

## A NATIONAL MEMORANDUM

- 1- In the midst of the crises Lebanon is experiencing, we stand here today deeply affected by the radical transformations taking place in the region, six years away from **the celebration of the first centenary of the 1920 declaration** of “Greater Lebanon.” We also find ourselves at the dawn of a new presidential mandate, and at a very delicate juncture, described by Pope Francis “as a worrisome period, resulting from a political struggle which is liable, if it lasts, to **destabilize the state.**”<sup>1</sup> Everyone knows that the declaration of “Greater Lebanon” came about thanks to the efforts of Patriarch Elias Hoayek, who carried to the Peace Conference in Versailles in 1919, the common aspirations of the Lebanese to establish a State worthy of the human person. The Maronite Church, which has been entrusted with that history, and with the heritage of that great Patriarch, cannot but reaffirm, through National Memoranda, as has been the case at critical junctions of our history, the **firm tenets** the Church believes in, and highlight the **concerns** that haunt the people, establish the **foundations** for the future and determine the **priorities** the Lebanese ought to hold on to, in order to secure a better future for themselves.
- 2- The Maronite Church, with an eye on the year 2020, issues this Memorandum to emphasize the firmness of her faith in Lebanon, a forward looking State, handed over to its citizens as a promise and a task. And because the Church wanted Lebanon to be a country for the human person, and “a final homeland for all its citizens,” (Section A of the Preamble of the Constitution) it wishes to affirm that it is due time for all the political forces in Lebanon to reaffirm their faith in deeds, not in words, in their state, a state that is capable, effective and productive. Such is the authentic expression of the faith of the Lebanese citizens in their country.
- 3- **The Maronite Patriarchate** cannot but be faithful to the history of its people and its leaders, particularly its great Patriarchs, whose endurance and resistance helped guarantee the freedom of the Lebanese mountain and the dignity of its people. This is why the Patriarchate calls on everyone to reflect deeply on the nature of the Lebanese state, which is constantly evolving out of its long experience of a history of living together, as it was said of it by the Prophet Isaiah: “Is it not true that in a very short time the Lebanon will become productive ground, so productive you might take it for a forest.” (Is. 29/17).

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1 – Address to the diplomatic corps of the Holy See on January 13, 2014

## First: THE FUNDAMENTAL NATIONAL TENETS

### *1- Co-living العيش معاً*

- 4- Despite certain things that lead some to have their doubts about the experience, the principle of co-living that the Lebanese are attached to is not an incidental matter nor is it a temporary motto, but rather the core of the Lebanese experience. That principle carries a clear content that Patriarch Hoayek expressed in eloquent terms when, in 1919, he brought the proposition of “Greater Lebanon”, on behalf of all Lebanese, before the Peace Conference in Versailles. He summed up that experience by saying to the French Prime Minister: “Allow me (...) to draw your attention to a feature that points to a deep and far reaching development, the first in the Orient, which replaces religious nationalism with political nationalism. Thanks to that reality Lebanon enjoys a special quality, a feature that it insists on preserving above everything else. Lebanon cannot, out of its wish to preserve that culture itself, sacrifice it for any material gain.”<sup>2</sup> The essence of co-living consists in adopting an option that Christians and Muslims chose together, and together put forward as proof that brotherhood among people belonging to different civilizations and religious affiliations, is historically possible, and that men and women, because they belong to a nation worthy of them, deserve to live and involve themselves freely in political activities.

That option is based on three tenets: freedom, equal rights, and pluralism. These tenets are an integral part of the making of the Lebanese state. Experience has shown that these three tenets make up the essence of Lebanon, the essential dimensions of its distinctive character, a character that all Lebanese are eager to preserve.

### *2- The National Pact الميثاق الوطني*

- 5- The Lebanese wanted the National Pact as their political chart. It constitutes the essence of their shared history of Christian-Muslim co-living, and the affirmation of the three tenets mentioned above. This is why the National Pact was not necessarily the result of convenient political compromise, nor did it come about as the outcome of temporary agreements, accepted today and rejected tomorrow, or denied in times of conflict of interests or critical options. This is why the National Pact is considered, in our political dictionary, a reality that precedes the constitution, **lays its foundations, directs political action and regulates it**. The National Pact is in fact the expression of an historical journey of encounter among the various components

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2- An address delivered in 1919

of the Nation, and the initiator of a movement that leads to the formation of a state dedicated to humanity and to the safeguarding of the rights of the individual citizen. It is also a guarantee that prevents the State from falling into the pitfalls of the contradictions encountered and lived throughout our historical experience.

