

Blessed Estephan Nehme

Feast Day: August 30
Birth: March 18, 1889
Death: August 30, 1938
Beautified: June 27, 2010
Canonized:

Brother Estephan Nehme was born, to a maronite family, in Lehfed, Lebanon, on March 8th 1889. His parents Estephan Bou Haykal Nehme and Christine Badawi Hanna Khaled. He was baptized on March 15th, 1889 at Our Lady Church of Lehfed by Father Gerges Fadel; he was given the name Youssef.

Youssef was the youngest among three boys and two girls and was called the angel of the family. He learned basic reading, writing and Christian teachings under the trees near the Church of Saint Estephan. Since his childhood, he was not sociable and not interested in parties, even among family, he prays late at night repeating: 'God can see me'.

In 1905, when he was 16 years old, Youssef left his house heading to the Monastery of Saints Cyprian and Justine in Kfifane, he took the name "Estephanos". On August 23rd, 1907, the Superior Father Youssef Saker from Kfoun, blessed the vows of Brother Estephan who wore the novice's cassock.

Brother Estephan spent 31 years in the monastic life. Brother Estephan was a "Worker monk". He was responsible for the field. He learned carpentry when he was in Mayfouk. He was good in construction since he was robust and sturdy.

Brother Estephan has demarcated the borders of the Order's land when the latter bought it. He was conveyed to reveal the marks after a long conflict. When he achieved his mission and resolved the problem due to his perspicacity, his cleverness as well as his good intention, he went back to the Monastery of Kfifane.

He died on Tuesday, August 30th, 1938, at 7 PM.

On March 10th, 1951, while the monks were burying the late Father Youssef Souraty, they found the body of Brother Estephan none decayed.

He was still supple, with the whole parts and organs of his body, even his hair and his beard had not fallen. His clothes were still new and out of rot. They moved him to a new tomb. In 1962, the Superior of Kfifane's Monastery, Father Eghnadius Khachan, charged a legal doctor to examine the body of Brother Estephan. He reported that all the organs and parts of the said monk were still safe from decay or any other disfiguration and deterioration. As for the color of the skin, it was almost brown. His members were supple and almost normal as

well as the muscles and the belly skin. His hair was also preserved.

Consequently, the Generalate of Lebanese Maronite Order decided to lock the door of the grave where the body of Brother Estephan lays peacefully till present.