

## **Biography**

### **His Beatitude and Eminence Patriarch Nasrallah Peter Cardinal Sfeir**

His Beatitude and Eminence Nasrallah Peter Cardinal Sfeir, is Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and all the East. He is the Father and Head of the Maronite Catholic Church throughout the world, an Eastern Catholic Rite that is in communion with the Apostolic See of Rome, and is Lebanon's largest Christian community.

Cardinal Sfeir was ordained a priest on May 7, 1950, and was appointed parochial vicar of the parish of Reyfoun. He was secretary of the Eparchy of Damascus from 1950 to 1956. On June 19, 1961, he was appointed Patriarchal Vicar General; later that year, he was ordained Bishop. In 1977, he was named representative of the President of the Assembly of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops in Lebanon for Caritas-Lebanon. He was subsequently appointed Councilor of the Commission for the Revision of Canon Law in 1980.

Cardinal Sfeir was elected Patriarch by the Maronite Synod of Bishops on April 19, 1986, and assumed responsibility on April 27 that year. Since then, he has participated in three General Assemblies of the Synod of Bishops between 1986 and 1994. He is also President of the Assembly of Patriarchs and Catholic Bishops in Lebanon and the Middle East. He was created Cardinal by Pope John Paul II in the Consistory of November 26, 1994. He is a member of the Congregation for Eastern Churches and also the Special Synod for Lebanon.

His many achievements include numerous published works as well as Arabic translations of several documents of Pope John Paul II. He has promulgated several revised Maronite liturgical texts as well as Maronite Particular Law. He convoked and presided over the Maronite Patriarchal Assembly, which for a period of three years, gathered 500 clergy, religious and lay experts, as well as observers from all the communities in Lebanon, to study the present needs of the Maronite Church throughout the world. He established funds to support retired bishops and has overseen the construction of several key building projects that have enhanced the Patriarchal See. He is presently working to create a Secretariat to realize the proposals made at the Patriarchal Assembly for renewal and outreach. In addition, he has made several pastoral visits to eighteen countries since 1986 along with his many visits to the Holy See.

Cardinal Sfeir is a tireless supporter of freedom and pluralism in Lebanon during that country's tragic civil war and occupation by foreign powers. By virtue of his religious leadership, he continues to be a symbol of unity in Lebanon and source of hope for all Lebanese. His role of peacemaker in this conflict-ridden area has made him a significant figure in the Church and Lebanon's great bridge builder, insisting on dialogue and peaceful coexistence for all of Lebanon's people.