

**Address by Rev. Fr. Dr. Talal Hachem
President of the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik
Commencement Ceremony of the “Let’s Get to Work!” Class of 2019
July 3, 2019**

Your Excellency, Prime Minister Dr. Saad Hariri, represented by Dr. Daoud As-Sayegh,
Your Excellency Judge Albert Serhan, Minister of Justice,

In the name of Most Reverend Father Abbot Neemtallah Hachem, Superior General of the Lebanese Maronite Order (OLM) and Chancellor of USEK, whom I salute and ask for his blessing, I bid you welcome.

I would also like to welcome His Excellency Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay.

Allow me to further extend my welcome to Your Excellencies ministers, MPs, and bishops,

Reverend Fathers Assistants General,

Religious, academic, political, military, security, municipal, arts, and media figures,

Reverend Fathers and members of the University Council,

The families of our beloved graduates, and

Ladies and gentlemen sharing the joy of this ceremony.

First and foremost, allow me, Your Excellency, to thank you for sponsoring this ceremony. Your sponsorship is much appreciated for the following reasons:

- You are one of the founders of the USEK School of Law and it would be superfluous to praise the status of this school and the high regard in which it is held by the University in general, and by me personally.
- Furthermore, it is truly an honor to say that your active presence among the teaching staff, ever since the school’s inception, has further promoted its status.
- More importantly, your valuable and active contribution underscores your importance – for us, for the faculty, and particularly for the students – as a beacon of good and justice, and an epitome of a loving and selfless instructor.
- Given your loving nature, your gentle manners, and your role as a model in the field of law, justice, and education in the past, present, and future, everyone – including students – truly love you and hold you and your journey in high esteem.
- Allow me to mention here my own administrative testimony to your permanent readiness to help and your utmost, honest, and useful cooperation in all occasions.

- In short, as a scientific and ethical role model, you stand as a guarantee in the realm of governmental responsibility, inspiring confidence in our nation and its promised renaissance among our youth in general and our graduates in particular.

For all these reasons and many more, which you do not wish to disclose over the course of your successful journey – as you are an advocate of silent, meek, and efficient work as Jesus Christ said: “...Your left hand must not know what your right has done” (Mt 6:4) – allow me to bid you welcome and thank you once again for sponsoring this ceremony.

Beloved graduates,

To begin with, I would like to talk about your parents, those heroes to whom we bow our heads in respect as they have given their everything for you and for your success. To you, beloved parents, I express my profound respect and appreciation. Your influence is extremely touching for us all, as we see in you human beings who are aware that life moves forward and that each of us is called upon to play a given role properly at any given stage. Thank you for who you are and what you have done.

Beloved graduates,

I join you now in taking a look at your University, which – as countless others will agree – I see radiating and prospering. It is prospering, first of all, thanks to you, its students and graduates, and to its ongoing successes and progress in terms of accreditations, international rankings, and its ever-growing network of international relations with the best world universities and reference institutions. USEK is further prospering thanks to its affiliation with the Lebanese Maronite Order (OLM), the order of saints. The OLM loves Lebanon indeed and embodies a set of values cherished by every society. Allow me here to address Most Reverend Father Abbot Neemtallah Hachem, Superior General of the OLM, and thank him along with the esteemed OLM Council for their trust in handing me this blessed responsibility [as USEK’s President] and for their keen and fatherly interest in USEK for the better good of every student, faculty, and staff. I realize that, in this huge responsibility with which I have been entrusted as president of USEK, I am merely a link in the long chain of monks who have been entrusted with various responsibilities within the OLM.

In this particular context, I would like to address the person who shouldered this responsibility over the past three years, my beloved brother and former president of USEK, Reverend Father Professor Georges Hobeika, to express my profound gratitude and thanks for his invaluable contributions and efforts to promote our University and its journey forward.

Beloved graduates,

I congratulate those in charge, the faculty and staff in your respective faculties on participating and contributing, each in their manner, to your reaching the time of reaping the rewards of your hard labor. May you always live up to their hopes and expectations!

I congratulate you, dear graduates, on your achievements, which come as a result of your strenuous efforts and your perseverance in extensive research and valuable

studies during your years of study. You are today about to reap the rewards of years spent sowing, receiving information, looking for information, and moving forward on the paths of academic attainment and professional training. Personal creativity and giving in all fields are on your agenda today.

Be assured that the University will follow up on your journey passionately, much like a mother keeps watch from afar on her children's achievements and waits for them should they – God forbid – encounter any emergency or failure in order to encourage them and strengthen their resolve.

Dear graduates,

Your class is the "Let's Get to Work!" class in keeping with the slogan of our current government of which His Excellency Minister Albert Serhan is a member. His Excellency is a model for you to follow in terms of self-made success and integrity, which are the values upon which you have been raised within your families and your University.

Once again, thank you, Your Excellency. Congratulations to you, dear graduates, and to your families and faculty. Long live USEK, long live the OLM, and long live Lebanon!