

■ Change is the law of life. How desperate are we for change in our beloved Lebanon; we need real change from the bottom-up!

But, can change be enacted by waving a magic wand?

No.

Change does not happen through dreams and desires.

Change is work; it is a daily, cumulative toil. It is a gradual, purposeful ascent, which requires firm determination and patience to tackle both the more exacting and more general conditions.

Can gulping down a jug of water quench thirst?

A little dose of medicine cures illness; too much, however, causes harm... and for medicine to be effective, doses should be taken steadily and regularly.

Change can come about if we all persevere with clear and resourceful plans; plans far removed from demagoguery, delusion, and devilry.

Change starts by changing ourselves; change should become a lifestyle. We must happily, engagingly, and steadily live and breathe change in every aspect of our lives.

Or else...

Change would be but a mere gamble, an adventure, and a leap into the void. It would be like flying kites over our heads... or like trading Beauty for the Beast!

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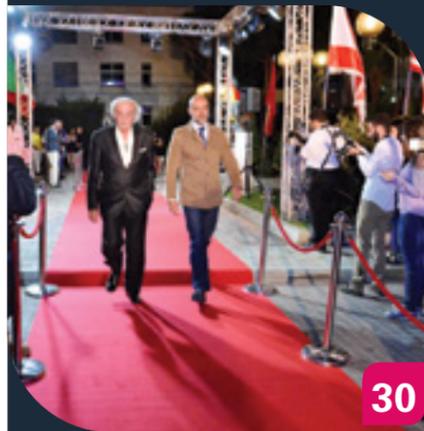
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“ FIRST COMES
THOUGHT;
THEN ORGANIZATION
OF THAT THOUGHT,
INTO IDEAS AND PLANS;
THEN TRANSFORMATION
OF THOSE PLANS
INTO REALITY.
THE BEGINNING,
AS YOU WILL OBSERVE,
IS IN YOUR
IMAGINATION.”

Napoleon Hill (1883-1970)



**PLANNING FOR AN ERA
OF TRANSFORMATION**

As one of Lebanon’s leading institutions of higher learning, Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) must continue to remain at the helm of innovation, planning, expansion, and research to drive itself forward in novel ways that challenge past thinking and practices so that it can maintain its reputation as a selective and prestigious University of the Third Millennium.

Although the NDU Mission and Goals remain dedicated to a rigorous focus on academic excellence in every aspect of scholarly pursuits, the University has drawn up an ambitious and high-level *Strategic Plan 2015-2020*, which will serve as both a roadmap and vision for the next five years. The evolution of the *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* builds upon previous plans set forth in 2001 and 2007.

Through this Plan, the NDU community will soon find itself working within an educational ecosystem that is even more internationally inclusive, active, and responsive. Today, NDU is witnessing unprecedented growth on all fronts, be it through fostering quality, excellence in scholarship, lifelong learning or enlightened citizenship, human solidarity, and moral integrity.

As such, the pursuit of this bold Plan will reverberate across the three NDU Campuses and help the University emerge stronger in the coming years as it continues to establish and promote sustainable environments not only in its education programs but also in a wide array of resource dimensions.

The task of NDU through the *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* is not to reinvent itself; rather, the task is to remain true to its rich heritage and history, to honor its achievements to date, and to secure a sustainable future environment conducive to excellence in education and scholarship.

Planning and the will to accomplish great deeds go hand-in-hand. At NDU, we strongly believe that “when there is a will, there is a way.”

Father Walid Moussa O.M.M.
President



ACADEMIC AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES

CENTER FOR APPLIED RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

CARE: Active in Fall 2014 and Spring 2015

The Lebanese Association for History (LAH) in collaboration with the Center for Applied Research in Education (CARE) at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) and the Centre for Lebanese Studies (CLS) have planned a series of 11 workshops as part of the project titled, "Developing History Teachers' Capacity to Foster Historical Thinking."

The series of workshops are scheduled from October 10, 2014, to September 5, 2015. Dr. Arthur Chapman from the Institute of Education (IOE) at the University of London, and Christine Counsell from the University of Cambridge have each worked for more than 20 years advancing history education as a discipline. Both educators, who will travel to Lebanon to facilitate the six core workshops, have designed the professional development program. The directors at LAH, CARE, and CLS will serve as mentors who will meet with teachers on a monthly basis to review the application of these new approaches in history classrooms.

History teachers from schools across Lebanon were selected based on applications and interviews. The workshops aim to reshape history education in Lebanon into a discipline that promotes historical thinking. The workshops will provide the history teachers with opportunities to explore innovative methodologies. These include a focus on inquiry and historical concepts like causation, change, continuity, significance, and similarities and differences.

Rather than referring to one textbook, teachers will encourage students to examine evidence, accounts, and events from various sources while thinking critically and constructively. The workshops are also building a community of history teachers that will be able to support curriculum design and future teacher professional development for learning and teaching history as a discipline. While the project has already started, an official launch took place at NDU on Friday, January 30, 2015, at 5 p.m. at Friends Hall.

CARE has started new explorations into education provisions for Syrian refugees. CARE collaborated with Aliim, a non-governmental organization in New York, a symposium titled, "Innovations for Syrian Refugee Education," which took place on November 5, 2014, at the NDU Main Campus. The half-day symposium addressed approaches and challenges in the design and implementation of educational programs for Syrian refugee children in various parts of Lebanon. There was a particular focus on:

- (1) Negotiations made with parents of Syrian children.
- (2) Socio-emotional support.
- (3) Tensions between Syrian refugees and donors and hosting communities.
- (4) Options of formal, non-formal, private, and public schools.
- (5) Ventures into technology.

The enriching symposium gathered local and international organizations to discuss and exchange different perspectives, methods, and experiences. On the symposium panel were Janae Bushman (Founder of Aliim); Dr Maha Shuayb (Director of the CLS); Alexandra Chen (Specialist in Child Mental Health and Refugee Education, Harvard University); Khalil Miled Makari (Education Specialist,



Symposium: Creating Learning Spaces- Innovations for Syrian Refugee Education (November 5, 2014).



War Child Holland); Friedrich Bokern (President, Relief and Reconciliation for Syria); Fadi Hallisso (Co-founder and General Manager, Basmeh Zeitooneh); and Amina Kleit, Program Director, Ana Aqra Association). Participants and presenters were invited to plan the second symposium, which is slated for May 2015.

CARE has developed a Brown Bag Series, a professional development program at NDU where all Faculty at NDU are invited to share experiences on learning, teaching, and research and closely examine approaches to further develop them. The activities can also support preparations for promotion files and Faculty assessment tools, namely the Teaching Portfolio (T4), Research Plan (R1), and Research Informative and Evaluation Form (R2).

The series comprises two strands: (1) Learning and Teaching Excellence and (2) Approaches to Research. During the lunch-hour sessions, a short period will be dedicated to looking at concepts that inform our approaches. We will spend most of the time reflecting and talking about our own individual practices and how certain approaches may further develop them. While we provide tea and coffee, do feel free to bring your lunches.

For Developing Approaches to Research, all NDU Faculty are invited to meet on the following Fridays from noon to 1 p.m. in HA 121:

- 1 – Induction day (21 November)
- 2 – Hot topics and grants (19 December)
- 3 – The literature review (16 January)
- 4 – Interviews and conversations (20 February)
- 5 – Experiments across the disciplines (20 March)
- 6 – Ethics and human subjects (17 April)
- 7 – Publication (29 May)

The program for Learning and Teaching Excellence will take place on the following Tuesdays from 12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m. in HA 121:

- 1 – Induction (18 November)
- 2 – Active learning (16 December)
- 3 – Collaborative learning (13 January)
- 4 –Formative and summative assessment (26 February)
- 5 – Course design and development (24 March)
- 6 – Classroom management (28 April)
- 7 – Graduation day (19 May)



Developing History Teachers' Capacity to Foster Historical Thinking (October 10 and 11, 2014).



**LEBANESE
EMIGRATION
RESEARCH CENTER**

**LERC Attends LCPS
Conference on
"Decentralization for
Development"**
JASMIN LILIAN DIAB,
LERC
July 16, 2014

Dozens of individuals dropped their projects on Wednesday, July 16, 2014, and gathered at Hotel Monroe, Beirut, to partake in an enriching conference titled, "Decentralization for Development," which the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS) organized. The conference assessed the status of Decentralization in Lebanon from both a legal and realistic perspective. Ms. Jasmin Lilian Diab and Mr. David Nassar both represented the Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU).

**Sociedad Los Hijos de
Darbeshtar at LERC**
JASMIN LILIAN DIAB,
LERC
August 12, 2014

The Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) Lebanese Emigration and Research Center (LERC) Liaison Officer to Latin America Mr. Roberto Khatlab invited to the LERC Mr. Juan José Reyes, President of the Uruguayan Sociedad Los Hijos de Darbeshtar (Society of the Sons of Darbeshtar) and Director of Centro de Estudios e Culturas da América Latina (CECAL), on his first-ever visit to Lebanon, along with Ambassador of Uruguay to Lebanon Dr. Marta Ines Pizzanelli.

Lions Club Governor Visits LERC to Discuss MoU
JASMIN LILIAN DIAB, LERC
September 1, 2014

Lions Club Governor to Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq Attorney Louis Abou Farah, accompanied by District Secretary Mr. Claude Zacca; LERC Liaison Officer, Mr. Antoine Menassa of the WLCU France and President of the Emigrant Committee at Lions Club D351, and Mr. Khoury Mansour of l'Association des Hommes d'affaires Libanais en France (HALFA), met with LERC Director Dr. Guita Hourani, for the purpose of discussing the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to cooperate on common projects related to the Lebanese Diaspora. Following a brief presentation of the LERC electronic archive (LEAD), the distinguished visitors discussed the LERC projects related to mobilizing the Lions members for mutual benefits to both the Center and the Club.



(from left) Ms. Liliane Haddad (LERC Indexer and Archivist), Mr. Mansour, Dr. Hourani, Mr. Abou Farah, Mr. Zacca and Mr. Menassa. (LERC, NDU, Oct. 2014.)

WLCU-Youth Concludes Lebanese Tour at the LERC
JASMIN LILIAN DIAB, LERC
August 28, 2014

The World Lebanese Cultural Union (WLCU) -Youth visited the Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU), as part of their scheduled trip to Lebanon. The delegation included the WLCU-Youth Secretary-General Mr. Philippe Di Hanna, as well as Ms. Rita Houkayem, former Miss Lebanon Emigrant Canada 2013.



The WLCU-Youth delegation with Ms. Haddad and Ms. Diab at the Abou Khater Auditorium, NDU. (Aug. 28, 2014.)

LERC Inaugurates Two New Pieces into its Museum
JASMIN LILIAN DIAB, LERC
17 October 2014

The Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) recently inaugurated two beautiful works of art donated to the LERC Lebanon Migration Nucleus Museum by two Mexican artists of Lebanese descent, sculptor Ms. Nour Kuri and painter Ms. Gabriela Abud.

Ms. Abud donated a painting titled, *La Independencia Nos Ha Dado Presente Y Futuro (Independence Has Given Us a Present and a Future)*, which she completed in 2010, and Ms. Kuri donated a bronze sculpture (24 x 36 x 14 cm) titled, *Aldea, or The Village*, which she completed in 2010.

**Mexican Professor of Lebanese Descent Dr. Nabil
Mobayed Khodr Visits LERC**
DALIA ATALLAH, LERC GRANT RECIPIENT
November 2014

Dr. Nabil Mobayed Khodr, Civil Engineer specialized in Hydrology and Professor at the Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro in Mexico, visited with his wife, Mrs. Norma Vega Avila, on October 30, 2014, the Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU). Following an introduction to the Center by Mrs. Liliane Haddad, Chief Indexer and Archivist at the LERC, Dr. Mobayed Khodr and his wife pledged to add their own documents and pictures to the Center's archives. Impressed by the LERC's archives and persuaded of the importance of the Center's mission, they both promised to influence their relatives of Lebanese descent to share their documents with the Center as well.

The professor and his wife were later given a tour of the LERC Museum where they admired the remarkable collection of works of art, personal belongings, documents, and other objects donated to the Center by various groups of Lebanese origin who visited the LERC. They were so impressed by the Museum that Dr. Mobayed Khodr decided on the spur of the moment to donate his Premio Biblos pin to the center, a pin that is exclusively awarded to exceptional achievers of Lebanese descent in various fields.

**LERC Director Gives Lecture During Emerging Leaders
Conference**
DALIA ATALLAH, LERC GRANT RECIPIENT
November 2014

Dr. Guita Hourani, Director of the Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU), participated as a speaker in the Emerging Leaders Conference (ELC) on October 24, 2014. The annual workshop, titled "The Family and Economic Development in the Arab Region," was organized by NDU in partnership with the World Youth Alliance Middle East regional office. Dr. Hourani during her lecture on remittances at the WYA Middle East Conference (Nov. 2014) presented a panel discussion on the impact of remittance money on families to an audience of NDU students and Lebanese and Arab youth who came to Louaize to participate in the ELC.

**LERC Representatives
Attend Conference on
Security Sector Reform**
DALIA ATALLAH, LERC
GRANT RECIPIENT
14 November 2014

The Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) was represented on Friday, November 14, 2014, at a conference organized by International Alert, in collaboration with the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS), titled, "People Centre Approach to Security Sector Reform," which was held at the Phoenicia Hotel, Beirut. LERC Grant Recipient Ms. Dalia Atallah and LERC Research Assistant Ms. Jasmin Lilian Diab attended the conference in which several prominent figures spoke. The ceremony started with opening statements by Mr. Dan Smith, Secretary General of International Alert, and Mr. Sami Atallah, Executive Director of the LCPS. Minister of Interior and Municipalities H.E. Nohad Machnouk also delivered a speech on the challenges faced by the Internal Security Forces (ISF), and focused on the citizens' perception of the ISF. The speakers included a number of other important personalities, notably a representative of the European Union Delegation to Lebanon.

