December 24

Charbel Makhlouf (1828-1898) monk

Today the Maronite church commemorates the monk and hermit Charbel Makhlouf.
Yussef Makhlouf was born to a very poor family in Beka'kafra, a Lebanese mountain village. He was orphaned and fled to the monastery of St. Maron in Annaya, where he became a monk and took the name of Charbel.
His life of prayer, extremely simple and intense, soon led him to desire greater intimacy with God. At the age of forty-seven, he was granted permission to move to his monastery's hermitage, where he led a silent, hidden life in the company of another monk, Macarius. On December 24, 1898, at the age of seventy, he returned to the Father whom he had always sought.
Charbel Makhlouf was almost unknown during his lifetime, but after his death he became one of Lebanon's most popular saints. He is still loved by Christians of every denomination, and also by Muslims and Druze, who recognize him as a man who had abandoned himself totally to God.

A READING

Lord, you have joined
your divinity to our humanity
and our humanity to your divinity,
your life to our mortal condition
and our mortal condition to your life.
You took what is ours upon yourself
and you gave us what is yours
for the life and salvation of our souls.

Charbel Makhlouf, *Prayer*

BIBLICAL READINGS

Rom 8:28-39; Mt 13:36-43

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

ANGLICANS:
Christmas Eve

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (15 kiyahk/tahsas):
Gregory the Enlightener (d. 328), patriarch of Armenia (Coptic Church)
Crossing of the sea by Eustace of Sarabi (Ethiopian Church)

LUTHERANS:
Adam and Eve
Mathilda Wrede (d. 1928), benefactress in Sweden

MARONITES:
Eve of the Nativity of the Lord
Charbel Makhlouf, hermit

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
Eve of the Nativity in the flesh of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour
Eugenia of Rome (2nd-3rd cent.), hosiomartyr

OLD CATHOLICS:
Christmas Eve