- 6- Those who brought about independence in 1943 expressed their understanding of the National Pact as follows: “No to the East and No to the West”. That formula was not understood as “a double negation that does not build a nation”, nor was it meant in its literal meaning, but rather an understanding of the historical experience that the various components of the Lebanese nation have lived as a joint commitment to the National Pact. That commitment is considered first, to be the basis for the founding of a state that measures up to the aspirations of all Lebanese, and helps them steer clear of regional conflicts, by renouncing what, in their various identities, is liable to make them cross the boundaries of the Lebanese Nation, and go beyond the borders of the state. Second, that commitment ought to serve as the basis on which the foreign relations of the state are built, demanding the distinctive character of Lebanon be respected as a model for co-living among various religions and civilizations. However Lebanon should never serve “as a venue nor a passage”, but ought to remain open to all, to cooperate with various nations, while preserving its independence, and reserve for itself the capability to work for the good of all nations, as was stated in the official declaration of the first Lebanese government.

### **3- The Lebanese Formula *الصيغة***

- 7- One of the most important applications of the National Pact is perhaps “the Lebanese Formula” which is considered to be the incarnation of the wisdom of the Pact in the way effective sharing is realized within the political system among the various Lebanese components. The Formula as applied has reflected the historical experience which proved that Lebanon cannot survive except with its two wings, Christian and Muslim. And the Formula was never considered on the basis of numbers. Here is how one of our wise men put it: “The Lebanese decided first to establish a nation and then worked out the details of the Lebanese experience.” This became an accepted historical fact sanctioned by the various regimes which governed Lebanon from the Moutasarrifiah to 1943, to the Taef Agreement in 1989. Even when agreeing on the Constitution of the first republic, it was decided to abolish confessionalism, only at a later date, but the confessional representation in parliament was maintained, because it was considered to be an integral part of the Lebanese Formula. Then the abolition of confessionalism within the civil service, stipulated in the Taef Agreement, was to be done on the condition that it would take into consideration mutual consent and justice, and it would not cause any harm to the state. That meant that the National Pact should take precedence over the

political and administrative considerations. This was also confirmed by the Preamble of the present constitution that stipulated that any measure contradicting the requirements of co-living is not legitimate. It is of prime importance to point out that freedom and diversity, which have been highly valued in Lebanon, did not come from within the various confessional communities but from the original concept of the Lebanese Formula which guaranteed balance in the power sharing among Lebanese components.

- 8- The Lebanese ought to be proud of what they accomplished at their founding stage through the National Pact and through their constitutional and political experience and expertise. They should remember it now at this delicate stage of the history of their country and the region. This should be a source of inspiration for us in our national life and a guide in our political options, if we wish to base our future aspirations on it, and avoid what could expose the essence of the founding experience to grave setbacks liable to sap it all from within.

## **Second: PRESENT CONCERNS**

### ***1- Concern about the Present Situation***

- 9- The present situation in Lebanon has reached the stage of an existential crisis. And the Maronite Church which has always been committed to the “Lebanese Cause” from time immemorial, cannot stand idly by while the future of Lebanon is being threatened. Out of deep commitment to the cause, the Church held a **Maronite Patriarchal Synod** (2003-2006), during which it engaged in a general review of its life and mission, including national issues. The Church came to the conclusion that what could save the Lebanese experience was the serious engagement of the citizenry in completing the building of the state, naturally, according to the National Pact and the Constitution. And in order to contribute to this process of nation building, it decided to prepare in 2009 “**the Chart of Political Action in the Light of Church Teaching and the Specificity of Lebanon,**” in which it studied the subject in depth and proposed clear guidelines for future action. Those texts were considered to be an early warning about the concerns regarding the Lebanese internal situation.
- 10-The Lebanese should be aware that no national project has a chance unless it aims at building a **state that is just, capable and productive**, within a stable nation, committed to the service of the human person...Without these elements such a national project could not be implemented, and could even pose a threat to stability, and throw the Lebanese citizens in total chaos and insecurity. One of the outcomes of this dangerous path is the appearance of the phenomenon of “auto security”

justified by the incapacity of the State to face up to grave threats, a situation that allows citizens to appropriate the right to take charge of their own security...Then the powerful arrives to impose his/her will on others, leading to internal confrontation. This encourages each party to enlist outside assistance, and, as a result, leads the country into the arena of regional conflicts. This is our gravest concern which induced Lebanon into a dangerous political stalemate and security threats that it has never experienced in its history. This is why we warn all Lebanese, and particularly politicians entrusted with governing the country, against the persistence in their lack of flexibility and desire for power. These will only push Lebanon into the abyss.