The conference presented to the attendees the results of a survey on public perceptions of security and insecurity in Lebanon conducted by International Alert and the LCPS, as part of a project supported by the EU, aiming to better understand challenges facing the security sector in Lebanon. It also shared the findings of the studies carried out based on the survey, which mainly tackled the Syrian refugee crisis, gender issues, and joint efforts to reform the security sector. These findings were later debated with experts, civil society activists, and security officials, notably high-ranking officers in the ISF.

“AIDea” One of LERC’s Museum Sculpture Exhibited in MACAM

DALIA ATALLAH, LERC AKIKI GRANT RECIPIENT
15 November 2014

An important sculpture from the Lebanon Migration Nucleus Museum at the Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC), Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU), was exhibited outside of the LERC Museum for the first time on November 15, 2014. The work of Mexican Sculptor Ms. Nour Kuri titled, *AIDea* or *The Village*, which she donated to the LERC Museum in October 2014, was exhibited alongside other sculptures of the artist at the Modern and Contemporary Art Museum (MACAM) in Alita, Jbeil. The exposition in which *AIDea* was displayed also featured a retrospective exhibition showing the wood sculptures of the Lebanese master sculptor Youssef Basbous, and in parallel, the works of the participants in the Age of Wood competition. *AIDea*, a bronze sculpture (24 x 36 x 14 cm), was completed in 2010.

Ms. Kuri described it as a representation of the village [Jezzine] from where her father migrated to Mexico, leaving behind his parents, brothers, friends, and the life he knew in search of a dream that he eventually made come true. The artist donated this sculpture in memory of all the “marvelous people” her father left behind.

Ms. Kuri’s style is one of “modern, stylized human shapes leaning toward abstraction but maintaining closeness with the original source of inspiration.” Her recurrent theme is “the human figure, searching to express it in different instances of life, individually, or as family, or even as a community” who came to Louaize to participate in the ELC.



LEBANON DIALOGUE INITIATIVE

Genesis

The Lebanon Dialogue Initiative (LDI) was initiated in June 2013 by several prominent figures and concerned Lebanese businessmen, namely, businessman William Zard Abou Jaoude and academics, namely, Dr. Edward Alam and Dr. Guita Hourani who selected Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) to lead an Initiative devoted to gaining United Nations recognition of Lebanon as a Land of Dialogue Among Civilizations and Cultures and to establish an international UN center for this purpose in Lebanon. LDI is housed at NDU and is being implemented by the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy (CRVP) — an international academic NGO, centered in Washington, D.C., with major University Centers in Russia, China, and Lebanon — and by the Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at NDU in collaboration with the Cedars Institute (CI), an academic cultural NGO located in the Cedars of Lebanon.

Rationale

In his address at the High-Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the Dialogue between Cultures and Religions (*Item 45: Culture and Peace*) in New York on November 12, 2008, former President of the Republic of Lebanon H.E. President Michel Sleiman stated, “The philosophy of the Lebanese entity is based on dialogue, reconciliation, and coexistence.” He went on to declare that he and the Lebanese people

would like Lebanon to “become an international center for the management of the dialogue of civilizations and cultures and consequently a global laboratory for that inter-entity dialogue.” The initial idea behind President Sleiman’s address came from the late Ambassador Fouad el-Turk who spent the last few years of his life promoting this idea in both the public and private spheres.



(from left) Steering Committee: Mr. Joseph Hourani, Mr. Ameen Nehme, Dr. Youssef Rahme, Mr. William Zard, Chairman of the Supervisory Committee, H.E. Michel Sleiman, former President of the Republic of Lebanon, Dr. Edward Alam, Executing Officer of LDI, Dr. Guita Hourani, and Dr. Nick Kahwaji. (Baabda, June 2013.)

President Sleiman was motivated in part by a similar declaration (11 years earlier) that touched the minds and hearts of all Lebanese, regardless of their religious affiliation. Namely, in his *Apostolic Exhortation* for Lebanon in 1997, His Holiness Pope John Paul II declared that Lebanon is more than a country, that it is a mission of love and conviviality. His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI has confirmed this statement, and also declared that Lebanon is a message of freedom, a model of pluralism, and a special space for dialogue and co-existence of different cultures and religions. These declarations have resonated among the various ethnic and religious communities of Lebanon and have been adopted by a vast majority of them as the ultimate vocation of Lebanon and its people. A particularly powerful expression of this came in September 2012, during the Muslim-Christian Summit at the Maronite Patriarchate in Bkerke whereby the convened religious leaders called for the designation of Lebanon as a “space for dialogue among civilizations based on peace and diversity.”

Such calls are not simply idealizations of Lebanon's past or present vocation, but are rooted in solid facts reaching far back into its history. In the last century and a half, Lebanon has experienced various socio-political systems that were born out of the womb of suffering and the will of finding peaceful solutions to protect freedom of religion and diversity. The *Mutasarrifiyya*, the *Qaemaqamiya*, the 1943 Pact, and the Taëf Agreement are all ingenious examples of this experience and will.

Lebanon's population is composed of eighteen various ethno-religious groups (Jews, Christians, Sunnis, Shiites, Druze, Armenians, Kurds, Turkmens, Assyrians, among others). In the last thirty years, Lebanon has recognized new groups under the law to acknowledge their freedom of religion (Copts, Alawites, and Baha'is). Labor migration has added to Lebanon's religious and ethnic diversity (Sikhs, Buddhists, and Hindus) that freely practice their faiths. This diversity embodies the richness of Lebanon and makes it an actual forum whereby the evolution of human relationships can take place in all of its noble and even its undignified forms. This diversity is Lebanon's great strength and weakness, as its painful history attests and is precisely what makes it worth of being designated as a Land of Dialogue Among Civilizations and Cultures.

Lebanese people are generally open and friendly, and do not perceive diversity as a threat; rather, as an opportunity to be enriched, hence, their predisposition to continue and to spearhead this dialogue in the Middle East. Their successes and failures are an indication of their will to come together, to try to coexist, to try to bridge controversies, and to reach out to forge and embrace a common understanding that is meaningful to all its inhabitants. The presence of the Lebanese people and their struggle to live freely has often been an inspiration and a liberating force for others in the region. As such, Lebanon and its people are committed to working toward dialogue, as they really do believe in conviviality. Lebanon's *raison d'être* is founded on the paradigm of understanding, freedom, and conviviality among civilizations and cultures. It is this *raison d'être* that Lebanon would like to invite other nations to emulate. In spite of the challenges to its vocation, which often times results in tragic failures, the world can still learn much from Lebanon's historical experiences.

LDI Mission

To designate Lebanon as a universal Land of Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures in response to contemporary local, national, and international disputes by contributing to conflict reduction, reconciliation, social justice, and peace building.

To petition and lobby the United Nations to officially designate Lebanon as a Land of Dialogue Among Civilizations and Cultures, by mobilizing and employing the efforts of the people of Lebanon at home and abroad, as well as the good will of like-minded people around the world.

Objectives

- To ensure Lebanon's historic and innate vocation to provide opportunities for peaceful settlements among nations;
- To acquire the International Community's recognition of Lebanon as a 'Land of Dialogue among Cultures and Civilizations'; and
- To propel the United Nations to establish a permanent international Center for Dialogue and Peace Building in Lebanon that complements Lebanon's historic vocation to co-existence and freedom.

Vision

To be an effective force in exploring and resolving central issues by facilitating harmony in conflict-ridden societies and by promoting shared values for a global common good.

Values

- We respect freedom and diversity among various identities commensurate with the natural law;
- We cultivate an environment of understanding and acceptance for sustainable peace; and
- We emphasize on the communities' moral principles as the best way to discover the desired peaceful solutions to the challenges they face.

Governance Structure

The President of Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) has appointed Professor Edward J. Alam to be the Executing Officer/Director to lead the LDI, to control its funds, and to submit annual activity reports to the Supervisory Committee and to the President of NDU.

A Supervisory Committee consisting of the Principal Donors was established following the signing of the

Agreement with NDU to guarantee the execution of the LDI.

An active and dynamic Advisory Committee consisting of Lebanon's varied ethno-religious groups has been assembled. The members of the Advisory Committee are Princess Hayat Arslan, H.E. Ali Osseiran, H.E. Edmond Rizk, Ambassador William Habib, and H.E. Dr. Bahige Tabbarah.

Major Activities

June 2013 - March 2014

The LDI was first promoted during an International Conference in São Paulo, Brazil in July 2013 titled, "*The Dialogue of Civilizations with an Emphasis on Lebanon*;" supported by the Secretary of Culture, the Mayor of São Paulo, the University of São Paulo (USP) and the Federal University of São Paulo (UNIFESP). This conference culminated in the signing of an agreement "Study Abroad in Lebanon" (SAIL) with UNIFESP in Brazil making of the SAIL program a key component of LDI. Ten Brazilian students of Lebanese descent will be visiting Lebanon with their professors and an intensive course on dialogue, history, and heritage will be given to them, sponsored by UNIFESP.

Dr. Edward Alam promoted the LDI among educational, political, and entrepreneurial elites in Washington D.C., Michigan, Colorado, and Utah, U.S.A., and met with the world-renowned expert on dialogue and conflict resolution William Ury to discuss ways in which the Lebanon portion of the Abraham Path might be commensurate with the aims and goals of the LDI.

The LDI sponsored and organized an International Conference at NDU, Lebanon in October 2013 titled, "*Interreligious/ Intercultural Dialogue: Reflections on the Nature of Love and Forgiveness*," which was supported by the Cedars Institute and the Fetzer Institute. President Emeritus of the Fetzer Institute and former director of the Center for the Study of World Religions (CSWR) at Harvard University Dr. Lawrence Sullivan was a key participant in this conference along with the renowned speakers in the field of interreligious dialogue: Dr. Jeffrey Bloechl from Boston College, Sheikh Shafiq Jaradi, Dr. Nader El-Bizri, and the Buddhist nun, Venerable Yifa. The publication of this conference is now available at NDU Press titled, "*Compassion and Forgiveness: Religious and Philosophical Perspectives from Around the World*," edited and introduced by Edward J. Alam.



The LDI sponsored two courses in November 2013 through February 2014 and in March 2014 through May 2014 on Relational Needs, with an emphasis on the philosophical and psychological meaning of dialogue given by Dr. Jerome Daher, holder of a Doctorate in Sacred Theology (S.T.D) from Atheneum Pontificium Regina Apostolorum in Rome.

Statements On Dialogue From Prominent Lebanese And Other World Leaders

“Sameness is Death; Diversity is the lifeblood of the times!”

– MEHDI AMEL (HASSAN HAMDAN), 1975.

“Lebanon is more than a country: it is a message of liberty and a model of pluralism for East and West alike.”

– ST. JOHN PAUL II, 1989.

“The Lebanese have no alternative other than to dialogue . . . coexistence is the inevitable fate of the Lebanese.”

– JUDGE ABBAS EL-HALABI, 2005.

“One thinks of Lebanon, whose people must rediscover, with the support of international solidarity, their historic vocation to promote sincere and fruitful cooperation among different faith communities.”

– POPE BENEDICT XVI, 2006.

Dialogue is a way “to safeguard and renew the Lebanese formula . . . given that Lebanon will not exist or have meaning without both its Christian and Muslim populations.”

– DR. SAOUD AL-MAWLA, 2007.

(from left) Proprietor of Le Notre Hotel at the Cedars of Lebanon Mr. George al-Burghul; Retired General Mr. Victor Sayna; President of Gibran Khalil Gibran National Committee Dr. Tarek Chidiac; Former Minister and MP Mrs. Nayla Mouawad; Nobel Prize Winner Professor Wole Soyinka; Former Minister Ibrahim Daher; and Judge Tarabay Rahme.



The LDI organized and co-sponsored an International Conference at NDU titled, *“The Legacy of Chinua Achebe: Dialogical Explorations in Philosophy, Literature, and Politics,”* attended by the Nobel Prize Winner in Literature Prof. Wole Soyinka, and supported by the Nigerian Embassy in Lebanon, the Lebanese-Nigerian communities, and the Cedars Institute in March 2014.

Prof. Wole Soyinka, Nobel Prize Laureate, as a keynote speaker at NDU.



In the next issue, you will read about the international campaign that was launched in June 2014, which aimed at obtaining international solidarity and support for the LDI

PASTORAL WORK

Spiritual Retreat (Fall 2014)
FADIA EL-HAGE

The Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) Spiritual Retreat took place on December 6, 2014, at the Carmelite Monastery of St. Elias, Maaysra, Nahr Ibrahim. The retreat began with morning prayers and the recital of psalms to give thanks to our Lord for a new day in our lives.

Following the prayers, Fr. Fadi Bou-Chebl, University Chaplain General, introduced Fr. Pierre Najem, Vice-President of Administration, who explained the meaning of Secular Consecration and how the Carmelite Order began given that Pope Francis has declared the year 2015 as the "Year of Consecrated Life (YCL)."

St. Teresa of Jesus (Teresa of Avila) wanted the nuns to reach the top of Mount Carmel in inspired prayer to meet Jesus Christ. To attain this task, a reform was needed at that time in the consecrated life of priests and nuns.

The central theme of Fr. Najem's sermon was to clarify the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, who became "flesh" in the womb of the Virgin Mary. People worship and pray to God, just to receive His graces, not to become His friend. Whenever one is baptized, it means wearing the name of Jesus Christ, and becoming His friend. So, the idea of "trade" between God and Man became obsolete after the birth of Christ. Praying to and worshiping our Lord should be a daily routine in our life to help us remember that "our friend" is always present among us.

