



## *Maronite Bishops of the United States of America*



July 29, 2022

His Eminence Cardinal Bechara Peter Rai  
Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and All the East  
Bkerke, Lebanon

Your Eminence and Beatitude,

Last week, we were deeply saddened to hear about the arrest and detention by the Lebanese General Security authorities of His Excellency Moussa El-Hajj, Archbishop of Haifa and the Holy Land along with the confiscation of his personal belongings, medical aid, and financial assistance for the needy in Lebanon. This act comes at a time when Lebanon's sovereignty is in jeopardy and the Lebanese suffer economic hardship and despair.

On behalf of our Eparchies (Clergy, Religious, and Lay Faithful), we reiterate our full and total support for you, our Patriarch, as head and father of our Maronite Church. We stand in solidarity with you, with the Synod of Bishops, and with all our brothers and sisters suffering in Lebanon. Lebanon is a beautiful country, where religious beliefs are a bridge, not a hinderance to conviviality and cooperation. We are proud of our Lebanese roots, and we feel your pain and suffering.

We also applaud your courage and your vision and agree with you on the importance of "Active Neutrality" of Lebanon. We call on all the Lebanese officials, especially Christian Representatives, to embrace this direction, and for the U.N. to formally recognize the neutral status of Lebanon. Thus, Lebanon will remain as St. John Paul II said, "more than a country; it is a message" of conviviality between Christians and Muslims where every citizen has a role in the development of Lebanon. If we do not stand united as one people working together for the future of our country, we are liable to fall victim to outside influence. Lebanon must continue to stand strong to retain its identity if we are to succeed and surpass to a better future.

We stand with you, Your Eminence. We place ourselves under your disposition, and we continue to place our resources giving a helping hand to our brothers and sisters. Lastly, we also accompany you with our prayers for your well-being and for peace, sovereignty, and prosperity in Lebanon. May the prayers of Our Lady of Lebanon, St. Sharbel, and all the Saints be with us.

Totally yours in Christ,

+ *Gregory Mansour*

+Gregory Mansour  
Bishop of the Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn

+ *A. E. Zaidan*

+A. Elias Zaidan  
Bishop of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles