Blessed Yaacoub El-Haddad

Feast Day: June 26
Birth: February 1, 1875
Death: June 26, 1954
Beautified: June 22, 2008
Canonized:

The Venerable Khalil (Father Jacques) Haddad was born 1 February 1875 in Ghazir, Lebanon. He was ordained on 1 Nov 1901 in Beirut, Lebanon. He died on 26 Jun 1954 in Lebanon. Father Jacques attended school in Ghazir, and then at the "College de la Sageese" in Beirut, studying Arabic, French, and Syriac.

In 1892 he went to Alexandria, Egypt to be a teacher of Arabic in the Christian Brothers' College. Itinerant preacher from 1903 to 1914, he walks all over Lebanon proclaiming God's word. They call him "the Apostle of Lebanon", but he will be seen also preaching in Syria, Palestine, Iraq, and Turkey.

In 1919, he buys land on the hill of Jall-Eddib, 7 miles north of Beirut. He builds a chapel there which he dedicates to Our Lady of the Sea. On a nearby rock, he raises a great Cross 30 feet high. In the 1920's he forms the "Franciscan Sisters of the Cross of Lebanon" who help the sick and poor.

The modest work of Father Jacques aroused the people's admiration. Soon the Lebanese Government becomes interested and begins to send to the Cross all sorts of ill and infirm; the deaf, mute, blind, paralytics, the mad, incurables who are all accepted pell-mell.

From 1950 on, the Cross will be exclusively a psychiatric hospital, one of the most modern of the Near East, where pioneer work is done in psychotherapy. The movement of charity begun at Jall Eddib spread throughout Lebanon. Father Jacques and his sister multiplied their works of social assistance.

Parallel to their hospital mission, Father Jacques and his Sisters carried on an important work of education.

Father Jacques' body was worn out by vigils, fatigue, and travels. Suffering numerous ills, almost completely blind, stricken with leukemia, he did not stop blessing God and working…Right to the end he kept his head clear. His last hours were an uninterrupted series of prayers and invocations of the Cross and the Virgin Mary.