To reach Mount Carmel in our lives, we need to live in a saintly way. Christ (Christos) is the Holy Spirit and the Son of God, who wants us to be incarnated with goodness. The Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, Jesus Christ, the three Wise Men, and the Shepherds were all consecrated during their lives to show us how to worship our Lord. God loves His creations, whether they are evil or angels. To conclude this idea, Jesus Christ should be the center of our life. St. Joseph was an honest, obedient man during his life. Chastity was his main character, and he protected the Virgin Mary without harming her. Mary, too, was an obedient woman, when God planned for her to become Mother of the Lord. The Lord is our savior, who gives us power and strength, and joy and real happiness to our lives.

After this interesting sermon, we had a coffee break and then started on the next subject with Fr. Joseph Chelala, who is in charge of the Monastery. He stated that in 1209, a Roman Catholic religious order called The Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was founded in Jerusalem. Actually, St. Simon Stock, an English priest, who lived in the 13th century, was the founder of the Carmelite Order. Traditions mention that Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to St. Simon and gave him the Brown Scapular, the Carmelite habit, and promised him that whoever dies wearing it would be saved.

In 1995, the Monastery of St. Elias was established, and the statue of Jesus the Infant of Prague was brought as a gift to the Carmelite Order. It was a wooden statue of the Child Jesus, holding a *globus cruciger*, located in Carmelite Church of Our Lady Victorious in Prague, Czech Republic in the 16th century. Legends stated that it belonged to St. Teresa of Avila, and holds miraculous powers, especially among expectant mothers.

Fr. Chelala's sermon explained the way St. Teresa of Jesus prayed during her life. She was born in Avila, Spain (1515-1582), refused the luxurious life of the nuns in the convent. She wrote her book titled, *The Way of Perfection*, where she explains how to pray. Three columns are the bridge to real praying. Humility, is to be oneself, because pride destroys the individual; the inner impartiality, is to give up and abandon the physical world to unite with our Creator; and loving our Lord is the fruit of praying to Him. Mysticism and prayer lead us to rejuvenate our spirits.

Our physical body should be relaxed while praying, to reach the relaxation in our spiritual and mental dimensions if we are to reach the spirit of Jesus. The spirit is like a palace, access through its gates is prayer, and there are seven steps to reach perfection of spirit and virtues. After 18 years of praying, St. Teresa of Avila was able to reach this perfection through prayer. With our faith and prayers, we reach the friendship of our Lord, who raised us from slavery to fraternity. And finally, if the Lord stays in our spirit, it becomes precious.

Quotes from her writings:

"The soul collects together all the faculties and enters within itself to be with its God." (St. Teresa of Avila, *The Way of Perfection*, 28,4)

"For mental prayer is nothing else, in my opinion, but being on terms of friendship with God, frequently conversing in secret with Him Who, we know, loves us." (St. Teresa of Avila, *The Life*, 8,5)

After listening to the interesting sermon, we gathered in the Church to celebrate Holy Mass with NDU President Fr. W. Moussa, Fr. F. Bou-Chebl, Fr. George Nassif, and Fr. Walid Nassif. Later, we watched a short movie about the life of St. Teresa of Jesus. Our day ended with a delicious lunch, at the Monastery, offered by NDU, and symbolic gifts were distributed from the Office of Sponsorship.

In conclusion, one can say that the consecrated person should be fully obedient to the Lord, and must enjoy a friendship with Jesus. One should be detached from daily routine and become a real friend with our Creator to reach Mount Carmel in spirit and to rejuvenate the spirit from trivial issues.

Thank you Lord for this fantastic day and may the spirit of joy stay with us always.



Pastoral Work Annual Christmas Events

As part of its Mission to encourage spiritual life at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU), the Pastoral Work organized on the Main Campus its traditional annual events for Christmas.

The first event, which took place on December 19, 2014, was the "Charity Tree." The names of children from Notre-Dame de Secours and girls from Bat'ha were put up on a tree. Each name appearing on the tree was entitled to receive a Christmas gift. The children arrived to the University at 5 p.m. where they attended the Chapel to say a small prayer before heading off for a late lunch with the Pastoral Work staff. After lunch, the children danced and had fun before Santa Claus appeared to give them their gifts. The even ended with the cutting of the Christmas cake.

The Pastoral Work invited for lunch on December 22, 2014, the elderly from the Monastery of the Cross. After lunch, everyone danced to traditional Lebanese songs and Santa Claus made an appearance and distributed gifts. The even ended with the cutting of the Christmas cake.

A Mass, with the participation of the Pastoral Choir, was held on December 23, 2014, at noon, in Issam Fares Hall, NDU Main Campus. Student Union members presented the offerings during the Mass, and many clubs participated in the Mass readings. A lively parade was held on the University grounds before Mass to encourage students to partake in the prayers. The parade reached the Cafeteria where a saxophonist played merry tunes and the Pastoral Choir sang festive and spiritual songs. The parade then moved to Issam Fares Hall amid singing and jubilations where lit candles were placed in front of the manger. Following the Mass, the Student Union invited everyone to a feast.

Later on that day, at 4 p.m., the Pastoral Work organized a party for the foreign cleaning staff working at the University. They were received at the Exhibition Hall amid a jubilant atmosphere, which saw everyone dancing, eating, and drinking. Before cutting the Christmas cake, Santa Claus made an appearance and gave each foreign staff member a shirt.



FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE, ART, AND DESIGN - MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Christmas Concert 2014

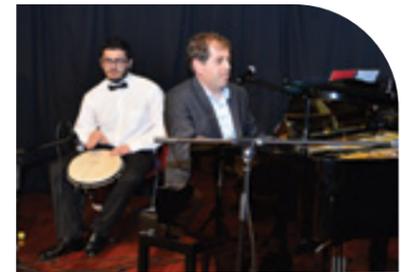
The Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) Department of Music at the Faculty of Architecture, Art and Design (FAAD), and the School of Music — Division of Continuing Education (DCE) — celebrated on Wednesday, December 17, at 4:30 p.m. an inspiring Christmas Concert at the Issam Fares Hall.

The Concert was divided into two parts.

- Students from the School of Music at the DCE along with Mario el-Rahi began the first part, which was a classical orchestra set-up under the baton of Fr. Khalil Rahme; and
- The second part of the Concert involved the Department of Music and FAAD students singing Christmas carols with a jazz twist.

The grand finale involved the School of Music's modern orchestra led by Mr. Johnny Lawoun.

The audience thoroughly enjoyed the skillful concert and the festive Christmas spirit.



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

NDU at Second IAA Dubai Apprentice Conference

An eight-member delegation, representing Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU), attended between November 7 and 8, 2014, the second International Advertising Association (IAA) Apprentice Conference titled, "Graduating? What's Coming Next?" which took place at the Emirates Aviation College in Dubai, U.A.E. The IAA organized the two-day intensive program to help the next generation of advertising and marketing professionals entering the field. The speakers and panelists were regional and international ad industry professionals who offered insights as well as a behind-the-scenes look into the advertising industry from its various perspectives, such as media, advertising agencies, social media companies, and clients. Attendees included senior soon-to-graduate students and graduates in addition to faculty members from various universities around the world, including Australia, K.S.A., U.A.E., France, Kuwait, India, and Lebanon.

NDU represented Lebanon in a special segment helmed by Melhem Rechdan, instructor at NDU and advisor to the IAA Advertising Club at the University. Rechdan showcased a presentation about the first IAA Diploma Ceremony organized by the Department of Media Studies at the Faculty of Humanities (FH), NDU, and the IAA Advertising Club back in June 2014.

Mr. Saad el-Zein, Vice-President and Area Director for Middle East & Africa at the IAA, represented IAA Global. NDU also awarded a trophy as a symbol of appreciation and gratitude to the IAA represented by Faris Abouhamad, Chairman and World President, Michael Lee, Managing Director of the IAA, Hani Ghorayeb, President of the IAA, U.A.E., Diane Slade, IAA Vice-President Learning, and Mr. El-Zein.

The impressive lineup of speakers gave inspiring talks, excerpts of which are summarized below:

Rayan Karaky, Agency Head at Google, said noted four main strengths that we should never forget: Data, experience, speed, and talent.

Jake Thomas, CEO MENA of LinkedIn, speaking on the value of LinkedIn, said, "This business-oriented social networking service allows users from all majors and all fields to create their business profile and connect to other people within the same field or even from different majors, therefore making it rather simple to market each one's experience in the real business world."

Mansour Salameh, Client Solutions Manager at Facebook, said, "People are spending more and more time with digital and mobile, while the time spent on TV and Radio has lessened significantly."

David Smith gave a workshop on how to deliver professional presentations.

Ricarda Ruecker, Vice-President Leadership and Organization Development at MCN, showed live strategies on stage on how to successfully conduct job interviews.

Paul Boulos, Head of Marketing at Commercial Bank of Dubai, said the following to students, "People spend all their lives working for one purpose, and that is money, but what about their passion and having a higher purpose?"

Nassib Boueiri addressed the young attendees and said, "Good education doesn't guarantee you a good life anymore. You have to be ambitious, hardworking, and willing to fight because you are the future, and your degrees are not enough to attain all that you need and desire."

Raj Kapoor, Associate Dean at the American University in Dubai, asked, "If students are all graduating with the same degrees and similar experiences, what makes you special? What differentiates you from your colleagues?"

Mazen Hayek, Director of PR & Commercial at MBC, showcased what is most important in this industry, "People, people, people, where specialization and customization are key to effective impact on diverse nations."

Diane Slade talked about personal branding when she said, "Who are you? What is your story? What makes you unique? What are you good at? What is your brand promise? The idea is to imagine yourself as a brand you are trying to advertise or to sell to the job market."

Gregory Bolle gave us a broad idea of the ecosystem of sports marketing and how the media, the star, the product, and the brand work together. Sports marketing emotionally connects brands to consumers, where content is stronger than any platform.

Finally, Kamal Dimachkie, Executive Regional Managing Director at Leo Burnett, talked about how important social media can be in spreading the word faster than any other medium. Great brands are aware of everything that is going on and should know how to benefit from the power of the moment.



Students participating in the public speaking workshop.

Students from around the world.



NDU awarding IAA-(from right) Saad el-Zein, Hani Ghorayeb, Faris Abouhamad, and Michael Lee.

NDU Delegation at IAA Dubai Apprentices

FNAS

Celebrated CG Artist Hayashida Hiroyuki Visits NDU

Computer Graphic whiz kid Hayashida Hiroyuki visited Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) on November 20, 2014. The Embassy of Japan in Lebanon sponsored his visit to NDU, which involved a two-hour workshop dedicated to students of Computer Graphics and Animation at the Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences (FNAS). The workshop, held in the presence of His Excellency Mr. Seiichi Otsuka, the Ambassador of Japan to Lebanon, involved an open lecture given by Hayashida titled, "Japanese Advertisement and the Role of Computer Graphics."

Hayashida is world famous for numerous animations for designing several promotions (*Shiseido Tsubaki, Uno*), films, games (*Final Fantasy 12 and 13*), music videos (*Exile*) and for introducing several authentic works in different fields. He was appointed as "Japan Cultural Envoy 2015" by the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs.



Hayashida Hiroyuki giving his talk.



A captive audience listening on attentively.



FNHS

NDU Nursing Students Participate in Kibarouna Annual Summer Camp

As a part of the Community Clinical Nursing course requirements at the Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences (FNHS), Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU), eight students from the Department were selected to participate from September 1 to 5, 2014, in the Kibarouna Association's annual Summer Camp for the elderly, which was held at the Monastery of Mar Youssef, Ajaltoun.

Kibarouna is a Lebanese Non-profit Organization (NGO), which aims to work with the elderly across Lebanon to help improve their quality of life through the following approaches:

- Empowering the elderly to help them overcome weaknesses, social isolation, and abuse;
- Acknowledging their achievements, valuing their roles, and supporting them to attain their rights;
- Mentoring the families of the elderly to help them acquire the necessary skills needed to care for and address the special needs of the aged; and
- Creating opportunities for Lebanese youth to meet and connect with the elderly.

The Learning Outcomes of this Community Clinical Nursing course were to:

- Compare and contrast the nurse's role in a community healthcare facility and acute care facility;
- Apply the practices of the nursing process in different settings where nursing care is provided;
- Determine nursing interventions and healthcare needs across the human life span;
- Recognize and apply the process of the three levels of community healthcare: Primary, secondary, and tertiary; and
- Develop an education pattern in the community with the contribution of the other sectors.

NDU students actively participated in caring for the elderly at all times and in all activities, and their volunteering services brought joy to those they served. It is worthy to note here that students cared for 43 seniors who suffered from stress and other complications for a period of four nights and five days.

The students were asked to prepare presentations related to proper healthcare in addition to bringing along games and musical instruments for entertainment purposes. Their duties were divided to ensure that students took responsibility for a select number of the aged. Students were also to distribute breakfast, lunch, and dinner every day.

During the Summer Camp, several activities were held, which included brainteasers, physical exercise, and fun activities, such as backgammon, singing, joke telling, etc.

... Our presence changed their health for the better.

The program for the five-day stint was as follows:

Day 1: Reserved for general introductions, task distribution, and internal organization. Each student took charge of six to eight patients, as part of the requirements of Holistic Nursing Care.

Day 2: Students collaborated with a professional hairdresser to dye, cut, and style the hair of the women, and also helped an esthetician trim and polish their nails. The elderly were treated to a photo shoot in which the men dressed as kings and the women dressed as princesses.

Day 3: Along with members of Bikfaya Club, the elderly were taken on a spiritual excursion to visit the tomb of Saint Charbel in Annaya. Afterward, the elderly were treated to nice meal at a restaurant, and enjoyed an afternoon of good food, singing, and dancing.

