mentions that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven either in this world nor the next (Matthew 12:31-32). In addition it speaks of especially devastating "*mortal sins*." "*All wrongdoing is sin,*" explains the Apostle John, "*but there is a sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that [person who commits such mortal sin]*" (1 John 5:16). The Apostle Paul teaches that "*it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again through repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame*" (Hebrews 6:4-6). All these warnings refer to people with a cynical attitude toward God; they either reject His mercy or they don't want to abandon their sinful habits.

In all cases the reason for unforgiveness comes not from any limitations of the Sacrament of Confession but from the unrepentance of the sinner. Indeed, in the case of speaking offensive words against the Holy Spirit, how can any sins be forgiven when His mercy is ridiculed and rejected? On the other hand we must believe that even the sin of blasphemy can be forgiven when it is followed by a true repentance. St. John Chrysostom says the following about this: "For even this guilt [blasphemy against the Holy Spirit] was forgiven to many repentant Jews. Many of them who blasphemed against the Holy Spirit [during Jesus Christ's preaching] later believed, became Christians and everything was forgiven to them" (Sermon on the Gospel of Matthew). The Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787 A.D. in the city of Nicea, near Constantinople) said the following about mortal sins: "A mortal sin is the one which remains unrepented ... These [sinners] will have no share with the Lord, unless they humble themselves and turn away from their transgressions."

The Gospel teaches that all must be allowed to repent, "*I say to you that there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance*" (Luke 15:7). These words include Christians who have fallen into sin.

Some contemporary Christians mistakenly believe that their faith alone makes them holy and free of sin and that for this reason there is no necessity to repent of anything. Referring to these self-satisfied "righteous" ones, the Apostle James writes, "*For we all stumble in many things*" (James 3:2). The Apostle John teaches that even Christians, not only pagans, need to cleanse their conscience: "*If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. If we confess our sins, He [Jesus Christ] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" (1 John 1:9-10).

The Holy Fathers of the Church explain that the absence of a penitent attitude occurs in people not because they are actually sinless but because of their spiritual hardening. Indeed, the brighter the light, the clearer one detects the dust and other defects on objects. Similarly, the closer man approaches God, the clearer he sees his shortcomings and the humbler he becomes. In the lives of saints we see that the more they succeeded in Christian virtues, the more unworthy they felt about themselves. Even saints who performed great miracles repented with grieving and tears of their insignificant faults and considered themselves unworthy.

The Feast of St. Joseph, March 19th

Seven days before the Feast of the Annunciation (25 March) which commemorates Gabriel's visit to Mary announcing that she is to give birth to the Messiah, we meet St. Joseph, her spouse.

St. Joseph was born in Bethlehem and worked as a carpenter (Matthew 13:55: "Is not this the carpenter's son?"). He became betrothed to Mary, a Virgin, in order to serve as her protector. When Mary came to be with child, his confusion and resolve to "put her away privately" in order to spare her any public humiliation were done away with when an angel of the Lord visited him in a dream and explained things to him:

Matthew 1:20-24

But while he thought on these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep, saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name JESUS. For he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: Behold a virgin shall be with child, and bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. And Joseph rising up from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took unto him his wife.

After Jesus was born, an angel again appeared to St. Joseph and told him to take the Holy Family away in order to escape the wrath of Herod:

Matthew 2:13-15

And after they were departed, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise, and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt: and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the child to destroy him. Who arose, and took the child and his mother by night, and retired into Egypt: and he was there until the death of Herod: That it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by the prophet, saying: Out of Egypt have I called my son.

After time in Egypt, an angel came twice more to St. Joseph:

Matthew 2:19-23

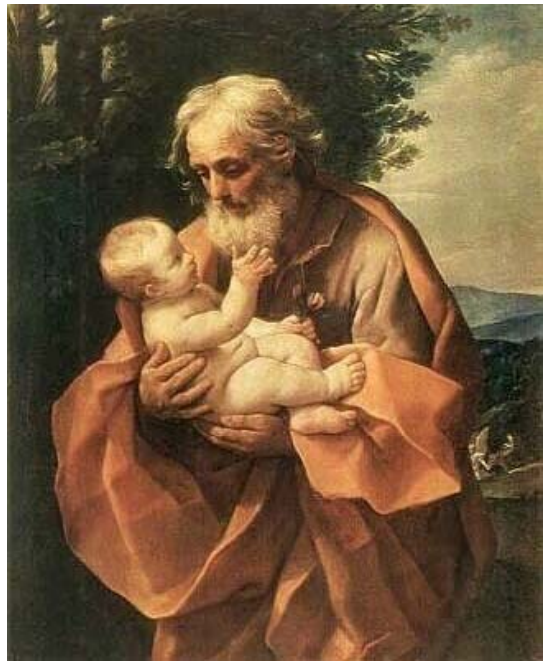
But when Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, Saying: Arise, and take the child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel. For they are dead that sought the life of the child. Who arose, and took the child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea in the room of Herod his father, he was afraid to go thither: and being warned in sleep retired into the quarters of Galilee. And coming he dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was said by prophets: That he shall be called a Nazarene.

The next -- and last -- time we hear of St. Joseph in Sacred Scripture is when Jesus was "lost" in the Temple:

Luke 2:42-52

And when he was twelve years old, they going up into Jerusalem, according to the custom of the feast, And having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not. And thinking that he was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance. And not finding him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that, after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his wisdom and his answers. And seeing him, they wondered. And his mother said to him: Son, why hast thou done so to us? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said to them: How is it that you sought me? did you not know, that I must be about my father's business? And they understood not the word that he spoke unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. And his mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men.

Tradition tells us that he had the great honor to have died in the presence of Our Lady and his Son, which fact makes him the patron of a holy death. Because during his life he was given the great responsibility of caring for and protecting the Virgin -- who is the Mother of all Israel -- and her Son, St. Joseph is considered the patron and protector of the entire Church.



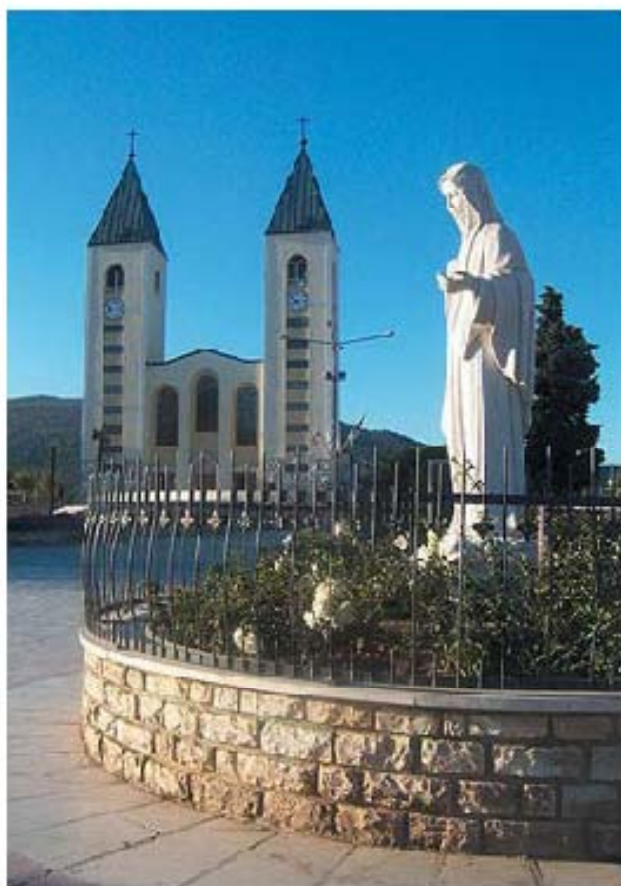
Join us on a special pilgrimage to...

Medjugorje

group coordinator: Marc Karam

August 3—11, 2009

\$2,599 per person from **Las Vegas**, single supplement \$199
(price subject to change due to fluctuation in the airline fuel surcharge)



206
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For additional info please contact coordinator:

Marc Karam

Tel. (334) 727-8991

e-mail: karammarc@hotmail.com

To register online or for additional information please visit: www.pilgrimages.com/marckaram

Trip details on next page

Day-by-Day Itinerary

On June 25, 1981, in the mountain village of Medjugorje in Herzegovina, Our Lady appeared to six children. She identified herself as the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace, and continues to appear to the young people daily. Her mission is to promote peace with God and mankind, through her Son, Jesus. Mary's own words to the children explained, "I have come to tell the world that God exists." 206 Tours has been arranging pilgrimages to Medjugorje since 1985. We have assisted over 250,000 people on their journey to Medjugorje many claiming to be at such peace, to have experienced spirituality like they have never felt before.



