

Novena to Saint Hardini

CHARBEL.APP

The novena to Saint Hardini is a nine-day prayer to Saint Nimatullah Kassab Al-Hardini, the quiet Maronite monk of Kfifan whose holiness was so steady that it formed a generation of monks, including a young student named Charbel Makhlouf. People pray it for perseverance, for a deeper life of prayer, for students and teachers, and for anyone trying to be faithful in ordinary things.

Many people pray this novena in the nine days leading up to his feast on December 14, which means beginning on December 6. But a novena is never bound to a calendar. If you are carrying a need today, today is the right day to begin.

HOW TO PRAY IT

You need nothing but a quiet corner and nine days of small faithfulness, which is very much in the spirit of Saint Hardini. Each day:

1. **Make the Sign of the Cross and name your intention.** Say clearly what you are asking for, for yourself or for someone else.
2. **Read the short meditation for the day.** Let one scene from his life sit with you for a moment.
3. **Pray the day's prayer**, then the closing invocation: *Saint Nimatullah Hardini, faithful monk of Kfifan, pray for us.*
4. **End with an Our Father, a Hail Mary, and a Glory Be.**
5. **If you miss a day, pray twice the next day.** You do not need to start over. God sees the sincerity of your heart.

After the ninth day, thank him, whatever the answer looks like so far. Novenas work in God's timing, not ours.

DAY 1: A CHILDHOOD ROOTED IN PRAYER

Youssef Kassab was born in 1808 in the mountain village of Hardine, into a family where faith was as natural as bread. As a boy he loved the village church and was drawn to prayer before he had words for why. Holiness began for him where it begins for most of us, at home, in small habits kept with love.

Saint Hardini, you learned to pray as a child and never stopped. Teach me to build my life on small habits of prayer, kept faithfully, until they become as natural to me as breathing. Obtain for me the grace I ask in this novena. Amen.

Saint Nimatullah Hardini, faithful monk of Kfifan, pray for us.

DAY 2: ANSWERING THE CALL

In 1828, at twenty years old, Youssef left Hardine and entered the Lebanese Maronite Order, beginning his novitiate at the monastery of Qozhaya in the holy valley. He took the name Nimatullah, which means "grace of God." He gave his whole life away in one quiet decision and never took it back.

Saint Hardini, you heard God's call and answered without bargaining. Help me to say yes to what God asks of me, even when I cannot see where it leads. Pray for all who are discerning their path, that they may choose with courage and peace. Amen.

Saint Nimatullah Hardini, faithful monk of Kfifan, pray for us.

DAY 3: HOURS BEFORE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

The monks knew where to find Father Nimatullah when he was missing: kneeling in the chapel, eyes fixed on the tabernacle. He spent long hours in adoration of the Eucharist, often at night, and celebrated Mass with a reverence that moved those who served with him. The Eucharist was not one devotion among many for him. It was the center.

Saint Hardini, lover of the Eucharist, draw me toward the altar as you were drawn. Give me a hunger for the Mass and a heart that is quiet in God's presence. Let my intention rest today before the Blessed Sacrament, where you kept watch so long. Amen.

Saint Nimatullah Hardini, faithful monk of Kfifan, pray for us.

DAY 4: A SON OF THE VIRGIN MARY

Hardini's love for Our Lady, and especially for her Immaculate Conception, ran through his whole life. He entrusted his work, his students, and his struggles to her. When death came for him, it found him holding her icon and speaking her name.

Saint Hardini, son of the Virgin Mary, place my intention in her hands as you placed your whole life there. Teach me to run to her simply, the way a child runs to his mother, and to trust that she carries every prayer to her Son. Amen.

Saint Nimatullah Hardini, faithful monk of Kfifan, pray for us.

DAY 5: FAITHFULNESS IN SMALL WORK

Between prayers, Father Nimatullah worked with his hands, binding books in the monastery workshop so the community's manuscripts and prayer books would not fall apart. Nothing about the work was glorious. He did it carefully anyway, because it was given to him to do, and because love shows itself in how we handle small things.

Saint Hardini, patient worker, teach me that no honest task is too small for God. Help me to do the hidden work of my own life with care, without needing to be seen, and to find God waiting for me inside my daily duties. Amen.

Saint Nimatullah Hardini, faithful monk of Kfifan, pray for us.

DAY 6: THE TEACHER OF A SAINT

At Kfifan, Father Nimatullah taught the young monks of the order, patiently forming minds and souls at once. Among his students in the 1850s was a young monk from Bqaakafra named Charbel Makhoul. The teacher never lived to see it, but his lessons helped shape the man who would become Lebanon's most beloved saint. No one ever knows how far a faithful teacher's influence reaches.

Saint Hardini, teacher of Saint Charbel, pray for all students and all teachers. Bless those who study, that their minds may open, and those who teach, that their patience may not fail. Let something of what I do in hidden faithfulness bear fruit long after me. Amen.

Saint Nimatullah Hardini, faithful monk of Kfifan, pray for us.

DAY 7: HUMILITY IN RESPONSIBILITY

Three times the order chose Father Nimatullah as assistant general, a post of real authority. He never sought office and never used it for himself, carrying responsibility as one more form of service and returning gladly to his books, his students, and his chapel. Rank changed nothing in him.

Saint Hardini, humble in authority, guard me from ambition that hardens the heart. If responsibility is given to me, let me carry it as service. If it is not, let me be content. Teach me the freedom of wanting only what God wants. Amen.

Saint Nimatullah Hardini, faithful monk of Kfifan, pray for us.

DAY 8: CHOOSING THE SHARED LIFE

Some urged him toward the hermit's solitude, a path his own order honored deeply. Hardini chose to remain in community, convinced that the daily friction and charity of life with brothers was its own school of holiness. He used to say that the truly wise man is the one who saves his soul, and he worked out that salvation among other people, not away from them.

Saint Hardini, saint of the common life, help me to seek holiness exactly where I am, among the people God has placed around me. Give me patience for their weaknesses and honesty about my own, and make our life together a road to heaven. Amen.

Saint Nimatullah Hardini, faithful monk of Kfifan, pray for us.

DAY 9: A HOLY DEATH

In the bitter winter of 1858, Father Nimatullah fell ill with a disease of the lungs at Kfifan. He died on December 14, holding an icon of the Virgin and commending his soul into her hands. He was fifty years old. The monks who buried him already believed they had lived beside a saint, and the Church confirmed it: he was beatified in 1998 and canonized by Pope John Paul II on May 16, 2004.

Saint Hardini, faithful to the last breath, pray that my life may end the way yours did, close to Jesus and Mary, at peace with my brothers, with nothing left unoffered. Present my intention to the Lord one final time, and obtain for me the grace I have asked these nine days, if it is for the good of my soul. Amen.

Saint Nimatullah Hardini, faithful monk of Kfifan, pray for us.