



**Address by Rev. Fr. Hady Mahfouz, President of the Holy Spirit
University of Kaslik (USEK)**

**At the Ceremony of the Doctorate Honoris Causa awarded to the
Honorable Jason Kenney.P.C., M.P.**

July 25, 2014

« La politique relationnelle » occasionne notre rencontre de ce soir qui, de surcroît, est une première. C'est, en effet, la première fois qu'une figure de proue canadienne est honorée avec le plus haut grade académique au sein de notre Université. Et c'est pour la première fois que ce grade est attribué dans le cadre d'un dîner convivial. Cela est imbibé de significations.

Au cœur de notre rassemblement se trouve son Excellence Monsieur le ministre Jason Kenney, ministre de l'Emploi et du Développement Social et ministre du Multiculturalisme. Au travers du doctorat honoris causa, l'USEK rend hommage à une valeur, notamment à la politique relationnelle aussi bien qu'à une personne.

J'ai abordé le thème de « la politique relationnelle » parce qu'en la personne de l'honorable Jason Kenney, je trouve un politique chevronné dont l'action est centrée sur le service de la personne humaine et de la société terrestre globale. Ses différentes fonctions au sein du cabinet du premier ministre, de la Chambre des Communes et du gouvernement reflètent l'intérêt, tant affectueux, qu'il porte au thème de la rencontre des personnes et des cultures.

Les premiers intervenants de ce soir, notamment le R.P. Dr. Talal Hachem et Dr. Georges Yahchouchi, ont bien mis en lumière les fonctions, les convictions et les atouts de l'honorable Jason Kenney, ce qui lui a valu le commentaire du « National Post » : « il est peut-être le meilleur ministre de l'Immigration que le Canada ait eu », et l'élection, par ses collègues dans le cadre de l'enquête annuelle du magazine Maclean des parlementaires, comme « meilleur député dans l'ensemble » et le député « le plus travaillant ».

Honorable Jason Kenney,

It has been two or three years that Fr. Talal Hachem mentioned to me all your good deeds towards the Lebanese community in Canada – I heard some of them now in his speech - and he praised your convictions for building a meeting-world, a world where people have good relationships with one another. So he suggested to me this honorary degree, and I am now so happy that his wish is fulfilled this evening.

Noting that the task in common between your previous occupation and your current one at the cabinet of the ministers of Canada is the Multiculturalism ministry, I am so confident that “relational policy” fits perfectly well with your carrier. You have been striving to build bridges between cultures, between persons and between societies. That is very noble, very humane and very instructive.

So I can lay stress on the fact that “politics” is a noble profession and it is universal, since it is a must for everyone to define his/her “policy” in his/her own life. So every human being is a person of politics. And “politics” is noble when it seeks goodness simultaneously for oneself and for others. That is the core of talking about “relational politics”. Success is conditioned by having good “relational politics” at many levels, spiritual, cultural, human, geographical and temporal. And I know that at all these levels, you have been witnessing to noble politics and values.

When I first visited Canada, in September 2009, Fr. Talal was kind enough, to organize a welcome-dinner for me. In this framework, you had the kindness of sending a representative and of addressing me two documents: a greetings-letter and an attestation of “Honneur au mérite”. These two documents are still at the university board room (So your picture is the only one in that room). Your closeness to the Lebanese community in Canada, and especially to our monastery in Outremont, is a matter of pride and honor for us. Here I cannot but thank our monks who have always been thriving to establish a strong and distinguished relationship between Canada and Lebanon. Let me name the last three of them Father Talal Hachem, Father Ziad Sacre (both are current deans) and Father Antoine Tahan, current superior of our monastery in Montreal.

I would like also to greet in a special way, the Chancellor of the University and Superior General of our Order, Most Reverend Father Abbot Tannous Nehme, thanking him for being among us and giving us his blessing.

Our gathering this evening is also relational, since many of the senior faculty members and staff are partaking to this event. Many of our friends and guests have also joined us this evening. I would like to thank them all. This is a joyful moment for all of us. I would like here to draw to your attention, honorable Kenney, that 4 of our 12 deans at our University are Canadian citizens that is the one third of the deans. Be sure, Honorable, that the other two third like Canada so much. Needless to mention that Canada is a beloved country in Lebanon. At USEK, this has been translated by the tight collaboration we have with Canadian Universities, namely, with HEC Montreal, University of Laval, and University of Sherbrooke in addition to the close collaboration with the Canadian Embassy to Lebanon. I would like here to address her Excellency Mrs. Ambassador Hilary Childs-Adams for the quality of her presence in the Lebanese society.

We know that Pope Saint John Paul II was an inspiration for you and we know how much you tried to push forward the Canadian senate to establish John Paul II day on June 12. Allow me to quote you: “Blessed Pope John Paul II was a champion of freedom in the face of tyranny and promoted universal values of human rights and democracy...”

His Holiness Saint John Paul II is also an inspiration to the Holy Spirit University Leadership where an Amphitheatre is dedicated to the souvenir of his visit to Lebanon in 1997 and the class of 2014 holds the name of the two Popes: Pope John XXIII and Saint John Paul II.

For all the values you have been disseminating, and for the noble “relational politics” you have been undertaking during your whole career, allow me, Honorable Jason Kenney, to bestow upon your shoulders the gown of the doctorate honoris causa. Thank you.