## **2- Relevant Issues**

Some of the most pressing of such issues are:

**11-First, the lack of clarity in the determination of the “highest national common interest”, and the commitment to honoring it.** This leads to political polarization instead of working for a just society out of respect for the National Pact and out of concern for the welfare of the state and its citizens. As a result, today we are witnessing a power struggle detrimental to the Pact and the Constitution, thus paralyzing the state by siding with different regional or international camps.

**12-Second, the blockage of Constitutional Institutions and subjecting them to the whims of various parties,** each claiming that his or her options are life saving for the state and the people. It is not in any way logical that the Lebanese should brag about having a democracy, a constitution, as well as public institutions, while they, in their majority, undermine democracy in the interest of their own power, suspend the constitution in favor of personal and partisan interests, and block national institutions by using them according to their whims. Political life in our country has been overshadowed by an exaggerated abuse of “consensual democracy”<sup>3</sup>, which lacks structure and procedures, and is drowned in various “behaviors and strategies” imposed by factors totally alien to the structure of the state as well and the interests of the Lebanese nation. All of this has contributed to the inability of the Lebanese to devise internal solutions to their problems, and to be in constant need of an external arbiter to settle their differences for them.

**13-Third, obstructing the constitution of legislative and executive state governance and authority.** One of the dangerous consequences of paralyzing these

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3- Maronite Patriarchal Synod, Text 19 : “the Church and Politics” Par. 19

Instead of turning them into democratic opportunities for a smooth transfer of power, every major national event in an elected democratic political process looks like the war of the gods in Hellenic mythology. A good example of such behavior is the inability to agree on a just and balanced electoral law, which resulted in the postponement of the election of a new parliament within the constitutional time limit. This led naturally to the extension of the mandate of the parliament, and blocked the formation of new governments within reasonable timeframes. This chain of events fueled the fear of reaching a power vacuum at the head of the state, by blocking the coming Presidential election before the expiry of the mandate of the current President on May 25, 2014 !

**14-Fourth, the intrusion of Lebanon into the problems of neighboring countries**

overlooking totally the detrimental impact of such behavior on the state and the people. It seems that the principle dictated by the National Pact “ No to the East and No to the West”, and what it means in terms of staying out of various foreign camps, has ceased to direct properly the actions of some Lebanese factions in their relations with the outside world. Have the Lebanese lost confidence in their national experience to the extent of renouncing their role as advocates for that human experience of peaceful coexistence in a pluralistic society? Have they stopped carrying that mission to other countries in need of a paradigm of co-living among religions and civilizations, and are in search of constitutions that guarantee the rights of all to proper sharing in real and effective political power?

**4- *The Neutrality of Lebanon***

15- At this point we clearly see the importance of the neutrality of Lebanon which proves that there is still faith in the Lebanese experience. Some claim that the neutrality of Lebanon can be detrimental to its national interests. We reiterate, however, our conviction that neutrality is the most promising way to safeguard diversity within countries composed of multiple communities. We state emphatically that the neutrality of Lebanon is a necessity for the region, on the condition that neutrality be coupled with the strength of its national defense, through a strong army and other security forces. While seeking neutrality Lebanon has to remain committed to the aspirations of the Arab countries, particularly the Palestinian cause, which embodies a commitment to justice and co-living, the principle of unity in diversity, equal rights of citizenship and the building of peace. In order for a neutral Lebanon to play its role, it ought to be strong, capable of defending itself, and able to serve the region around it. And until such time when Lebanon has achieved its neutrality,

we should endeavor to steer clear of the regional and international conflicts, as stated in the “Baabda Declaration” which is considered an important step along that road. Moreover, we should not permit that Lebanon be used as a venue or passage for any action liable to implicate the country in those conflicts. Finally, Lebanon should devise a national defense strategy which will enable it to reclaim all its occupied territories and defend its borders effectively.

