

## **May 2011 Communiqué -- Monthly news release From Bkerkeh**

On 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011, Their Excellencies the Maronite Bishops held at Bkerkeh their monthly meeting, which was presided over by His Beatitude Patriarch Bechara Peter Rai, with the participation of His Beatitude and Eminence Nasrallah Butros Cardinal Sfeir. They studied church and national matters. At the end of the meeting, they issued the following communiqué:

The Fathers dwelled upon two distinguished church events; the Maronite Church had lived last month:

1. The first event was the visit of His Beatitude Patriarch Bechara Peter Rai to the Apostolic See. He was accompanied by a number of Bishops, Superiors General, priests, faithful and officials of different communities, at their head was the representative of His Excellency the President of the Republic, to celebrate the confirmation of the ecclesiastical communion with His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI and visit Vatican Curia. The Lebanese delegation met a distinguished paternal welcome from His Holiness and the authorities of the Vatican city.

2. The second event was the beatification of Pope John Paul II. His Beatitude the Patriarch participated, heading a church delegation from different countries, beside a Lebanese delegation in which His Excellency the President of the Republic was represented by the First Lady. They expressed the esteem of the Lebanese for all that the new blessed did to defend their homeland and carry its case before the international circles considering it more than a homeland, considering it a message of freedom, dialogue and peace for all Peoples.

3. The Lebanese are still suffering from the worrying situations storming over their homeland and neighboring countries. They reflect upon them as deplorable security events, difficult being conditions, confusing economic stagnation and an almost total paralysis of the centers of decision-making and authority. Thus, the Fathers call upon all the authorities to press ranks, hurry the formation of a government which would be responsible in treating the citizens' matters, ward danger off the homeland and secure a future for all its daughters and sons, specially the rising generations.

4. The meeting held by some Maronite leaders at Bkerkeh, in response to the invitation of His Beatitude and under his presidency, left a great relief upon the citizens, strong hope in the possibility of overcoming wounds, advancement in the national reconciliation procedure and reciprocal forgiveness, holding hands in order to strengthen Christian presence in Lebanon and the region and strengthen their role in building good societies on the bases of justice, love and respect of Man.

5. The Fathers look forward with joy and hope to the Moslem-Christian spiritual summit meeting tomorrow at the Patriarchate. They wish that this summit gives a push towards a true national unity and that the participants always endeavor to work together to strengthen common life between all the children of this homeland, with the respect of the plurality of their religious cultural and social adherence, be committed in the culture of dialogue which respects the different points of view and aims at realizing public good.

6. In the Easter-tide, the Fathers call upon all their sons and daughters to renew their hope in Christ who vanquished sin and death. In this month consecrated to honor the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, they call them to persevere in praying, asceticism and repentance, visit Marian shrines and saints tombs asking their intercession so as God grants our homeland and region security and peace and our Peoples tranquility, love and affection.