

**Talk for the Order of Sharbel Breakfast held at  
The National Apostolate of Maronites Annual Convention  
San Francisco, California**

July 9, 2016

Bishop Elias,

Bishop Robert,

Bishop Gregory,

Archbishop Paul,

Bishop Youssef,

Beloved Priests, Seminarians and Religious Sisters,

President of the Order of Saint Sharbel, Dr. Eli Ayoub,

Members and Friends of the Order that does so much for the Church

The Order of Saint Sharbel is well known for its devotion to our Maronite spiritual heritage and for a love for seminarians and religious vocations. You have been a shining light from your very beginning. Your bishops are so grateful for the support you lend to your own vocations. This helps us all to breathe easier because we have your spiritual and financial support.

Your work helps the bishops perfect our spiritual unity in Christ. Clergy and laity together is something to be proud of. For this reason, I am so very happy to be here to celebrate with you, especially in this 50<sup>th</sup> year since the appointment of a bishop to the United States.

I pray for your first bishops, may they rest in peace, and I pray for all those clergy and laity who labored alongside of them. I also give thanks for our brothers Bishops Elias, Robert and Gregory.

Jesus asked us pray that the Lord of the harvest would send laborers to his vineyard to build up his Mystical Body. You are an answer to the prayer of the Church when you work alongside your bishops and priests to support and provide for vocations to the priesthood and religious life. May we work with passion for the Gospel of Christ, and exert a sacrificial and forgiving love in imitation of our Lord and Master.

May God give us always this grace to support and encourage laborers in his vineyard.