



DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH  
THE BISHOP'S OFFICE



August 16, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

The Church has been present in Lebanon since the first century when Saints Peter and Paul evangelized among Her people. Most of Lebanon's Catholic population are direct descendants from these first Christians. Lebanon is traditionally renown for the cooperation and mutual respect among its people who adhere to the three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. This remains true despite political pressures placed upon this beautiful nation from outside forces.

On the afternoon of August 4<sup>th</sup>, two terrible explosions devastated the port of Beirut and much of the city-center in the direct vicinity of the port. The loss of life and the severe nature and number of the casualties is terrible. This devastation has directly impacted the Maronite Catholic Christian community, who compose nearly 35% of the country's population, a country who is now in desperate need of economic and humanitarian assistance. The sad and heart-breaking reality is that there will be additional hardships endured by our Christian brothers and sisters and those of other religions living in Lebanon; as the long-term economic and social impacts are sure to be severe and far reaching with threats to peace.

During this time of pandemic and accompanying civil unrest within our own society, we might be tempted to turn inward and concern ourselves only with our own hardships and burdens, but this in itself is an act of fear and not of faith in Christ. Our responsibility is to assist our elder brothers and sisters in the Faith who long for peace as they reside in this most beautiful of Mediterranean nations. With this in mind, and with the full knowledge of our responsibility as Catholic Christians to help provide for those who are suffering and in need, we have decided to initiate a special collection today, August 16<sup>th</sup>, with the goal of raising additional funds to support the recovery effort for the Maronite Catholic Community in Lebanon and for all those who are suffering as a result of the disaster.

All gifts will be sent to Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Lewisville, and then directed to Caritas Lebanon, in the name of the Diocese of Fort Worth, to help the more than 300,000 people left homeless and devastated. Many of these people are family members of parishioners of Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Catholic Church. Should you desire to make your donation online, please go to <https://ourladylebanon.com> and follow the link marked "LEBANON RELIEF FUND CLICK HERE."

As Catholics in the Diocese of Fort Worth, God has blessed us with tremendous security and prosperity, even during these challenging times. Please remember to pray for the people of Lebanon and, as you always are, be generous in assisting them in their hour of need. I remain,

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

*+ Michael F. Olson*

Most Reverend Michael F. Olson, STD, MA  
Bishop of Fort Worth

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