

Dear friends,

The accumulation of years of frustrations have culminated this past week as hundreds of thousands of protesters from all geographical regions and religious and political groups have flooded Lebanon's streets with increasing intensity. Citizens from all walks of life have been protesting extreme economic uncertainty, a high unemployment rate, an unstable currency, rampant public debt and the inability to meet the needs of their families, to name just a few of their concerns.

When the greatest aspiration of the Lebanese youth is to emigrate, thereby draining the country of its best and brightest minds, what prospects remain for a better future? The uncertainty surrounding us leads us all to wonder what will ensue: Reform? Revolution? A power vacuum? No one knows for sure what will happen. But, for the first time in the history of a country that has been plagued by sectarian divisions, what is clear is that Lebanese citizens of all religious confessions are uniting to demand the demission of the current political class in hopes of a brighter and more equitable future.

In light of the uncertainty facing us as an organization, we remember that we "are the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13-14). As God's people in Lebanon, we will not be paralyzed by the unrest that these events bring. Rather, we know that this is the time for us to shine as a beacon of light to a world seeking answers. As always, this is an opportunity for us, as the Church, to share the message of hope and peace that transcends all divisions and reach out to an aching population with Christ's love and comfort.

Finally, our role as the Body of Christ is now more important than ever as we bring the balance of both advocating the cause of the suffering while also praying for those in authority (1 Timothy 2:2). No durable and lasting change will happen overnight, and it is important for us to avoid the temptation to grasp at 'quick fix' solutions that don't take into account the complexities and challenges of our world. We thank you for joining with us in this uncertain but opportune "kairos" moment in which the Church can show the people the true leader that their hearts are longing for, whose name is "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

As we resist the temptation to fear and worry about what is to come, we ask that you stand with us in prayer.

- Please pray for our staff as they commit to continue coming to work undeterred by the road blocks that double their commute time;
- Pray also for our partners currently visiting us (from the US, the UK, Egypt, Iraq and Sudan) and for those still planning to visit us;
- Pray for safety and God's protection all around and that we will have the wisdom to know how to shine in a way that glorifies God;

- Pray that God grants us wisdom to know how to pursue our different projects and keep working on strategic plans for the future that will impact the Church and the local community in Lebanon and the region;
- Pray that the efforts of the Lebanese people will not be in vain;
- Pray for wisdom for those in authority so that they may make decisions for the common good.

In Christ,

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For more information on the current situation in Lebanon, please see the following news site:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-lebanon-protests/facing-protests-lebanon-approves-emergency-economic-reforms-idUSKBN1X00NT>