

**His Beatitude Patriarch Nasrallah Peter Cardinal Sfeir**  
**Homily For Tuesday Liturgy**  
**Our Lady Of Lebanon Maronite Church, Washington, D.C.**  
**July 18, 2006**

*Beloved in Christ,*

I wish to warmly greet and thank Archbishop Donald Wuerl who in spite of his busy schedule as the New Archbishop of Washington took time to be with us and concelebrate this Divine Liturgy for peace in the Middle East, especially in Lebanon. I also want to welcome his predecessor, Cardinal McCarrick, a good friend of Lebanon. We take this occasion to congratulate Archbishop Wuerl and wish him a peaceful and fruitful journey in his New Archdiocese.

I also thank our Nuncio, Piero Sambri, Cardinal William Keeler and Archbishop Edward O'Brien for expressing their deep sentiments of solidarity although they are unable to be with us today.

It is a source of consolation to see several United States officials here present as well. I thank Ambassador Abboud as well as Miss. Carla Jazzar Chargee d' Affaires and the Embassy of Lebanon Staff, for taking the time to come and pray with us. I thank my Brothers the Bishops, Gregory Mansour, Roland Aboujoudie, Youssef Bechara, Chorbishop Faouzi Elia, representing Bishop Shaheen, Chorbishops Thomas and Beggiani, as well as all the priests for their exemplary work.

Last but not least, I thank Chorbishop Dominic Ashkar and all of you parishioners and friends of our Lady of Lebanon Parish, congratulating you for this beautiful church that will stand as a symbol of your deep faith. Today I stand before you at this Altar of the Lord that I also had the joy of consecrating during my last visit.

We offer today the same Liturgy used for the dedication of this church not too long ago. But this time, not to dedicate the stones of this building but rather to re-dedicate ourselves to the Truth and to the One who gave his life for us and thus gave us the meaning and value of life. We must re-dedicate ourselves over and over again so that we may truly be the living temples of the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Life, the Spirit of Love, the Spirit of respect of life and coexistence.

My friends, I come today with a heavy heart, because of what is happening in Lebanon. Are there no more peacemakers? I ask: is war inevitable? The course of history seems to confirm this fearful thought. The earth has been the scene of incessant wars among peoples. Millions have been killed, maimed, orphaned, imprisoned or made helpless refugees.

As Christians we believe that war is **not** inevitable, people choose war and people can choose peace. In today's gospel we see that Jesus himself restates, just after the curse of the cities, that the unity of people will be made around the hearing of the Word. Thus, one who hears God must not isolate himself from the modern city.

The Word of God abides where men multiply their effort for communion, and build around themselves the city of God, where his justice and truth are found. Let us pray for our homeland, for all the innocent victims, those who loose everything. Let us ask the Lord to enlighten those who govern to be faithful to his will for mankind, which is, peace and good order among peoples.

Blessed are the peacemakers, Jesus said. May Our Lady of Lebanon, for whom this parish is dedicated, and to whom we turn to in prayer, protect Lebanon and help us to be, along with her, peacemakers. Amen