Day 4: Reserved for medical assessments. Students measured the blood pressure and glucose levels of the elderly, and applied the principles of health promotion, disease prevention, and educational activities linked to nursing by delivering to the target audience appropriate medical information intended to:

- Raise awareness on how to use medications at home (examples, subcutaneous insulin, anti-hypertensive drugs, vitamins, etc.);
- Provide basic awareness for the types of diets appropriate to their state of health;
- Provide tips on how to stay healthy and to prevent falls, and avoid certain chronic and acute diseases;
- Demonstrate some physical exercises to improve flexibility, balance, respiratory function, etc.; and
- Perform mental exercises to help strengthen concentration and stimulate reflection and memory.

The day ended with a Saj activity in which students made and distributed around 120 *manouches* (Lebanese pizza).

Day 5: Musician Elie Massaad surprised the elderly with an appearance. Afterward, the pictures taken on Day 2 were distributed to each person, including the group photo.

The Summer Camp achieved its purpose of filling the hearts of the elderly with joy and giving them a new-found sense of security and belonging, which softened their daily strife and feelings of isolation and marginalization. It greatly impacted their morale, self-confidence, and ability to interact socially with others.

Samer Ajaj, an NDU student, summed up the success of Summer Camp beautifully, "Attending this camp was incredibly educational, and even though I didn't think it was related to nursing at first, I eventually changed my mind when I saw how much emotional and psychological comfort we brought... our presence changed their health for the better."



FLPS

Lebanese, Arab Youth Meet at NDU for "Emerging Leaders Conference" DALIA ATALLAH

The Department of Government and International Relations, Faculty of Law and Political Science (FLPS) at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU), in partnership with the World Youth Alliance (WYA) Middle East regional office, hosted between October 23 and 24, 2014, the annual "Emerging Leaders Conference (ELC)."

This year's theme was titled, "The Family and Economic Development in the Arab Region," which tackled several issues affecting youths in modern Middle Eastern societies, and highlighted the role families play in helping their members both socially and financially.

Dr. Elie el-Hindy, Chairperson of the FLPS, and WYA Director Ms. Jessica Hallak each delivered an opening speech before an audience of NDU students and Lebanese and Arab youths who attended the ELC.

Dr. Akram el-Khoury started the panel discussions with a presentation highlighting the support

families provide to children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities in Lebanon, which was followed by a presentation by an Egyptian WYA member on the same subject, but in an Egyptian context.

The discussions later focused on the difficulties that migrants, displaced persons, and refugees face, an issue that NDU Professor and Researcher Dr. Eugene-Sensenig addressed. Following the interactive lectures, the attendees were divided into two groups and asked to discuss the different problems mentioned in the conference and come up with recommendations.

The second day of the ELC started with a panel discussion on the impact of remittance money on families, presented by Dr. Guita Hourani, Director of the Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at NDU. The lectures then addressed the theme of youth unemployment and transition from school to work, with Dr. Bassel Akkar explaining how to conduct surveys, and WYA member Mr. Ahmed Waheeb —

who specifically traveled from Egypt to attend this conference — speaking on unemployment in Egyptian society.

The audience was later divided into three groups, and each had to find policy alternatives to solve the problems discussed at the conference. The ELC concluded with the groups' presentations of their work, followed by a group photo.

Overall, the two-day conference presented a special opportunity for youths to meet peers from Lebanon and the Arab world who share their concerns and challenges. The FLPS and NDU presented themselves, yet again, as an open space for dialogue and youth development. Through this unique conference, NDU proves itself as a University that holds close to its heart the needs of its community and proves that it is willing to cooperate with all relevant bodies to promote its values of encouraging peaceful dialogue and upholding human dignity.

Diplomacy Class Hosts First Saudi-American Woman to Run for Political Office in U.S.A

RITA ABU MRAD

Our journeys are evaluated according to the people that add value to the paradigm through which we observe the experiences of others, and what lessons we can learn from those experiences.

Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) in general and the Department of Government and International Relations at the Faculty of Law and Political Science (FLPS) in particular were honored to welcome on November 14, 2014, Ms. Ferial Al-Masri, the first Saudi-American woman in history to run for political office in California, U.S.A.

Ms. Masri gave a brief and closed talk limited to members of the FLPS. She introduced herself with what could be best described as a mixture of confidence, wit, honesty, and charisma.

My colleague and I were honored to have been selected as discussants. The opportunity of speaking to such a motivated woman gave me the chance to quell my burning curiosity.

I learned that Ms. Masri had struggled at the beginning of her journey, yet she believes that her real journey has only just begun. Gifted with a sharp intellect and social skills, she was able to change the clichéd image that many Americans have about Saudi women. She changed their perception, she engaged in politics, cooperating with both the democrats and the republicans, and worked hard to achieve her goal.

We learned from Ms. Masri that we decide how to live our dreams and uphold our values; the latter shall never die, nor should our values be affected by some external factors that sometimes sway us into giving up and betraying our beliefs.

Yes, women can have political power, if they choose to; this should not be seen as some sort of victory; rather, an axiom.

Ms. Masri not only gave us a political talk demonstrating wide knowledge and a good education but also an inspirational one mixed with personal experiences and captivating charm.



Ms. Ferial Al-Masri giving her talk.



FLPS members listen on attentively.



GENERAL NEWS

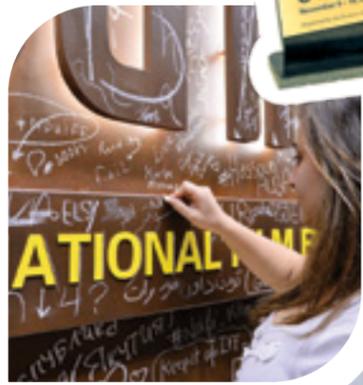
8th NDUIFF

Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) hosted from November 9-16, 2014, the 8th NDU International Film Festival (NDUIFF) themed, "The Power of Youth." NDUIFF is a forum for young filmmakers from Lebanon and around the world to exchange film culture and to communicate through image and sound.

In previous years, the Festival honored many figures in Lebanese and Arab cinema, and this year's event was no exception. The NDUIFF chose to honor in its opening ceremony the celebrated Syrian actor and director Dureid Lahham for his lifetime achievements. Lahham was honored in the presence of the Minister of Education Mr. Elias Bou Saab, NDU President Fr. Walid Moussa, Vice-Presidents Mr. Souheil Matar and Dr. Elie Badr, and a host of professionals from the film industry, including actors, actresses, producers, directors, writers, film makers, and film students.

The 2014 NDUIFF welcomed students and independent short films from Lebanon and around the world in three categories: Fiction, Documentary, and Animation.

After week-long screenings, long hours of deliberations among the NDUIFF jury on more than 80 short films, and a closing ceremony, which took place on Sunday, November 16, 2014, the winners in each category were announced. (See opposite page.)



Best Fiction - Lebanese Competition, 1st Prize Award

Where There is Nothing But Water by MOHAMED SABBAH | ALBA

Best Fiction - Lebanese Competition, 2nd Prize Award

Django by SCARLET SAAD | IESAV

Best Fiction - Lebanese Competition, 3rd Prize Award

Manuscript by MANSOUR AOUN | USEK

Best Documentary - Lebanese Competition

Suspended Survival by NOUR SAFIEDDINE and ROLANDE ISSA | LU1

Best Animation - Lebanese Competition

Intersection by MARC AOUN | ALBA

Bank Of Beirut Public Vote Award

With Thy Spirit by KARIM RAHBANI | IESAV

Best Independent Film - Lebanese Competition

Moneta by JAD DANY ALI HASSAN and *Troubled Waters* by TOUFIC KHREICH

Best Fiction - International Competition

Eye and Mermaid by SHAHAD AMEED | Saudi Arabia

Best Documentary - International Competition

Behind the Smoke Screen by RAMI EL-HARRAYRI and NIELS DE GROOT | Netherlands

Best Animation - International Competition

Seven Minutes in the Warsaw Ghetto by JOHAN OETTINGER | Denmark

Emile Chahine Award for Cinematic Excellence

Coup D'oeuil by CELINE MOUKARZEL | LU2

Best Actor

HOVSEP KAPLANIAN (*Hramstek* by TONY PARTAMIAN) | USEK

Best Actress

CAROLINE HATEM (*Where There is Nothing But Water* by MOHAMED SABBAH) | ALBA

Best Cinematography

Smog by JAD SLEIMAN | LU2

Best Director

Smog by JAD SLEIMAN | LU2

Best Screenplay

With Thy Spirit by KARIM RAHBANI | IESAV

Grand Jury Award

Hramstek by TONY PARTAMIAN | USEK

Special Jury Mention

Shnir by VITALY SUSLIN | Russia and *She Is !!* by ALEKSANDAR TOKIN | Serbia
Red White Green by Tarek Raffoul

Honorary Award

HADY ZAKKAK, Active Contributor to the Lebanese Cinema

CELEBRATING THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT AROUND THE MAIN CAMPUS

Christmas 2014 was a remarkable sight at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU). Not only was the Main Campus filled with Christmas cheer but also Christmas trees, ornaments, and lights filled every corner of the University.



"I LOVE CHRISTMAS, NOT JUST BECAUSE OF THE PRESENTS BUT BECAUSE OF ALL THE DECORATIONS AND LIGHTS AND THE WARMTH OF THE SEASON."

ASHLEY TISDALE



"CHRISTMAS IS NOT A TIME NOR A SEASON, BUT A STATE OF MIND. TO CHERISH PEACE AND GOODWILL, TO BE PLENTEOUS IN MERCY, IS TO HAVE THE REAL SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS."

CALVIN COOLIDGE



"CHRISTMAS IN BETHLEHEM. THE ANCIENT DREAM: A COLD, CLEAR NIGHT MADE BRILLIANT BY A GLORIOUS STAR, THE SMELL OF INCENSE, SHEPHERDS AND WISE MEN FALLING TO THEIR KNEES IN ADORATION OF THE SWEET BABY, THE INCARNATION OF PERFECT LOVE."

LUCINDA FRANKS



"HAPPY, HAPPY CHRISTMAS, THAT CAN WIN US BACK TO THE DELUSIONS OF OUR CHILDHOOD DAYS, RECALL TO THE OLD MAN THE PLEASURES OF HIS YOUTH, AND TRANSPORT THE TRAVELER BACK TO HIS OWN FIRESIDE AND QUIET HOME!"

CHARLES DICKENS



NEW APPOINTMENTS
DR. ELIE BADR
 Vice-President for
 Academic Affairs



Dr. Elie Badr joined Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) as Vice-President for Academic Affairs in September 2014. Prior to his appointment at NDU, Dr. Badr held several teaching and administrative positions at the Lebanese American University (LAU) in Beirut.

In addition to serving as a consultant for many companies and executing several leading mechanical engineering projects, Dr. Badr began his first contact with NDU as consultant handling the University's accreditation process with New England Association for Schools and Colleges (NEASC). He also sits on the Board of Trustees at the American University of Madaba in Jordan and is an active member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and a registered professional engineer in the Order of Engineers in Lebanon.

Dr. Badr received his Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Tulsa, Oklahoma, U.S.A., in 1994. With an extensive publication and research record, Dr. Badr authored and co-authored numerous papers on residual stress analysis, metal fatigue, machine design, and energy forecasting and analysis. He presented several papers at local and international conferences and taught as a Professor of Mechanical Engineering at LAU.

He served as the Assistant to the President and Strategy Officer for External Projects and Related Entities at LAU. He was appointed to this role in October 2012 to establish the university's New York Head Quarters and Academic Center, which he managed from inception. In parallel, Dr. Badr also established the LAU Executive Center at Solidere, a joint venture between LAU and Solidere aimed at bringing executive training seminars, EMBA and MBA courses to the heart of Beirut city center.

At the same time, and in the same capacity, Dr. Badr led the renovation works at the University Medical Center-Rizk Hospital in accordance to a Master Plan, which he established and directed. He effectively contributed to two LAU strategic plans as well and chaired the Education Pillar on the most recent LAU Strategic Plan 2011-2016. He also established strategic academic programs, such as the Fashion Design program and most recently the LLM in Business Law.

Prior to that, Dr. Badr was appointed as the Assistant Provost for Academic Programs in October 2009, a position he previously held under a former title as Assistant Vice-President for Academic Programs. In this role, he assisted LAU's seven schools in creating new programs, a task that encompassed developing programs, securing approval from relevant councils, obtaining government decrees, and preparing the relevant materials for the New York State Education Department.

While presiding over these dynamic activities, Dr. Badr also worked with the Provost to oversee the ongoing NEASC accreditation process. He co-chaired three steering committees for three self-studies (2005, 2009, and 2013) and also contributed to the assessment of learning at LAU by overseeing the function of the Center for Program and Learning Assessment (CPLA), which helps schools develop and implement systems for student learning assessment. Finally yet importantly, Dr. Badr also led in-class evaluations across the university every semester, and coordinated between the Information Technology (IT) office and Academic Affairs in regards to the implementation of university-wide academic systems and software.

Dr. Badr first arrived at LAU in 1997 as Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering and was promoted Associate Professor in October 2001, and to Full Professor in 2009. Between 1999 and 2003, he served as the faculty representative of the Byblos Campus and in July 2003, he was appointed Interim Dean of the School of Engineering and Architecture until September 2005. In October 2005, he was appointed to the position of Assistant Vice-President for Academic Programs, and in October 2009, Dr. Badr was Founding Interim Dean of the School of Architecture and Design. In this capacity, he worked on establishing the school and integrated it within the university systems.

