



MARONITE EPARCHY OF AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND AND OCEANIA

Saint Charbel Parish in Greenvale Unveils Vision for Worship and Community at Inaugural Dinner

Melbourne, 15 October 2025 — Under the patronage of His Excellency Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, Maronite Bishop of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania, Saint Charbel Parish in Greenvale, Melbourne, hosted its inaugural Gala Dinner on Saturday, 11 October to celebrate the launch of its new parish church, monastery, and community centre.

The event brought together religious leaders, government officials, parliamentarians, and members of the Maronite Catholic community. Among the distinguished guests were Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan, attending for the first time, Opposition Leader Brad Battin MP, the Consul General of Lebanon in Melbourne, Mr. Rami Hamidi, and several local councillors. Also in attendance were Fr Fadi Taouk, representing the Superior General of the Antonine Maronite Order, The Right Reverend Father Joseph Abou Raad; Fr Charles Hitti; Fr Rami Choullami; Fr Richard Jabbour, Parish Priest at Our Lady of Lebanon in Melbourne; the Antonine Sisters; and Fr Edmond Andraos.

In his speech, Bishop Tarabay reflected on the spiritual meaning of the parish's growth, "As Saint John Paul II reminded us: 'The parish is not principally a structure, a territory, or a building, but rather, 'the family of God,' a place where the mystery of communion is lived and the mission of the Church is carried out.' This truth reminds us that a parish flourishes when Christ is truly at its centre, and when its clergy and parishioners are dedicated to service and attaining holiness."

Bishop Tarabay added, "The same spirit that guided early monks—who arrived in Australia on 9 February 1998, the Feast of St Maroun—now continues to flourish here in St Charbel's Greenvale. The unveiling of the master plan for your new Church, Monastery, and Community Centre this evening is a powerful sign of faith in God's providence and of your shared commitment to building a home where the mystery of communion is lived each day."

Fr Fadi Taouk thanked His Excellency Bishop Antoine Charbel Tarabay for blessing the new project, and spoke of the Antonine Maronite Order's mission in Australia and its evolving role in supporting the community, "From the moment the Antonine Maronite Order set foot on Australian soil in 1998, we have carried a sacred mission to preserve and share the richness of the Eastern spiritual heritage, and this has been embodied through guardianship, mutual responsibility, and a deep-rooted belonging."

Fr Taouk continued, "This year, as the Antonine Maronite Order celebrates 325 years of history, we are reminded that our journey in Australia is part of a much larger story. Our shared history already has strong roots. Since Coburg, we have lived experiences that have strengthened our bond."

Fr Charles Hitti expressed gratitude for the community's dedication and shared his personal journey, "I personally followed this presence in Australia from the very beginning of its First steps, and I was a real witness of the huge efforts deployed by the Antonin monks who were before us and those who

worked contemporary with us in order to serve the community spiritually and socially till we proudly reached to what we are today.”

Thanking Bishop Tarabay for his fatherly presence, Fr Hitti continued, “I tell your Excellency: That our parish by all its groups and troops by its elders, youth and children are working hard to make our parish a peaceful oasis for getting together firstly with God, and secondly with the human being on the footsteps of its Patron Saint Charbel.”

Premier Jacinta Allan addressed the audience, highlighting the importance of the project in fostering community connection and cultural harmony across Victoria. She announced additional support for the efforts of Saint Charbel Parish, including youth-led initiatives, and presented a \$10,000 grant to support youth activities.

Opposition Leader Brad Battin also addressed the audience, highlighting the role of Christian values in the work of individuals and communities, and reflecting on the spirituality of Saint Charbel and its relevance in today’s world.

The Saint Charbel Parish now moves forward with a renewed sense of purpose, with its new facilities set to become a vibrant centre for worship, cultural preservation, and community life.

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About Saint Charbel Monastery in Melbourne

Saint Charbel Monastery in Melbourne was established in 1998 as a spiritual mission of the Antonine Maronite Order, serving the growing Maronite community in Victoria.

Founded at the request of His Excellency Bishop Youssef Hitti, former Maronite Bishop of Australia (1991-2002), the monastery began with the arrival of Fr. Charbel Chidiac and Fr. Edmond Andraos on the Feast of St Maroun, 9 February 1998. Their mission was to support parish life, minister to families, and establish a permanent monastic presence. In 2002, the Order acquired a property in Coburg, which became a sanctuary of prayer and community under the patronage of St Charbel.

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