### **Third: BASIS FOR A ROAD MAP FOR THE FUTURE**

16- Having to face all the concerns mentioned above, the Lebanese ought to reflect deeply and ask themselves the following question: What future do they want for Lebanon and on what basis? This question also concerns the upcoming President who will lead Lebanon into the first centenary celebration of the founding of “Greater Lebanon.”

#### ***1- The Supreme National Interest***

16-The Maronite Church, anxious to preserve what the Lebanese have realized together since the founding of “Greater Lebanon,” feels that overcoming the present crisis can come about only by going back to the supreme national interest of Lebanon on the basis of the National Pact and the constitution. Lebanon is either built by all Lebanese or it will cease to exist. This ought to be realized through honest and transparent dialogue leading to real internal peace and to an agreement of priorities for the building of the state. These two tasks will be the responsibility of the new President, whose election is an absolute necessity for Lebanon. If Lebanon is to prove to itself and to the world that it is a state that respects its own democracy and alternating of power, and respects its constitution as well.

#### ***2- Internal Dialogue***

17-If the internal dialogue is to succeed in leading to a true peace, it ought to take place within the Institutions, namely in the Committee of National Dialogue, and according to the rules of consensual democracy, inspired by the National Pact and the constitution. In this way the results of the dialogue will be binding for all and will serve the good of Lebanon and all Lebanese. This is why the Maronite Church feels the necessity to reassert the centrality of the National Pact and the constitution, because Lebanon, composed as it is of Christians and Muslims, can only deal effectively with the storms by making use of a helm and a sail.

### 3- Insistence on the National Pact

18-The Pact is a spirit and a covenant, incarnated in a binding formula, for a nation and a state. To reaffirm faith in the Pact one ought to:

**First, get back to the essence of the Pact by** safeguarding freedom through productive intellectual and cultural interaction, mutually enriching, and fully committed to the essence of the Lebanese Formula of equitable power sharing, in the building of a unified state, and in the formation of a national identity of which everyone feels a part, independently of numbers. By getting back to the essence of the Pact we totally renounce enlisting outside help, and we refuse to behave in an individualistic way internally, as we lend full respect to our National sovereignty. In this way we give credibility to our historical experience and earn the respect of others for holding on to that experience and safeguarding it.

**Second, safeguard the formula, “No to the East and No to the West” in all its dimensions.** This is a Formula drawn to determine the nature of Lebanon’s relations with outside countries. The renewal of the commitment to the Pact means in fact a commitment to the neutrality of Lebanon as described earlier, a positive, engaged and unselfish neutrality, which serves the specific character of Lebanon, guarantees the success of the Lebanese experience and offers the region and the world an added cultural value.

19- This engaged neutrality requires Lebanon:

**To serve its environment,** both Eastern and Western, by supporting their just causes, cultivating good relations of cooperation with their countries, offering assistance in promoting peace and respect for human rights, safeguarding freedom and diversity, and fully respecting the legal decisions of the international community.

**To insist on lending support to the just cause of Palestinians,** their right of return to their land, and the formation of a state for them on their national territory, thus refusing their settlement, in any shape or form, on Lebanese soil, in accordance with what is stated in the Preamble of the Lebanese constitution.

**To help establish peace in Syria** as soon as possible, and to assist Syrian citizens in the determination of their own future, through honest dialogue among themselves, with the hope that refugees may be able to return to their homes and their land safely, and with full respect for their individual human dignity. The swift return of



peace to Syria and the return of the refugees are indeed in the vital interest of Lebanon.

**To keep communication open** so that Lebanon may be able to play an effective role in the Arab world to which it belongs, and succeed in fostering cultural, economic and commercial relations with the international community, in a friendly way, and to establish the exchange of Lebanese cultural values with the values of modernity, especially through the Lebanese scattered all over the world, and through the official channels of the Lebanese state. **The internal stability of Lebanon is intimately linked to its ability to fulfill its humane mission, and peace building role, and to assist with the establishment of democratic states within the region. Lebanon should endeavor to play this role as effectively as possible.** We wish to seize the opportunity to reassert our full respect for the resolutions adopted by the Security Council, and particularly resolution 1701. We wish to express our deep respect and appreciation to Pope Francis and the Holy See for their constant support of Lebanon and its mission. We express our gratitude also to all the countries participating in UNIFIL in South Lebanon.

### **3- Insistence on Safeguarding the Constitution and Respecting it**

21-The constitution reflects the spirit of the National Pact, safeguards the rights and duties of the citizens, and it regulates the election of the national parliament and the formation of the government as well as the proper formation and functioning all the national institutions.

Abiding by the constitution imposes on all:

**First, to safeguard the constitutional benefits already guaranteed**, such as personal freedoms, the civil and democratic character of the state, equal participation of all the components of society, and the openness to modernity and progress, in accordance with the constitution. This ought to be realized through the respect of law and order. **Safeguarding the constitutional benefits that form the founding values of the state** is realized, in practical terms, through the respect of effective equality in rights and duties between Christians and Muslims, and more specifically in their equal and active participation in the government and public service.

**Second, to guarantee a serious commitment to the building of a just, effective and productive state** through the safeguarding of sovereignty, the building of a strong army, modern and well equipped, and through the strengthening of the internal security forces. Moreover the security of the state ought to be entrusted

solely and strictly to the legal security forces. The building of the State can be realized also through the respect of the judiciary and its independence, the strengthening of the institutions of supervision and the application of the law on all without any exception or discrimination. The political interference and favoritism in the public administration ought to be curtailed, otherwise it could greatly hamper the proper functioning of the institutions and cover irregularities and corruption. For the building of the state the economy ought to be developed and job opportunities provided. A just, effective and productive state is the venue where all citizens come together, strengthen their unity and develop a strong immunity against outside interference, guaranteeing thus the unity of the nation within the diversity of its various components.

**Third, to abide by the constitution and facilitate the smooth functioning of the constitutional institutions.** This an indication of the level of democratic progress and political maturity, essential in securing internal peace and stability and in safeguarding the common good and the rights of all citizens, which is the main objective for the establishment of any institution.

**Fourth, to remain open and welcome its citizens scattered throughout the world, as they represent valuable and valued assets to our country.** Those citizens are a natural extension of the human culture and civilization of the Lebanese people. Lebanon ought to strengthen national ties with them and assist in promoting their welfare. It ought to cooperate with them to promote the Lebanese as well as the Arab cause in their societies. Finally the Lebanese state should show them true respect by guaranteeing their right to vote and the possibility to reclaim their Lebanese citizenship.

**Fifth, the election of a new President of the Republic** within the constitutional delays, a new head of state and protector of the constitution, remains the essential condition to safeguard both the constitution and to look forward to the future with confidence.

#### **Fourth: DEFINING THE PRIORITIES.**

22- In view of what was said about the fundamental national tenets, the present concerns and the basis for a road map for the future, we wish to define the priorities and put them before the Lebanese people, and more particularly before those who are in public office:

**First, complete the building of the state** in its internal structure and extend its full and exclusive authority throughout the national territory and form and motivate the political coalitions needed to run the government. This will help rebuild the state and its central institutions, safeguard the constitution, guarantee the separation of powers, and respect for the judiciary, with the will needed to make the necessary tough decisions and take the exceptional measures required with wisdom and strength.

**23-Second, vote on a new electoral law** reflecting the spirit of the National Pact in a way that secures effective participation and equal representation between Muslims and Christians, through free and democratic elections, avoiding the imposition of some representatives on their constituencies, through monolithic confessional coalitions. Such an electoral law will allow the voters to hold their representatives accountable.

**24-Third, enact and apply the law of “administrative decentralization”**, as it guarantees a better management of diversity, enhances local participation, and grants the regional administration greater flexibility to provide what that entails in terms of corresponding finances and needed income. Decentralization has become a worldwide trend today, even in systems of government that are historically highly centralized.

**25-Fourth, complete the application of the Taef Agreement**, and look into what needs to be clarified, explained or re-designed in the light of actual practice, including the review of the powers of the President of the Republic. This review should help rectify the constitutional and executive deficiencies that the exercise of power has shown since the Taef Agreement was enacted, more than 20 years ago, thus enabling the President to practice what is required of him by the constitution as head of state. Such amendments should allow him/her, to exercise power effectively, to guarantee stability for the government, to avoid hampering the smooth running of the government and the smooth transition of power; they should allow the President also to lead the implementation of political reforms, as they will help improve the functioning of other Institutions, such as the Cabinet and the Parliament. Finally additional amendments should be considered to allow the revision of some of the deadlines in the exercise of government that are now left totally open.