FR. PIERRE NAJEM
 Vice-President for
 Administration



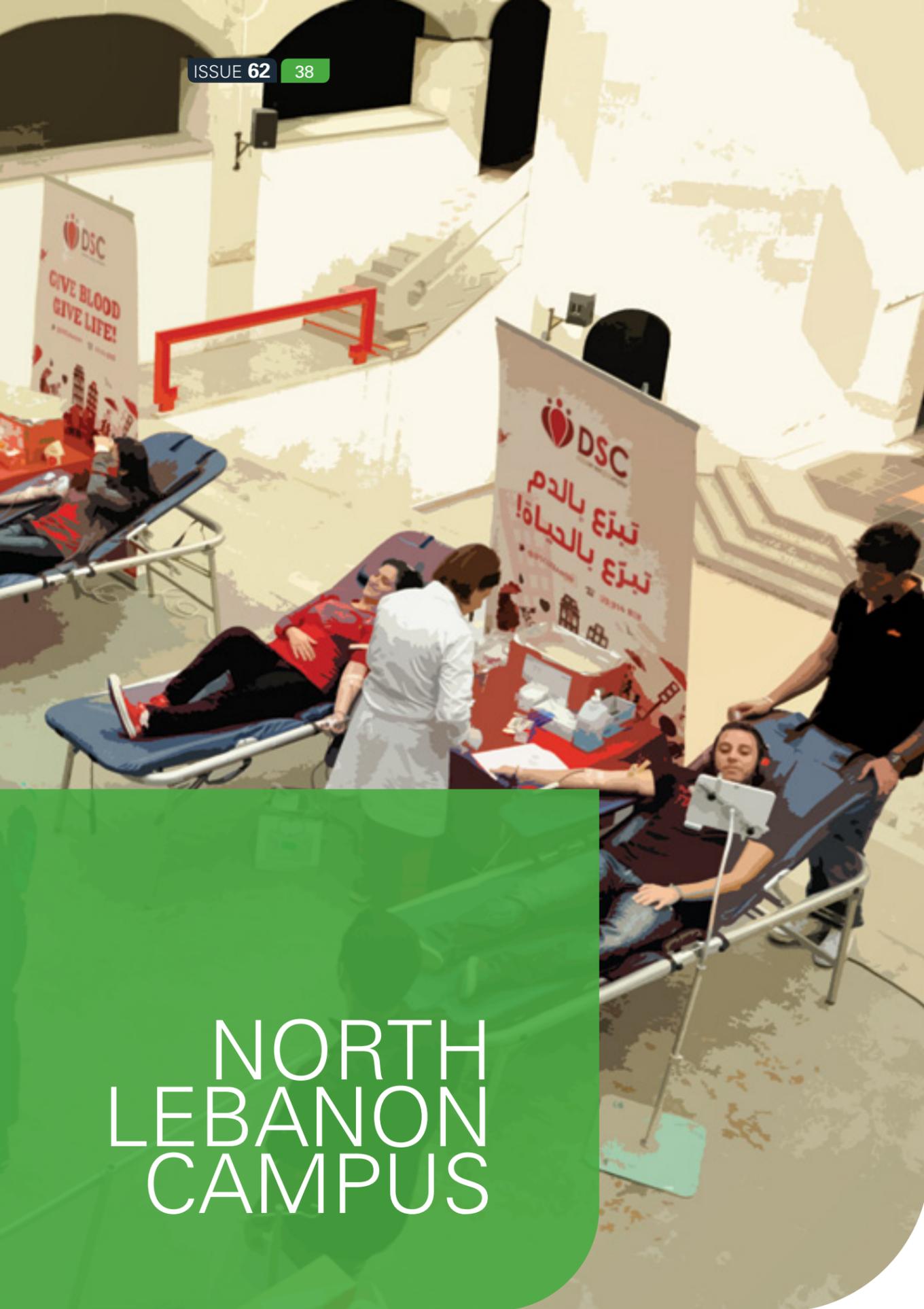
Prior to his appointment as Vice-President for Administration, Fr. Pierre Najem held the position of Master of Formation from 2012 to 2014 at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) Center for Digitization and Preservation of Manuscripts. His main role was to oversee the digitization and perseveration process of Eastern Christian literature, which is receiving growing attention in the West.

The process allows documents to be captured in the highest available format on a computer hard disk, giving scholars and researchers the unique opportunity to study clear copies. Whether digitizing an entire manuscript or a single document, preservation activities require an archival infrastructure. Archivists ensure in painstaking detail that all collections are properly cataloged, conserved, and periodically migrated to newer media.

Fr. Najem was ordained priest in the Maronite Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary on August 11, 2011. He is currently working on his Doctorate — *Histoire du Christianisme Ancien (History of Early Christianity)* — at the Sorbonne-Paris IV. He obtained in 1999 a Diploma in Mariology from the Pontifical Institute Marianum, Time; a Bachelor in Philosophy and Theology in 2000 from Université Saint-Esprit Kaslik (USEK), Lebanon, Pontifical University St. Thomas Angelicum, Rome; and a Canonical degree in 2004, Biblical Exegesis, from the Pontifical Biblical Institute (Biblicum), Rome.

He is fluent in Arabic, French, English, Italian, Spanish, and German, as well as in a number of ancient languages: Syriac, Hebrew, Biblical Greek, and Latin. Fr. Najem has published a book titled, *The Mariology of Saint Ephraem (With a Translation of His Marian Poetry)*, NDU Press, 2007, with another book in progress (written in French) titled, *Les Noces de Cana, entre Moïse et Dionysos- Etude exégétique*.

Fr. Najem is currently a part-time lecturer, teaching Biblical Greek at the Pontifical Faculty of Theology, USEK. In the past, Fr. Najem served as a part-time lecturer at NDU, teaching the course Introduction to Catholicism (2006-2007), and served as a part-time lecturer at the Antonine University, Baabda, Lebanon, teaching the course Introduction to the New Testament (2006-2007).



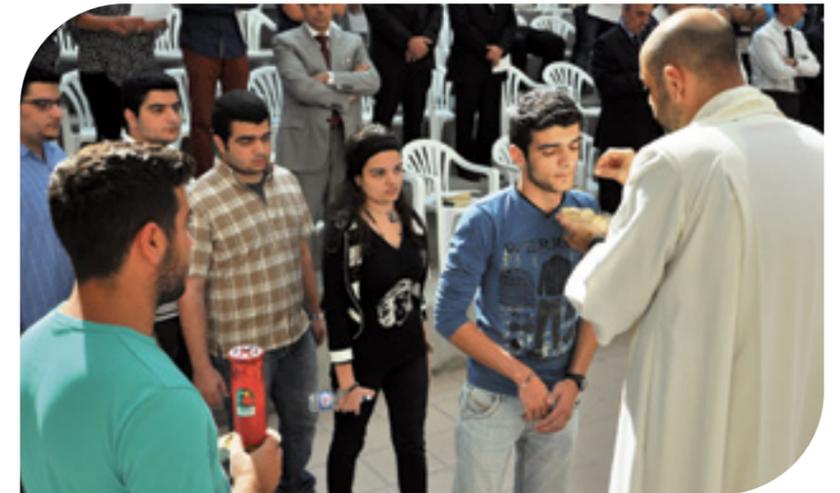
NORTH LEBANON CAMPUS

OPENING MASS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2014-2015

The Opening Mass for the academic year 2014-2015 took place on October 16, 2014, at the Notre Dame University-Louaize North Lebanon Campus (NDU-NLC). Present were NDU President Fr. Walid Moussa; Vice-President for Administration Fr. Pierre Najem; NDU Choir Choirmaster and Composer Fr. Khalil Rahme; NLC Executive Director Fr. Samir Ghsoub; and several deans: Dr. George Eid, Dr. Maan Bou Saber, Dr. Antoine Farhat, and Dr. Elie Menassa. In addition, a large number of NLC students attended Mass along with faculty members and staff.

Fr. Moussa celebrated the Mass, which was served by NLC students from the various clubs. Fr. Rahme sang hymns and enchanted the audience with his voice. Fr. Moussa in his sermon said, "The University is no longer a place where we go simply to acquire knowledge and other tools to help us progress in life; rather, it has become a venue where we interact with society at large..."

The Opening Mass was indeed a spiritual and special way to begin the academic year.



GEORGES KHABBAZ VISITS NLC

The Faculty of Humanities (FH) at Notre Dame University-Louaize North Lebanon Campus (NDU-NLC) invites accomplished guest speakers as part of its program to offer students, especially those studying Radio/TV, unique insights from their professional careers.

The FH organized on October 21, 2014, an entire morning session on Campus with Mr. George Khabbaz - actor, comedian, writer, director, and musician. Khabbaz met with the COA 310 and COA 315 students, who were joined by other students from different classes.

Khabbaz introduced himself in way of a biographical outline of his career and highlighted his achievements in television, cinema, and theatre. Following his introduction, Khabbaz engaged in a Q&A session with the students who asked many questions to which they received elaborate and professional answers.

At the end of his visit, it was agreed that NLC students watch *Waynon*, a film directed by Khabbaz, to allow others involved in the motion picture, including the main actors/actresses, the opportunity to visit NLC for an open discussion with students on the film.



CEDAR INSTITUTE LECTURE

Notre Dame University-Louaize North Lebanon Campus (NDU-NLC) hosted on Thursday, October 23, 2014, Prof. Youssef Rahme who gave a lecture on The Cedars Institute (CI), a registered non-governmental organization, which he and his colleagues from NDU founded in 2012.

Prof. Rahme was a tenured faculty at the University of Michigan, U.S.A., until 2011 when he resigned for familial reasons. Upon his return to Lebanon, he established The CI as an academic institution whose purpose is to "celebrate life by cultivating the unlimited unity of the good, the true, and the beautiful in religious, cultural, intellectual, artistic and ecological diversity in Lebanon, the East Mediterranean, Asia, and the whole world."

The Institute, Prof. Rahme informed his audience, overlooks the Holy Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is nestled neatly beneath the shadows of the ancient, biblical Cedars of Lebanon, the Cedar Forest, a World Heritage Site, in the district of Bsharri, North Lebanon, the birthplace and home of the famous Lebanese poet Gibran Khalil Gibran. He related how the idea of establishing the Institute came about in 1994 while a faculty in the U.S.A., attending the World History Association at The Aspen Institute in Aspen, Colorado. He stated that the CI is committed "to preserving and nurturing the vast spiritual and material treasures of Lebanon, beginning with CI's symbol, the Cedar tree itself. The CI tries "to promote life in all its abundance as it unfolds in religious, cultural, intellectual, artistic and ecological diversity in Lebanon and the region."

Finally, Prof. Rahme informed students in the audience that "CI's cultural, intellectual, artistic and ecological activities are held together by its religious and philosophical activities, which include seminars, retreats, exhibitions, and publications focusing on three major areas:

- (1) Eastern Christianity, East/West Christian relations, and Christian Muslim relations.
- (2) Environmental Studies.
- (3) Migration.

All three emphasize healing and healthy living together in the local, regional, and international arenas."

He underlined that students conducting research in the aforementioned fields can apply for CI fellowships. For further information, contact Prof. Rahme at yrahme@ndu.edu.lb



Prof. Youssef Rahme



The audience listens on attentively during the lecture.

RECRUITMENT DAY 2014-2015 AT NLC

Recruitment Day at Notre Dame University-Louaize North Lebanon Campus (NDU-NLC) was organized on November 12, 2014, to motivate new students to join various clubs on Campus.

Many new clubs were established this year, such as the "Extreme Club," "Nutrition and Health Club," "Support and Awareness Club," "Design Club, and "Social Club." Many activities brought this event to life, including an enthusiastic performance by the Paradise Parade whose members introduced the Extreme Club to students. The Lebanese Red Cross, moreover, organized a road safety drill to help raise awareness for accidents and safety, especially among the youth. The event also included music, food, and some games.

In his welcome address, Fr. Samir Ghsoub, Director of NDU-NLC, stressed the importance of collaboration among all clubs to provide the University and its students with benefits and to create a harmonious environment.

Fr. Ghsoub promised students that the University would continue to pursue its main mission of providing high quality education and a suitable environment conducive to learning. The University's priority is to strengthen students' personal development, which serves to ensure a sound career path after graduation.



BLOOD DRIVE

Donner Sang Compter (DSC) in collaboration with Centre Hospitalier du Nord (CHN) organized on Thursday, November 13, 2014, its first blood drive to collect blood from Notre Dame University-Louaize North Lebanon Campus (NDU-NLC).

Students were eager to donate their blood amidst a motivating environment. Students underwent a minor medical check-up and filled a questionnaire to ensure that they were fit to donate blood and that their blood was safe. While students were giving blood, volunteers played music and screened videos to entertain students during the process.

In total, 41 students donated blood, which can be used to save 123 patients given that each unit of blood can save up to three lives!

NLC was honored to have collaborated with the DSC and to have helped it fulfil its mission: "Give Blood... Give Life." The University hopes to continue this collaboration with the DSC well into the future.



CAMPUS GROWS INTO AN OLIVE TREE

In the *Prophet*, Gibran says when you love, you should not say, "God is in my heart;" rather say, "I am in the heart of God."

Notre Dame University-Louaize North Lebanon Campus (NDU-NLC), which has resided in the heart of North Lebanon for the past 25 years, is ready now to host the inhabitants of the North in its warm and loving heart. Our deep faith in the righteousness of our Mission, and our readiness to accommodate for the needs of the beloved citizens of this region have been clearly manifested during the past years through recruiting professional academic personnel and staff members, upgrading existing majors and launching new ones, and installing some of the best laboratories in Lebanon.

Fr. Samir Ghsoub, Executive Director of NLC, proudly announces that it is high time we expand our structures. To accommodate for the significant increase in the number of students, NLC is in the process of adding three new blocks to its existing layout. Our environmentally-friendly structures will hopefully add to the beauty of our peaceful environment.

