

# Mission Intention

# NOVEMBER

2019 - 2020

Education for  
Community Life

Country Focus: Saudi Arabia

## Pope's November Prayer Intention

That the people living in the Middle East will grow in understanding and reconciliation with their neighbors of different faiths.

Saudi Arabia is a country in flux.

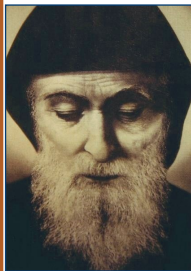
Ruled by a monarchy, Saudi Arabia is one of the largest oil producers in the world. It is also the birthplace of Islam and home to two of its holiest sites, Mecca and Medina. Islam is the country's state religion, and 93% of Saudi Arabian citizens are Muslim.

While people of other faiths are allowed to live and work in Saudi Arabia, the country's devotion to Islam can present challenges for those of other religions. In its effort to promote Islam, Saudi Arabia does not allow other religions to worship publicly, to build their own places of worship, or advertise their services. Those of other faiths are allowed to worship privately: in homes, embassies or consulates, or on the grounds of foreign-owned oil companies.

Recently, however, there have been small signs of change in Saudi Arabia. Some of the laws regarding the enforcement of private religious practice were rewritten, making faith celebrations safer for non-Muslims. Let us pray that these changes may continue to grow and strengthen the understanding between people of different faiths in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East.



## Saint Spotlight: St. Charbel Makhlouf



St. Charbel Makhlouf has been uniting Christians and Muslims for decades.

As a child in the Lebanese village of Beka-Kafra, St. Charbel dreamed of living as a prayerful hermit when he grew up. But his uncle, who raised him after his father died, did not approve of his life's ambitions. Seeing no other way to realize his dream, St. Charbel ran away from home when he was 23 and joined the Monastery of St. Maron at Annaya, Lebanon. After his ordination, he was able to fulfill his goal and lived as a hermit for the rest of his life.

Known for his devout holiness, devotion to the Eucharist, and for following a strict fast, people often asked St. Charbel for his blessing and to be remembered in his prayers. Even though St. Charbel died in 1898, his miracles still continued. Many people visit his shrine in Lebanon each year, and numerous healings have been attributed to his intercession. Pilgrims include Christians and Muslims, and people of both faiths have reported receiving miraculous cures. St. Charbel's willingness to intercede regardless of a person's faith reminds us that we are all called to grow in understanding and reconciliation with those of other religions.

St. Charbel was a priest in the Maronite Catholic Church, an Eastern Rite Catholic Church in full communion with the Holy See. He was canonized by Saint Pope Paul VI in 1977.

Promoting Knowledge  
of Faith

## God's Word for Mission

*"For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Gal 5:14)*

*"[The Church] looks with sincere reverence upon those ways of conduct and life, those rules and teachings which, though differing in many particulars from what [the Church] holds and sets forth, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men." (Second Vatican Council, Nostra Aetate, No. 2)*

# Peace



How would you describe true peace? For many people, peace means being able to live in a society free from war. But the Catholic Church teaches us that peace is much more than the absence of armed conflict. Real peace, the kind God wants for all humans, is being in right relationship with all of creation. Peace, then, means forming true friendships with our neighbors and being good stewards of the Earth's resources. When people live in harmony with each other and the rest of creation, they experience God's gift of peace.

All Catholics are called to build peaceful societies. The Catholic Social Teaching theme of Solidarity reminds us that the love God asks us to show to all God's children requires that we

promote peace. An important part of promoting peace is supporting religious tolerance. In fact, the Church teaches that any discrimination against someone because of their religion is "foreign to the mind of Christ" (Second Vatican Council, Nostra Aetate, No. 5). All people are created in the image of God and should be treated with respect. When we acknowledge the dignity of others and respond to God's reflection in them, we are living witnesses of the Gospel of Christ.

In this month's video, we'll learn more about Saint Charbel Makhlof, who continues to be a witness of the Gospel of Christ to both Christians and Muslims who seek his help. As you watch the video, consider ways you might promote peace and be an example of Christ like Saint Charbel Makhlof.

## Saint Charbel Makhlof: [Click Here](#)>>

1. What does it mean to be in "right relationship" with others?
2. Why do you think God wants us to live peacefully with those of different faiths?
3. What do you think Saint Pope Paul VI meant when he wrote that discrimination against someone because of their religion is "foreign to the mind of Christ"?
4. How can you make Jesus the center of your life and add prayer and virtues to your relationship with others and creation?



## Mission Petitions

- ✚ Let us pray that all government leaders may be renewed with God's love so that they may stand firm for the religious tolerance of all people.
- ✚ Let us pray that God will help all people follow the example of St. Charbel Makhlof and see all others as children of God, regardless of religion.
- ✚ Let us pray that all people may be given the wisdom to receive the stories and experiences of those different from themselves and to respond with respect.
- ✚ Let us pray for all those working to promote religious tolerance and peace.

Dear God,

Your word is a light to our steps. Help us walk your path. Give us the honesty we need to recognize when we make it difficult for others to see your light, and the grace we need to share your light with others. We ask this in the name of your Son. Amen.