**26-Fifth: Form competent governments** that operate according to well drawn up plans, away from improvised policies and quick fixes; governments that abide by their ministerial declarations, revive the national economy and work towards equality

and social justice; governments that fight poverty and unemployment and close, once and for all, the dossier of citizens who were displaced during the Lebanese war; governments that set up plans to deal with public debts, as this gravely threatens the State and social stability. The media have to be properly managed through proper legislation that strikes the right balance between freedom and responsibility and helps secure the independence of the media through self financing in an open and transparent manner.

**27-Sixth: give proper attention to the youth** as they constitute the great wealth of the nation and the force needed to rejuvenate the society and the Church. The youth ought to be offered the proper scientific and professional education alongside a solid human formation and a social value system which equips them to share responsibly in the national decision making process, and to enter the public sector with a new mentality and fresh outlook. Job opportunities in accordance with abilities and specialization should be provided to encourage creativity and a desire to remain in the country, make a future for themselves in it, raise a family and gain greater confidence in the future and in possible change for the better.<sup>4</sup>

**28-Seventh: Enhance the contribution of women** to the public sector and encourage their participation in political life in order to guarantee their rights and avail of their talents, their vitality and their openness. <sup>5</sup>

**29-Eighth: motivate the citizen** to exercise responsibly for his/her democratic rights, to assume his/her duties towards the building of the State and to get involved and be effective in the large public arena, more specifically in what is of direct concern to the citizen. In this way, political action may have a lasting impact and not be reduced to simple slogans that dissolve as soon as they are voiced.

**30-Ninth: endeavor to reform the public administration,** to modernize it by employing people with high moral standards and competent scientific expertise, who will make the fight against corruption a top priority. Corruption is the main obstacle in the way of the building of the state.

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4- Chart of Political Action, p.33

5- Idem, p.34

**31-Tenth: Lebanon should contribute to a settlement** that will take the Arab world out of the present turmoil it is experiencing in its search for new modern regimes, worthy of the Arab citizen and of the rich cultural heritage of the Arab societies. Lebanon ought to strengthen its presence on the international scene. In effect the richness of its heritage and the authenticity of its identity make it an effective partner in the building of human civilization and in the support of the process of building a stable, just and global peace in the region,<sup>6</sup> on the basis of the United Nations Resolutions and the Arab peace initiative proposed in Beirut in 2002. The new Tunisian Constitution guaranteeing the freedom of conscience and other types of freedom, and securing gender equality, constitutes an important sign of hope for the future of the Arab world.

**32-Eleventh: guarantee the application** of the conclusions reached by the International Support Group for Lebanon, namely: support the stability of the country, enhance its economy, strengthen the army, and support efforts in dealing with the problem of Syrian refugees.

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6-Maronite Patriarchal Synod, Church and Politics Par. 40

“Rejuvenating the experiment of mutual coexistence does not only provide a guarantee for the future of the Lebanese, but constitutes a necessity for their Arab environment, and aids in transcending this dangerous phase inhabited by wars and strife of all sorts. Hence, we must strive to make the Lebanese experiment, in its rejuvenated formula, a model from which to derive benefit for the Arab world, in its capacity as a civilization pattern in the search for mutual coexistence and enhancement in societies characterized by diversity and pluralism. It is also a way to redefine Arabism in its capacity as a civilization bond which draws Arabs closer to each other, and not a political project which estranges them from each other, and in its capacity as a way of renewing the Arabs’ contribution to world civilization. This constitutes a Lebanese contribution to extract the Arab World from its deep civilization travail it is suffering from. “It is a world searching for self and for a formula for its existence and for its own station in today’s world, through which it can be a positive element in the shaping of human civilization and in cementing the supports of stability and peace, emanating from the authenticity of its identity and the uniqueness of its heritage.”

## Conclusion

**33** Lebanon constitutes a unique human experience in this world, and the allegiance of the Maronite Church to it will never waver as it considers that support an integral part of its national mission. The Church will never tire to urge all Lebanese, and particularly those who are in public office, to do their utmost to make that Lebanese experience a constant success, by contributing to the building of the state on the basis of the National Pact which guarantees the good of all citizens, and offers our country the solid base that will help it realize its mission, as Blessed John Paul II stated: **“Lebanon is more than a country, it is a mission of freedom and a model of diversity for both East and West.”**<sup>7</sup>

**7.** John Paul II, a Letter to all the Bishops of the Catholic Church, September 1989

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