



**Remarks by Rev. Father Hady Mahfouz**

**USEK President**

**Inauguration ceremony of USEK new Dealing Room**

**Kaslik, November 26, 2015**

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Beauty, technology and efficiency are three key concepts fitting with our gathering today and they all, somehow, are facets of two cherished concepts at USEK: Love and development.

We are in a nice and beautiful scenery. The dealing room is overlooking a nice garden, neighboring an advanced LTEC (Learning and Teaching Excellence Center) – the first of its kind in Lebanon - and sheltered by a new, nice and well illuminated corridor. The scenery is nice, and the technology is at its peak: a first of a kind in Lebanon screen, a very advanced software in the dealing room, and highly developed techniques.

At USEK, beauty inspires us, since it embeds harmony and evokes the beginnings of creation when God, after every creation, saw that it was good. We take care of technology because it bears seeds of creation, and it helps promoting the human being's cause; our ultimate goal being the development of every human being, without any discrimination, and the development of all the human being, in all his/her dimensions.

We strive at USEK to undertake our work in all fields with love, to make our university “within man's reach, where the student is preserved from anonymity” as expressed by Pope Benedict XVI in the university of Pavia (April 22, 2007). He also said on the same day: “Technical progress, technology and human love should always go together!”.

Let me now shift to another note which stresses the above concepts. During the month of November, USEK had several meetings with the international. It presided the CONFREMO (Conference of Rectors in the Middle East) in Abu Dhabi, it welcomed the OIE conference (the International Organization for Animal Health), it organized the Internationalization Forum under the theme: Always further: building global education bridges, and it underwent the site visit of the International ABET team for the accreditation of its Engineering programs. Last week, a meeting was held with our Alumni in Canada, and right now one of our teams is participating in an international conference for rankings in Melbourne in Australia. These events go in the line of action undertaken for many years. And our today gathering which culminates the November events is also in the same line. Though local in many ways and related to economy and finance, the opening of this dealing room is on one hand international in its core, and it serves, on the other hand, the values and the goals of USEK.

In order to explain my latter thought, allow me to go straight forward to our special guest and honoree, Dr. Selim Sfeir, CEO and owner of the Bank of Beirut, since his deeds reveal who he is.

Dr. Sfeir studied and worked abroad and, obviously, acquired an international education. The bank he founded is international not only because it has branches in many countries but also because it functions according to international standards and it has a cross-border reputation. Still, Dr. Sfeir marvelously is well rooted in his spiritual and social heritage, and in his country.

We are opening a new and very advanced dealing room thanks to his donation. Thus, the best international practices, experiences and equipment are brought into our local context. This very openness to the international norms helps the local raising its standards and positively affects the international. We do indeed have, on earth, “a unique and common home” which we should build together and of which we should take care. That is the deep belief of Dr. Sfeir, and that is what reminds us of the title of the last encyclical of our beloved Holy Father, Pope Francis, on the environmental issue: “*Laudato si. On Care for our Common Home*”. I hope that our students, when dealing with economy, will have this same belief and abide by the teachings of Pope Francis, in His Apostolic Exhortation “the Joy of the Gospel”: “Economy, as the very word indicates, should be the art of achieving a fitting management of our common home, which is the world as a whole.” (n. 206). The Holy Father indicates the way for this, in the same Exhortation: “I am firmly

convinced that openness to the transcendent can bring about a new political and economic mindset which would help to break down the wall of separation between the economy and the common good of society” (n. 205).

So thank you Dr. Sfeir for believing in the noble cause of USEK and for accepting to serve on USEK first Board of Trustees. Thank you for making the establishment of this new dealing room possible!

While looking at this achievement, I cannot but acknowledge the work of Prof. Nehme Azoury, Dean of the Business Faculty, with his team, and the diligent work of Rev. Dr. Antoine Abou Rahal, Director of our Architectural and Maintenance Office, with his team. To all of them my heartfelt thanks.

I am so grateful to the Lord who has blessed USEK with skillful, devoted and energetic people in all its units and fields and with highly respected friends. All of them help USEK fulfill its mission of love and development. They do increase in USEK, beauty, technology and efficiency.