NLC will soon have the following:

- A fully- and multimedia-equipped, state-of-the-art 500-capacity Auditorium;
- An ultra-modern Administration Building to house, among others, the offices of the Director, Admission, Registrar, and Business Office;
- A state-of-the-art Academic Building to house modern laboratories with cutting-edge technology and accommodate the Engineering, Business, and Sciences disciplines. The building will also include a sophisticated Library with innovative equipment for study and research, a trendy Cafeteria and a Cutaway Hotel, a Stock Room, Art Gallery spaces, modern Meeting/Seminar Rooms, a Computer Center, and many other resources and facilities designed for optimum space allocation and smart access and interconnectivity;
- A Church that pays homage to the NDU Heritage, its Mission, Values, Belief in God, and the infallible faith of the Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin Mary to which the University belongs; and
- A Residence for the Most Reverend Abbot and Monks, which would allow for spiritual retreats and future activities related to the Order amidst the beautiful site surrounding the Campus.

All are welcome to visit!



OPENING MASS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2014-2015



The Opening Mass to celebrate the beginning of yet another academic year 2014-2015 at Notre Dame University-Louaize Shouf Campus (NDU-SC) took place on Friday, October 17, 2014, at Mar Abda Church, Deir el-Kamar. Classes were suspended from noon to 2:00 p.m., giving students, faculty, staff, and administrators an opportunity to partake in the Opening Mass, which Most Reverend Abbot Boutros Tarabay, Superior General of the Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin Mary, celebrated in the presence of Fr. Walid Moussa, President of NDU, Fr. Hanna Tayar, Director of SC, and Br. Charbel Doumany, Assistant Director, SC.

Abbot Tarabay's sermon focused on the main role the University, which should make a concerted effort to cultivate a better generation for the future; he stated the founding principles, which would set the strong Christian yet academic path that the University should follow.

At the end of the Mass, Fr. Tayar thanked Fr. Moussa and Abbot Tarabay for taking time off their busy schedules to attend the special ceremony at SC. He stated that NDU, Main Campus and Campuses, is one body, one entity, one unit. He then invited the entire SC family to come forward and take a commemorative picture to remember what is bound to be a busy, productive, and blessed academic year.



INDEPENDENCE DAY CONGRATULATORY VISIT

On the occasion of Lebanon's 71st Independence Day, the Notre Dame University-Louaize Shouf Campus (NDU-SC) family, i.e. administration, faculty, staff, and students, celebrated and commemorated this year's occasion by paying tribute and honoring the Lebanese Army in Beit el-Dine, which is under the command of Brigadier-General Jamal el-Chamaa, by visiting the barracks on Friday, November 21, 2014.

Fr. Hanna Tayar, Director of SC, gave a word of thanks and appreciation for the selfless efforts made by the Lebanese Army to protect our beloved country, Lebanon, and its citizens under today's such dire circumstances. Fr. Tayar insisted that the army was, is, and will always be the only protector of our safety, stability, and security. In return, the brigadier-general thanked the SC Administration for their thoughtfulness and the deep implication of such visit. He spoke of the evident role that the University has played on the fronts of culture, education, social, and co-existence, and expressed limitless support to SC. The visit ended with the exchange of heartfelt congratulations and taking souvenir photos.



ACQUAINTANCE DAY 2014

At the beginning of every academic year, the Notre Dame University-Louaize Shouf Campus (NDU-SC) regularly organizes an Acquaintance Party to introduce new students to the student body at large and to create stronger bonds on campus among students, faculty members, staff, and administrators. This year, Fr. Hanna Tayar, Director of SC, with the help of Br. Charbel Doumani and in collaboration with the SC newly founded Clubs, decided to turn the Acquaintance Party into an Acquaintance Day. The event took place on November 14, 2014, and lasted from noon to 7:00 p.m.



The Lebanese National Anthem and the NDU Anthem were performed before the start of the event. Fr. Tayar then addressed new students in particular and the SC family in general, welcoming them to the 2014-2015 academic year. He thanked Br. Doumani and the various Clubs for organizing this special day that reflected the true spirit and character of SC.

In his speech, Fr. Tayar, spoke about the excitement that usually accompanies new beginnings. He urged students to experience life

on campus and embrace the challenges that lie ahead by simply being "involved;" involved academically, involved socially, and involved in their own welfare and that of the University. He encouraged students to voice their concerns and suggestions, and at the same time to learn how to make use of instructions and advice. Fr. Tayar concluded by saying, "Be happy that you are embarking on a new experience, a new adventure, and be thankful for every new day."



The special features, games, and talents of the SC Club members followed his heartfelt speech. Each Club took the stage to introduce its objectives and plans, and then presented what its members had prepared to entertain the audience. It was a lovely occasion during which new students were acquainted with their University in all its facets: Academic, social and leisure and entertainment.

The day ended with the cutting of the cake followed by a reception and a toast to the continuity, success, and prosperity of our beloved University.

INDEPENDENCE DAY EXHIBITION AT AIN ZHALTA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Notre Dame University-Louaize Shouf Campus (NDU-SC) representatives were invited to partake in an Art Exhibition organized by the Ain Zhalta Public School to celebrate both the artistic talents of the Shouf region and Lebanon's 71st Independence Day. This event took place on November 29, 2014, at the Ain Zhalta Town Hall. In addition to the organizing school, represented by its Principal, Mr. Adel Mahmoud, the guests of honor included representatives of higher learning institutions, military figures, bank directors, civil servants, and local leaders from the Shouf region. Mr. Jack Bou Nassif, Public Relations Officer, and Ms. Maya Abou Khzam, Admissions Officer SC, represented SC during the opening ceremony.

The opening ceremony commenced with the Lebanese National Anthem, which Lebanese Army orchestra played along with other tunes in accord with the Independence Day celebration. Mr. Mahmoud, the host of the event, then welcomed guests and attendees, and thanked everyone for their moral and financial support. Mr. Mahmoud specifically mentioned SC among other sponsors whose contribution and support contributed to the success of the exhibition. There were other words by Mr. Zuhair Abou Shakra, representative of the secondary level education, and Sheikh Karam Kamaledine who had encouraged and believed in the success of the exhibition all along. The cutting of the ribbon was followed by a tour around the exhibition during which everyone took time to admire the beautiful paintings and exhibited works of art.

It is worth mentioning that SC contributed six paintings to the exhibition, which students from the Faculty of Architecture, Art and Design (FAAD) painted under the supervision of Mr. Maamoun Najjar and Coordinator Mr. Charbel Akl.



BITE-SIZE NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD...

(compiled from various sources by MARIO NAJM)

LEBANON

Another Reason Not to Use the Name of God in Vain!

Most countries have a few strange laws that ought to be reexamined, and Lebanon is no exception. Take for example Law 473 of the Penal Code, which states that anyone who uses the name of God in vain will be jailed for a period, ranging from a month to a year. Anyone with basic knowledge of Arabic and experience in Beirut traffic knows how often the Lebanese employ such language, oftentimes in plain view of police officers!



MIDDLE EAST

Hell Hath No Fury Like a Woman Scored

A few months ago, a Saudi man was shot dead by his wife only a few days after he married another woman. The man and his new bride were attacked by the first wife in Al-Jouf, a region near the northern border of Saudi Arabia. According to *Al-Arabiya News Channel*, the husband died instantly after the first wife shot him several times. The second wife was also shot but survived the attempted murder.



WORLD

Poland Honors Wikipedia Authors with Monument

A western Polish town took up a suggestion to erect a monument to honor the authors of Wikipedia, the Internet encyclopedia, which allows anyone to contribute. More than one million entries in Wikipedia are in Polish, rivaling the number in French or Spanish. Slubice authorities funded the 47,000 zlotys (US\$14,000; 11,000 euros) fiber and resin statue, which was unveiled on October 22, 2014.

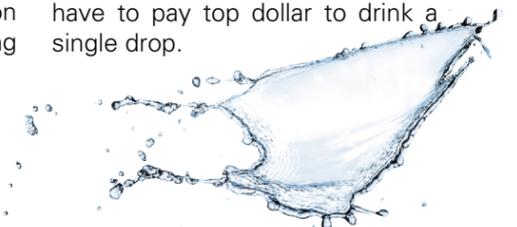
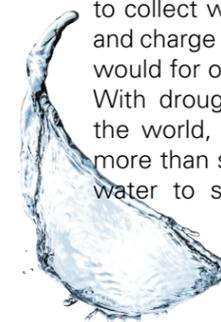


BUSINESS

Fresh Water: The Next Oil?

According to the *Guardian*, mammoth companies are trying to collect water that all life needs and charge top-dollar for it, as they would for other natural resources. With droughts increasing around the world, a global population of more than six billion that relies on water to survive, and dwindling

water resources, today's society takes the ready availability of clean, running water for granted. No longer! In the near future, water will be bought and sold like any other commodity on the New York Stock Exchange, and we may all have to pay top dollar to drink a single drop.



OFFBEAT

ENTERTAINMENT

Walking Dead Takes World by Storm



If you haven't watched or heard of AMC's *Walking Dead* television series, you must be living on another planet. The *Walking Dead* is an American post-apocalyptic horror drama television series developed by Frank Darabont. Robert Kirkman, Tony Moore, and Charlie Adlard based it on the comic book series of the same name to create the TV series. It stars Andrew Lincoln as sheriff's deputy Rick Grimes who awakens from a coma to find a post-apocalyptic world dominated by flesh-eating zombies. He sets out to find his family and encounters many other survivors along the way. Now in its fifth season, the *Walking Dead* has reached record-breaking audience results in more than 120 countries. Prepare to become addicted.

OUT OF THE ORDINARY

Out of Paper

According to *Reuters*, Venezuela's oldest newspaper stopped publishing, because it cannot find printing paper, the latest victim of a shifting media landscape triggered by shortages. Lack of U.S. dollars caused by strict currency controls, import delays, and red tape are hitting businesses across the country. Some small regional Venezuelan publications have had to fold, while mainstream dailies have cut back on pages. Adding to the changing press landscape, three major media groups have since last year been sold in largely undisclosed deals. Opposition critics say the socialist government's policies are tantamount to slowly muzzling the press.



SPORTS

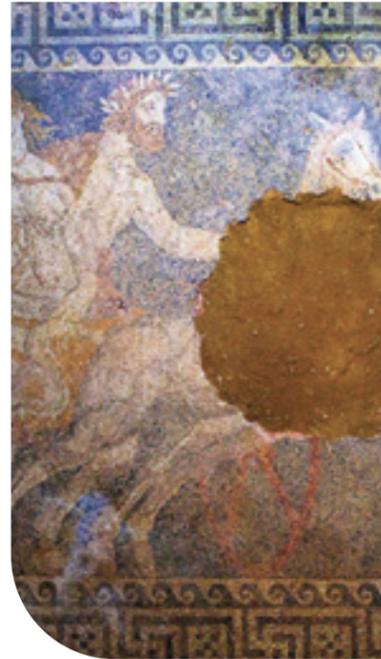
Brazilians Still Sore from Historic World Cup Loss

It was the most shocking defeat in the history of the World Cup. Brazil's 7-1 semifinal annihilation in Belo Horizonte at the hands of a faultless German side brought the host nation's tournament to a shuddering, horrifying end. After billions of dollars spent on stadiums, after years of build-up and preparation, after so much accrued expectation for soccer's most famed national team, no one could have conceived that it would suffer its worst ever World Cup loss. But it did and Brazilians are still not over the shock and probably never will be.



CULTURE

Giant Mosaic Unearthed in Mysterious Greek Tomb

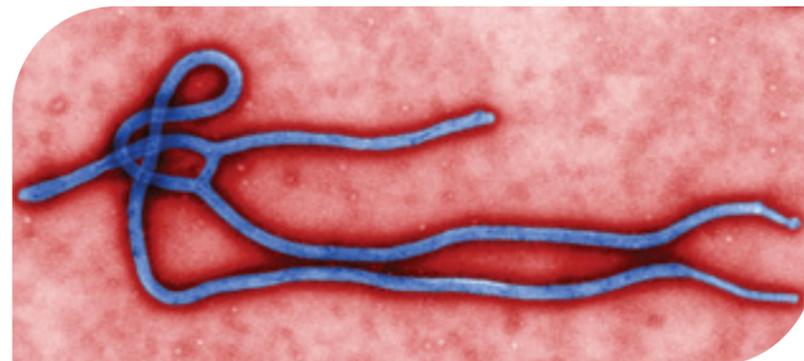


An imposing fourth century B.C. mosaic, measuring 4.5 meters by three meters (14.8 by 9.8 feet), of a man driving a chariot has been uncovered in the largest antique tomb ever found in Greece, in Amphipolis in northern Macedonia, according to the Ministry of Culture. Tiny pieces of white, black, blue, red, yellow, and gray create a picture of a chariot drawn by two white horses, driven by a bearded man wearing a crown of laurel leaves. Hermes, the messenger of the gods in ancient Greece, stands in front of the chariot. There is widespread speculation over who was buried at the site: from Roxana, Alexander's Persian wife, to Olympias, the king's mother, to one of his generals.

SCIENCE

Chinese Scientists May Hold Ebola Cure

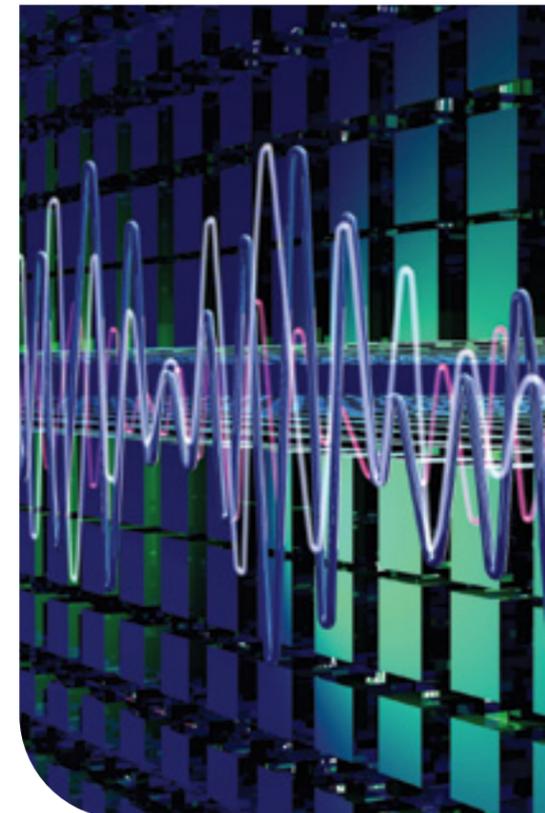
A Chinese pharmaceutical company with close military ties is seeking fast-track approval for a drug that it says can cure Ebola, as China joins the race to help treat a deadly outbreak of a disease that has spread from Africa to the United States and Europe. Sihuan Pharmaceutical Holdings Group Ltd recently signed a tie-up with Chinese research Academy of Military Medical Sciences (AMMS) to help push the drug called JK-05 through the approval process in China and bring it to market. The drug, developed by the academy, is currently approved for emergency military use only.



