



**Address by Rev. Fr. Hady Mahfouz,
President of the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK)
Around the Book of Dr. Mirna Abboud Mzawak
June 10, 2014**

Amid the Joy of the Spirit, the family shines.

We are gathered today around the book of Dr. Mirna Abboud-Mzawak, Chair of the Department of Social Sciences in the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik. This book is entitled “*Les familles maronites face à leur Maronité*” (Maronite Families vis-à-vis their Maronity), and is published by the Higher Center for Research in cooperation with the Maronite Synod Committee which framed Dr. Mzawak’s study.

In the title of the book, the place of its publication and its outcome, joy, the spirit and the family rise.

In fact, in the timely publication of this book, there is a great spiritual joy: this year is the year of preparation for the Synod of the Family, as per the wish of the father of the Catholic family, His Holiness Pope Francis. This book was published in the beginning of Spring, when we were witnessing an overwhelming event filling souls with joy and excitement; it is the canonization of the two Popes: John Paul II and the John XXIII that took place on April 27. This ceremony testifies to the work of the Holy Spirit and it is related to the entire Catholic family. It is related to the family, which is the Church. It is related to the family because the Popes, new saints, loved the family. In fact, John Paul II wished to be remembered as the Pope of the family

as mentioned by Pope Francis in his homily. The Saint Pope had published an Apostolic Exhortation about the family, whereby he said: “Thus, the Christian family is inspired and guided by the new law of the Spirit and, in intimate communion with the Church” (n. 63). Pope John XXIII is this same good Pope whose voice, on the evening of the inauguration of the Vatican Council II, is still resonating within Saint Peter’s Square. Back then, he said with his kind and spontaneous tone: “We can say that even the moon rushed itself to the sky this evening to watch this celebration...My person does not mean anything...I am a brother talking to you, a brother who became a father according to our God’s will...When you go back home, caress your children and tell them that this is the caress of the Pope; look for some tears to dry them up...” This Pope always thought of the family and of wiping tears off the eyes of human beings. This is also the joy, spirit and family.

The memory and the mentioning of these two Popes make us proud to belong to the Catholic family, where the Spirit is the driver, and joy is the principle of life. Therefore, I would like to ask His Excellency Mgr. Gabriele Caccia, Apostolic Nuncio in Lebanon, to convey to His Holiness Pope Francis our filial feeling and absolute obedience.

The book of today is published in the University of the Spirit; all its members spare no effort in embodying the spirit of the family in the University for the sake of the development of the institution, for the development of every one of its members and for the sake of the prevalence of an atmosphere of joy in the University.

Your Beatitude, our University celebrates its patronal feast every year over three days: Saturday, the evening of the Pentecost, Sunday, Pentecost day and Monday as the Pentecost holiday. This year, it is special; the feast extended for an additional day because the father of the Maronite family has come to us to bless us and rejoice us with his presence. I extend to you my heartfelt thanks, your Beatitude, because you bring joy to our University every time you visit it; you are our blessing; therefore, I convey to you the deepest gratitude on behalf of the father of our Maronite Order, Superior General, Most Reverend Father Abbot Tannous Nehme.

In this book, the subject of our celebration, we can see the features of the work of the Spirit, just like Pope Francis taught us two days ago in his homily on the Pentecost day, by saying that the Spirit teaches us, makes us remember and makes us talk. In this book, we can see the fruit of a teaching acquired by the writer, the outcome of her remembering that she is the faithful daughter of the Church entrusted with the words of the Lord; and through this book, she talks to others. Therefore, I would like to thank Dr. Mirna Abboud-Mzawak for her academic and ecclesial product and for her dedication in the service of the University and the Church. She, and her family, the family of Dr. Pierre Mzawak, Head of the Municipality of Ballouneh, have the sincere feelings of our University.

While talking about family, joy and the Spirit, in an ecclesial ambience par excellence, I would like to go back to Virgin Mary, our Mother. In fact, in his homily the other day, while talking about the work of the Spirit, the Church and Virgin Mary, Pope Francis said: “Mother Church and Mother Mary: ...they are both women”. We ask them to bless the woman who wrote this book.

All this makes us live in the midst of the joy of the Spirit where family shines.