

# National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes to dedicate Shrine of St. Sharbel

The National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in Emmitsburg will host a day of celebration in honor of the dedication of the Shrine of St. Sharbel. The Sept. 30 dedication ceremony begins at 11 a.m., with a Mass to be celebrated at noon. A reception will follow.

The statue is in honor of a 19th-century monk and ordained priest and hermit of the Lebanese Maronite Order. Blessed Pope Paul VI canonized St. Sharbel in 1977.

“We are delighted to include this saint in Our Lady’s Grotto,” said Lori Stewart, director of the National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes. “St. Sharbel is a model of holiness and devotion for all people, he had a great love for our Blessed Mother and is a welcomed addition to our National Shrine Grotto.”

The St. Sharbel shrine had its origins in the vision of a group of Lebanese faithful who regularly visit the National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes. Members inquired about sponsoring the shrine. With approval from the grotto, they formed a sponsorship group called the “Family of St. Sharbel, USA.”

Ghassan Touma, a member of the group, noted that St. Sharbel withdrew himself from the world, remaining detached from all material possessions and continually fasting by taking one meal a day.

“He practiced an exemplary silence,” Touma said, “speaking only when addressed by others and immersed his soul in God, such that he was a man possessed and

inebriated by God and His love. He had a deep faith and devotion to Christ in the Eucharist.”

After the saint’s death, Touma said, “the Lord revealed his power and love for us through St. Sharbel’s intercession to peoples of various nations.”

The statue will be located on Corpus Christi Lane going toward the Grotto.