TECHNOLOGY

Millions of Voiceprints Quietly Being Harvested

Over the telephone, in jail, and online, a new digital bounty is being harvested: The human voice. Businesses and governments around the world increasingly are turning to voice biometrics, or voiceprints, to pay pensions, collect taxes, track criminals and replace passwords. "We sometimes call it the invisible biometric," said Mike Goldgof, an executive at Madrid-based AGNITiO, one of about 10 leading companies in the field. "There's a misconception that the technology we have today is only in the domain of the intelligence services," said Paul Burmester, of London-based ValidSoft, a voice biometric vendor. "The technology is here today, well-proven and commonly available."



HEALTH

Eat More, Look Better

According to controversial diet guru Matt Stone, metabolism is the process the body uses to break down food in order to produce energy. As we age, we lose muscle and gain more fat. The more fat you are carrying vs. muscle, the more your metabolism slows down. Low metabolism causes all sorts of health problems including low energy and fatigue, cold hands and feet (and low body temperature — the kind of person who is always shivering in a sweater), hair loss, low sex drive, infertility, mood swings, anxiety and irritability, hypothyroidism, insomnia, etc. To keep your metabolism revved, here are his ten [highly debatable] tips:

1. Don't drink when you're not thirsty.
2. Monitor your body temperature.
3. Eat more and drink less.
4. Eat enough salt.
5. Eat enough carbs.
6. Exercise, but not too much.
7. Sleep more... much, much more.
8. Snack when hungry.
9. Splurge on junk food if you feel like it.
10. Go easy on the coffee, tea, juice, fruit.



TOP JOKE

A defendant was on trial for murder. There was strong evidence indicating guilt, but there was no corpse. In the defense's closing statement, the lawyer, fearing that his client would probably be convicted anyway, resorted to a ruse. Looking gravely at his watch, the lawyer announced, "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I have a surprise for you all. Within one minute, the person presumed dead in this case will walk into this courtroom!"

He looked toward the courtroom door. The jurors, somewhat stunned, all looked on eagerly. A minute passed. Nothing happened.

Finally, the lawyer said, "Actually, I made up the previous statement. But, you all looked on with anticipation. I, therefore, put it to you that you have a reasonable doubt in this case as to whether anyone was killed, and I insist that you return a verdict of not guilty."

The jury retired to deliberate. A few minutes later, the jury returned and pronounced a verdict of guilty. "But how?" inquired the lawyer. "You must have had some doubt; I saw all of you stare at the door."

The jury foreman replied, "Yes, we did look, but your client didn't!"



DAUGHTERS OF THE SOIL:

Amal Ramzi Alamuddin Clooney

Amal Ramzi Alamuddin Clooney, 37, is a London-based British-Lebanese lawyer, activist, and author. Amal is fluent in Arabic, English, and French. She is a barrister at Doughty Street Chambers, specializing in international law, criminal law, human rights, and extradition. Her clients include Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, in his fight against extradition. She has also represented Yulia Tymoshenko, the former prime minister of Ukraine.

She was born in Beirut to father Ramzi Alamuddin, a retired professor of business studies at the American University of Beirut (AUB) who returned to Lebanon in 1991 and is from a prominent Lebanese Druze family, and mother Bariaa (née Miknass) Alamuddin, foreign editor of the Pan-Arab newspaper Al-Hayat, who is a Sunni Muslim from Tripoli.

Amal married actor George Clooney on September 29, 2014, in a star-studded wedding in Venice, Italy.



SOCIAL

OBITUARIES

It is with deep regret and sorrow that we announce the deaths of the following individuals:

- **MRS. MIREILLE HANNA ROMANOS**, mother of Dr. Jennifer Abou Hamad, full-time staff member at the FBAE;
- **JAD ANTOUN HIMO**, NDU student;
- **MR. RAYESS YOUNESS EL-RAYESS**, father of Mr. Maroun el-Rayess, Head of Access Services Department, NDU Library;
- **GERGI ELIAS YOUSSEF ABDELNOUR**, father of Ms. Sana Youssef, Venues Assistant, Event Services, DAVA;
- **ANHALITE NAHHAL**, NDU Radio/TV student;
- **JOSEPH BOUTROS SFEIR**, brother of Fr. Elie Sfeir;
- **MR. RAFIC YAZBECK**, father of Ms. Eliana Yazbeck-Koussaify (FLPS Staff);
- **MR. CHRISTO SABIEH**, father of Dr. Christine Sabieh and Dr. Caroline Akhras, full-time staff at the FH and the FBAE respectively;
- **MR. ANTOINE C. NASR**, father of Ms. Dany Nasr, Supervisor, Gifts and Exchange Acquisition Department, Library;

May all the souls of the departed rest in eternal peace.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

We are happy to announce the births of the following:

- Lilia Atallah (born on July 7, 2014), daughter of Dr. Jad Atallah, Faculty of Engineering (FE), and his wife, Nora.
- Joyline Nakad (born on September 19, 2014), daughter of Mrs. Nelly Nakad, Administrative Assistant at the Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences (FNAS), NDU.



Lilia Atallah



Joyline Nakad

THE NDU FAMILY, COLLEAGUES, AND FRIENDS BID FAREWELL TO LEGENDARY SAID AKL

Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) bid farewell on December 1, 2014, to a titan of Lebanese culture, the renowned poet, philosopher, and writer Said Akl, who passed away on November 28, 2014, at the age of 102.

NDU organized a service at its Main Campus to honor a true colleague and friend. Prayers were recited over his body as it lay in state, and the entire day was set aside for the droves of people present to mourn him and pay their final respects.

NDU commissioned sculptor, painter, and poet Rudy Rahme to carve Akl's casket, which he did using Lebanese rock and a 3,000-year-old cedar tree that was uprooted by a storm in 1983. Rahme engraved in the wood the titles of Akl's poems.

On the second day, December 2, 2014, Akl's casket arrived to the Saint George Cathedral in Downtown Beirut for a funeral service led by Patriarch Beshara Rai and attended by key political and social figures. Akl was later transported and buried in his hometown Zahle.

Before his death, Akl had donated all his writings and publishing rights to NDU.

Said, you will be missed.



BRINGING GOODWILL TO ALL

TERRY BITAR

My name is Terry Bitar, a senior year architectural student at Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU). Although I love architecture, it is not my only talent! Actually, I am also a singer. I have been singing in choirs ever since I was a little girl. Even when I decided to pursue architecture, I never neglected my voice, which is why I began taking singing lessons from my first semester at the University. After four years of intense lessons with Dr. Jihad Zeidan, I entered a Karaoke competition held in the Bekaa District... and won. Two months later, I received from the International Beauty Union (an organization that honors both beauty queens and amateur talents) two Certificates of Honor: one for amateur singing and the other for beauty.

The story does not end there... While never intending to pursue a singing career, I did not settle for the certificates and lay my voice to rest. What I actually did was to use my voice to spread goodwill.

It is common knowledge that Lebanon is struggling through a difficult time. Poverty is widespread and the number of the underprivileged is increasing drastically. That is when it dawned on me: We are all waiting for a radical change that will never happen! There won't be a revolution that would do away with the bad situation and make everyone happy!

The change is in one's self! The cycle of change starts from within and expands outward to touch everything around you, i.e. family, city, country, and the world.

This type of thinking made sense to me. I knew that I wanted to help the situation and my fellow citizens, but I do not know how to do it! So, I took baby steps to come up with the perfect plan.

I started out with a small charity project in which I collected unwanted clothes from relatives and friends to give to the poor. Soon afterward, the project grew bigger and bigger, and I ended up collecting more than 5,000 items of clothing that helped more than 1,000 people.

That's not all. After the huge success of the first project, I started preparing for another event that took place this Christmas. And now here I am, a 23-year-old architect who is still studying, and starting her own NGO called "Charity Donation" (www.facebook.com/charitydonation.lebanon).

We can all make a difference if we make the effort, because nothing is difficult. As the old saying goes, "When there is a will, there is a way."



WINNING THE ARABIC DICTATION CONTEST

MICHELLA RUSTOM

On the occasion of the UN World Arabic-language Day, the Antonine University in Hadath-Baabda organized on December 6, 2014, for the second consecutive year, the national Arabic Dictation Contest titled, "Our Dictation, Our Language," which Mr. Bassam Barrak hosted and which LBCI broadcasted live. Around 75 university students from various public and private Lebanese universities participated in the competition, which took place under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and the participation of the Arab League Council and the encouragement of the International Council of the Arabic language.

I was among the 75 participants. As a third-year Engineering student, majoring in Electrical Engineering at Notre Dame University-Louaize, I have always had a keen interest in the Arabic literature. I have enjoyed reading and writing in Arabic ever since I was student at College Notre Dame de Louaize School. Although the competition was fierce, I am proud to say that I won and walked away with the first prize (US\$1,500). This was my third experience competing in such an event and the second I have won - the first being at the Antonine School in Ghazir.

I would like to thank my University, NDU President Fr. Walid Moussa and Vice-President for Cultural Affairs and Public Relations Mr. Suhail Matar for their support. I would also like to thank Dr. Salma Abdallah, who encouraged me to participate in this competition.



(from left) Dr. Suhail Matar, Michella Rustom, Antonine University President Fr. Germanos Germanos, and juror Mr. Pierre Eid.



LEGENDARY WASHINGTON POST EDITOR BEN BRADLEE LEAVES TRANSFORMATIVE LEGACY

Courtesy of *New York Daily News*

Legendary *Washington Post* editor Benjamin C. Bradlee, who took over the paper's newsroom in 1965 and who directed the coverage of the Watergate scandal that led Richard Nixon to resign the presidency, died on October 21, 2014, at the ripe old age of 93. He had been suffering from Alzheimer's disease, according to his third wife, writer Sally Quinn, and died at home,

Bradlee became a national figure during the presidency of Richard Nixon, when he challenged the federal government over the right to publish the *Pentagon Papers* and oversaw the publication of Bob Woodward's and Carl Bernstein's stories documenting the Watergate scandal. At his death, he held the title of vice-president at-large of the *Post*.

He was also an advocate for education and the study of history, including working for years as an active trustee on the boards of several major educational, historical, and archeological research institutions. Bradlee presided over some of the biggest and most controversial stories of the latter part of the 20th century.

The dapper, Harvard-educated Navy veteran joined *The Post* in 1965, after persuading the newspaper's publisher, Katharine Graham, to put him in line for managing editor, a position he achieved within three months. By 1968, Bradlee was *The Post's* executive editor.

Under his tutelage, the newspaper's circulation increased and it became a global enterprise. With Graham's backing, Bradlee made the decision to print the *Pentagon Papers* in 1971 — defying the Nixon administration. The cache of secret papers, whose existence was first revealed by *The New York Times*, detailed the U.S. military involvement in Vietnam from 1945 to 1967.

As Nixon fought to block the publication of the *Pentagon Papers* — and was overruled by the Supreme Court — Bradlee gave the green light to reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein to investigate a June 1972 break-in at Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate hotel.

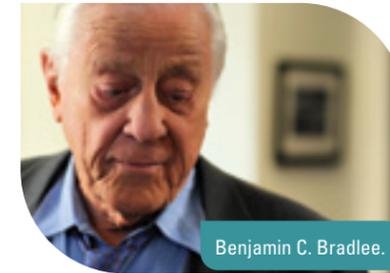
In a string of stories that traced the crime to the Nixon White House, *The Post* led the way on one of the biggest political scandals in American history. Bradlee, a Boston Brahmin and friend of President John F. Kennedy, was portrayed by Jason Robards in the Oscar-winning 1976 movie *All the President's Men*, based on Bernstein and Woodward's book about covering Watergate.

The Post won 18 Pulitzer prizes during Bradlee's tenure. He returned one, awarded to Janet Cooke in 1981, after she confessed that she had fabricated her riveting feature about an eight-year-old heroin addict. Bradlee offered to resign, but Donald Graham, who had succeeded his mother as publisher, would not hear of it.

"The story of the modern *Washington Post* starts the day Kay Graham made Ben Bradlee the editor of the paper," Graham said in a simple, heartfelt statement after Bradlee's death.
"He was the best."

President Obama remembered Bradlee as a "true newspaperman" who helped shape the course of modern politics. "(He) told stories that needed to be told — stories that helped us understand our world and one another a little bit better," Obama said.

His wife, four children, 10 grandchildren, and a great-grandchild, survive Bradlee.



Benjamin C. Bradlee.



Front page of the *Washington Post*, announcing President Nixon's resignation after the paper exposed the Watergate scandal.

EDITOR'S NOTE

It is sad to note that in this era, objective journalism has died along with great men like Bradlee. In Lebanon, objective journalists, such as Salim el-Lawzi, who feared not reporting the truth, was kidnapped on February 25, 1980, and brutally tortured and murdered.