August 3rd - Depart USA

Board your overnight transatlantic flights from Las Vegas. Meals are served on board.

August 4th - Arrive Medjugorje

After connecting in Europe we make arrive in Croatia. Upon arrival, you'll be greeted by a tour guide and/or driver who will then take you on the 2 1/2 hour drive by private coach to the village of Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Guide will be with you throughout your stay. Once there, you'll meet your host family in whose comfortable yet modest house (inn) you will be staying for the next seven nights.

August 5th thru 10th - Medjugorje

Experience the beauty and peace of this simple village. During your stay in Medjugorje you will have the opportunity to share faith with pilgrims from all over the world.

Here are some of the activities we'll be sharing with our fellow pilgrims:

Each morning at 10am we assemble at St James Church for the English-language Mass (Feast days and Sundays English Mass is at Noon).

Follow the path up Apparition Hill where the visionaries first encountered Our Lady.

Touch and pray before the cross that commemorates the spot where Mary first appeared to the visionaries.

Each evening at 5pm, we will join the villagers and pilgrims to pray the rosary.

The apparition takes place at 5:40pm, (*visionaries may not be present*) and then stay on for Croatian Mass. Each evening during Croatian Mass, there is the Blessing of the Sick and blessing of the items you have with you.

Our guide will arrange meetings with the visionaries at their own homes provided that they are in Medjugorje during your trip, and pending their availability.

We will have the opportunity to climb Krizevac Mountain, where in 1933 the villagers built a 30' high cross on the anniversary of Jesus' crucifixion. Visit and pray at "Blue Cross", which is a place of great healings and graces- a very special place at the base of Apparition Hill.

We will also visit the community Cenacolo during our stay to hear their stories of faith and healing.

August 11th - Medjugorje - USA

After an early breakfast and heartfelt farewells, we leave by motor coach for Dubrovnik Airport for return flights home.

YOUR TRIP INCLUDES:

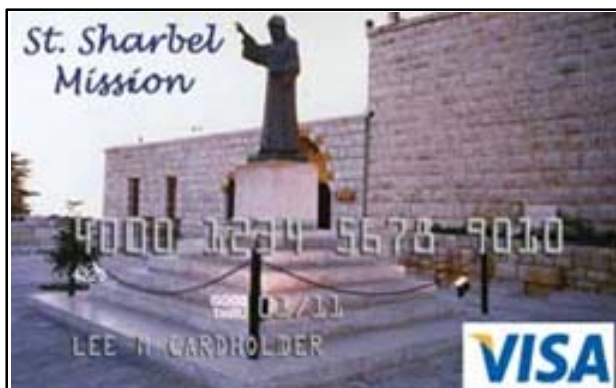
- Round-trip air from Las Vegas in economy class
- Airport taxes, Fuel Surcharge & Security fees (up to \$390 per person)
- 7 nights in centrally located accommodations as follows: (*or similar*)
Aug 04-11 (7 nights) Modern home/hotel with private baths in Medjugorje
- Buffet Breakfast and Dinner daily
- Wine with dinners
- Transfers by private deluxe motor coach
- Holy Mass Daily: English at 10:00am, and Croatian at 6:00pm
- Escorted by professional local Catholic guides
- Sightseeing and spiritual activities
- Visit to Community Cenacolo
- Meeting with visionaries (*pending availability*)
- Flight bag & portfolio of all travel documents

Not included: Lunches, Optional Travel insurance \$129 (as per www.206tours.com/insurance). Tips to home owners, guides & drivers (\$8 per person per day), Items of a personal nature.

To register online or for additional information please visit:

www.pilgrimimages.com/marckaram

A \$400 per person deposit is due at the time of registration. Balance of your trip costs are due on June 04, 2009.




Please visit the website below and receive the highest honor yet by applying, acquiring and carrying the St. Sharbel Mission Credit card, where a donation is offered directly by the processing bank to St. Sharbel Mission at no cost to you:
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