Even veteran journalist Ghassan Tuani, editor-in-chief of An-Nahar newspaper, who passed away in 2012 at the age of 86, was a fierce advocate of press freedoms and was jailed several times in the years before the 1975-1990 civil war for his media rights advocacy. Today, most journalists sip predigested meals from the official spoon instead of foraging for themselves, and by doing so, enjoy kickbacks on a scale never witnessed before in the field of journalism.

Will no one take the place of those courageous journalists of old who once gave their very lives to uncover the truth and open our eyes to the lies, half-truths, and manipulations? We need such men and women today more than ever before, because as Thomas Cox says, "There is far more to this world than taught in our schools, shown in the media, or proclaimed by the state. Most of mankind lives in a hypnotic trance, taking to be reality what is instead a twisted simulacrum of reality, a collective dream in which values are inverted, lies are taken as truth, and tyranny is accepted as security. They enjoy their ignorance and cling tightly to the misery that gives them identity."



EXPAND YOUR VERBAL SKILLS IN 2015

MARIO NAJM

We all tend to think and express ourselves in words and that makes it one of the most important skills we can, and should, develop. In our lifetime, we spend thousands of hours acquiring expertise in our native language in addition to another language, i.e. Arabic and English, Arabic and French, or Arabic, English, and French, as in the case of Lebanon.

People who can express themselves clearly are perceived as more intelligent and higher status; hence, they are accorded greater respect. That is why we should spend our life sharpening our language skills to help us grow.

One of the easiest ways to do so is to get a good dictionary and thesaurus. Of course, many online dictionaries and thesauruses may help, but the mighty physical volumes are the kings of the heap. These two references should become your most loyal companions in your quest to develop your language skills.

The second most important step is to read. Try to read the good stuff, such as the works of great writers, because this is the only way to truly develop your abilities with words. Reading serves to increase, among other things, our understanding of concepts, our acquisition of knowledge, and our ability to develop better skills of comprehension and expression.

Third, make it a habit to capture new words. Most of us tend to stick to a vocabulary that is limited in both range and scope. Instead of skipping words we do not understand when reading a text, we should turn to a dictionary to learn more about the word. The more words we learn, the smarter we become, as this encourages the growth of new brain cells.

Fourth, we all write, whether it is a text message, an e-mail, or a paper, and we can all improve our writing. When reviewing your work always ask yourself if your writing expresses what you really mean, whether your writing would be clear to the reader, and find ways to make it more concise. Remember, most writing can be improved by cutting out unnecessary or repetitive elements. By being your own editor, you improve your language skills.

Fifth, learn to play games that involve words, such as scrabble, cryptic crosswords, code-breakers, etc. Word games are ideal for increasing your verbal dexterity.

Sixth, listen to yourself. Shoot a video clip with yourself speaking or use the recording function on your smartphone. How do you sound? Most people are surprised to discover that they display a number of errors in their everyday speech. For example, many people pepper their talk with filler words, such as "like," "well," "um," or 'you know'. Get rid of these faults and not only will you sound more articulate but also more confident and refined.



ARTICLES
IN FRENCH

ABDO KAHİ

DU POUVOIR DES MOTS
OU
de l'histoire des histoires...
de nos histoires.

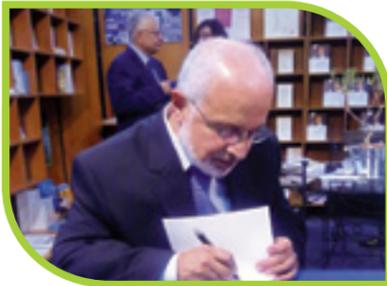


DU POUVOIR DES MOTS OU DE L'HISTOIRE DES HISTOIRES ... DE NOS HISTOIRES.

Ce livre vient couronner vingt ans d'efforts et de luttes, des fois véhémentes, au Centre Libanais de Recherches Sociétales, Université Notre-Dame de Louaizé, pour donner sens à la recherche sociétale et humaine globale.

Après avoir développé ses réflexions sur l'être en situation, dans six livres qui ont paru successivement à Dar Annahar entre les années 2003 et 2012, Abdo Kahi vient, dans ce livre, relever la responsabilité du langage humain dans les différentes formes de soumission qu'impose le pouvoir des mots sur l'être en état d'expression. Il s'emploie, à cet effet, à souligner les charges émotives que la mémoire de cet être lui renvoie à l'évocation des mots auxquels il va avoir recours, en le ramenant aux traces des événements traumatisants qui ont été à l'origine du sens qui leur a été accordé, et qui ont fait perpétuer ce sens dans le temps.

Une histoire racontée par Abdo Kahi sur l'histoire de son livre



Abdo Kahi, pourquoi, donc, êtes-vous arrivé au point de soupçonner les mots d'être à la source du pouvoir qui s'exerce sur l'être humain ?

Pourquoi j'en suis arrivé là ? pourquoi je suis arrivé dans mes recherches au point de soupçonner les mots, mes mots ? Mais comment peut-on ne pas arriver à se résoudre à se plier à la pression grandissante de sa curiosité de chercheur, cette curiosité qui m'a conduit à la source de mes doutes, où j'ai retrouvé le pouvoir agissant en moi sur mes mots ?

Comment peut-on faire la sourde oreille à cette curiosité qui n'arrête pas de me pousser en tant que chercheur à explorer ce qui se passe à cette source, en m'amenant à faire ressusciter une histoire presque imaginaire sur un éventuel périple effectué par les mots ?

Et pourquoi, à partir de là, ne pas répondre à cette curiosité de chercheur qui m'a conduit sur le chemin de l'abandon des approches de recherche tant appréciées pour leurs capacités de fournir des preuves savantes aux analyses intelligentes qui ont servi les décisions efficaces, pour me projeter sur les parcours de cette histoire, une histoire qui a dû exister mais qui n'a jamais pu être reconnue !

En vous projetant sur les parcours de votre histoire imaginaire, comment avez-vous fait pour argumenter votre doute du pouvoir des mots ?

Pour argumenter mon doute du pouvoir des mots, je me suis évertué à apprendre à relire la science (les sciences et les scientifiques), la philosophie (les philosophes), et les religions (les livres saints et leurs interprétations), dans des tentatives répétées d'élargir mes connaissances, en vue de conforter davantage ma compréhension des raisons des endoctrinements, qui ont envahi les mémoires et qui se sont transformés en signes et symboles, imprégnant de leurs marques les histoires des temps, telles qu'elles nous sont parvenues jusqu'à nos jours.

Mais qu'est-ce qui vous reste de tout cet apprentissage ?

Il ne me reste, en définitive, que ma curiosité de chercheur. C'est cette curiosité que j'avais préservée en mon for intérieur tout au long de mon parcours de recherche, et qui est toujours aussi vivace en moi qu'elle l'était en ma prime jeunesse, et que j'ai l'intention de garder aussi ardente, et le plus longtemps possible, en tant que sociologue, rodé à l'analyse démographique, où il ne s'agit pas, à chaque fois, de dénombrer et d'évaluer la progression de nos malheurs et souffrances, mais de déchiffrer les dynamiques des sociétés humaines basées sur la solidarité citoyenne de nature sociétale, solidarité que nous avons osé soumettre aux envies du pouvoir en vigueur pour justifier l'exploitation des plus faibles par l'ordre des plus forts.

Comment avez-vous découvert le pouvoir qu'ont les mots dans la structuration des liens humains ?

Dans mes recherches, les mots commencent à se révéler dans leur vérité, comme potentiel de pouvoir qui s'exerce sur les individus et les groupes à leurs simples évocations par eux. J'en suis arrivé à cette conclusion, parce que j'ai constaté qu'en voulant être encore plus clair dans la présentation des résultats de mes recherches, qui montraient bien, et d'une manière statistiquement défendable, la rythmique de la détérioration du sociétal au Liban, et dans le monde en général, je finissais par dévoiler à mon public les mécanismes du jeu de force qui commande ses angoisses, et par tout perdre en conséquence, face à la taxation inconsciente de non-réceptivité, que mon message devait faire entraîner au niveau de la mémoire gouvernée par l'ordre socioculturel en vigueur.

Que faut-il faire pour endiguer la dérive des mots ?

Il faut, surtout, s'arrêter de vouloir prouver quoi que ce soit sur le chemin de la logique des choses, parce qu'il viendra toujours quelqu'un qui voudra prouver la logique opposée, en se basant sur des arguments empruntés à la culture mère qui alimente l'univers symbolique de cette logique, ce qui conduirait à la lutte entre ces deux logiques jusqu'à l'assujettissement de l'une à l'autre.

Quelles sont les raisons qui vous ont conduits à adopter une pareille position à l'égard du dialogue, qui, selon vous, gagnerait à se faire dans le silence du dialogue ?

Ce sont mes recherches qui m'ont aidé à constater que les états culturels ne sont pas le fruit d'un choix et n'appartiennent pas à la logique du choix. Ces recherches m'ont, surtout permis de me rendre compte du fait que ces états ne peuvent qu'être admis, appréciés et compris tels qu'ils sont, pour que les vrais choix, une fois revus et reconsidérés, avec l'intention nette d'être libérés dans leurs perspectives : sociale et humaine globale, puissent se faire attifer, de nouveau, de leurs atours culturels, en accordant à tous ceux qui auraient opté pour eux, et à chacun de son côté, l'autorisation de procéder à la relecture des mots, qu'ils vont dorénavant utiliser ainsi que de l'ensemble du vocabulaire qui va accompagner ces mots, en vue de délivrer le sens recherché par eux de l'influence qu'a le pouvoir dominant sur lui.

De quoi l'avenir sera-t-il fait, selon vous ?

L'avenir dépendra de notre capacité de favoriser de nouveaux choix culturels. Il sera tributaire de notre habilité à procéder à la mise en œuvre de ces nouveaux choix, et de veiller à ce qu'ils soient suffisamment ouverts pour qu'ils permettent à ceux qui vont les adopter de déchiffrer l'histoire, en la restituant à travers les temps, dans une nouvelle relecture des produits culturels et socialement religieux qui ont rythmé la segmentation de ces temps en périodes historiquement distinctes, de manière à pouvoir retrouver le point à partir duquel, l'humanité aura une nouvelle occasion d'espérer reprendre le bout du fil qu'elle pourra retisser, pour tapisser la voie du temps, qui s'ouvrira à son cœur comme à ses pas, pour gagner l'universel, qui n'est autre que l'écoute perpétuelle de l'autre en soi.

SI LE LIBAN M'ETAIT CONTÉ

**Said Akl Tel Que Je L'ai Connue :
Une Etoile Qui A Traversé Notre Ciel
La Légende Dorée**

PROF. GEORGES LABAKI*

J'avais l'âge de quatorze ans quand j'avais entendu parler de Said Akl qui était déjà bien établi.

On disait alors intelligent comme Said Akl. Je travaillais dans une librairie pour pouvoir payer une partie des frais de l'école et pour gagner un peu d'argent de poche pour l'hiver. Intention oh combien bénéfique qui m'a valu bien plus. En effet, je passais le temps à lire tout ce qui me passait sous la main. Bientôt, je fis le tour de tous les bouquins la librairie. Je commençais par la presse quotidienne, continuais par les hebdomadaires avant d'aborder le roman. Je finis par évoluer dans un monde féérique. Mon imaginaire en fut tellement enflé que je fus attiré par l'aventure ce qui ne cadrait pas avec mon air calme et posé. Cela me poussa un jour à traverser tout jeune les contrées les plus lointaines. Non satisfait de mes lectures au travail, je ramena des livres à domicile. Ma mère en fut alarmée et me cachait mes livres car elle croyait que trop de lectures rendait fou un peu à la manière de Said Akl dont les actions et le comportement sortaient de l'ordinaire.

Pour en revenir à Said Akl, je me souviens que je lisais l'article qu'il écrivait tous les jours dans le journal *Lissane El Hale* qui paraissait tous les après-midi. J'attendais impatientement pour lire l'article quotidien de ce grand écrivain dont les idées ne tarissaient point. Il s'agissait d'un encart situé sur la partie gauche de la première page. Il ne s'agissait pas d'un seul article mais d'une suite de paragraphes qui traitaient de sujets différents à la fois littéraires, historiques, politiques et sociaux. Le point commun était la grandeur du Liban, sa place dans le monde et sa pérennité. Je me souviens que les attaques de Said Akl étaient les plus virulentes contre les politiciens libanais qu'il accusait par leur fourberie et manque de vision d'être responsables de la décadence du pays des Cèdres.

Said Akl y racontait également qu'il touchait deux livres libanais pour chaque mot publié dans son article à *Lissane El Hale*. Cela, ajouta-t-il, lui permettait de créer un prix mensuel de mille livres libanais, somme fort importante pour l'époque. A début de chaque mois, tout le Liban et le monde arabe avaient les yeux rivés sur le choix de Said Akl. Ce dernier accompagnait le prix d'un texte court mais incisif qui justifiait les raisons du choix.

Mais la chose qui exercera plus tard une influence sur tout mon parcours professionnel fut son analyse sur les moyens de financer ses projets grandioses pour rehausser la splendeur libanaise dans le monde. Il voulait lever à l'instar des pays développés un impôt progressif sur le revenu qui aurait permis de financer les projets les plus grandioses. Tout cela cadrait bien et semblait très logique si ce n'était l'esprit corrompu des responsables libanais qu'Akl fustigeait de toutes ses forces. L'effet des idées de Said Akl sur mon âme fut immédiat. Je décidais d'étudier à l'avenir les finances publiques et la fiscalité pour pouvoir contribuer à la



mise en œuvre du dessein de Said Akl. Ce que j'accomplis plus tard en obtenant un Doctorat d'Etat en Finances Publiques et Fiscalité de la Sorbonne.

Les années passèrent. Je continuais à lire les articles de Said Akl. La guerre rattrapa le Liban et *Lissane El Hale* arrêta de paraître. Mais Akl continuait son parcours fulgurant. Il semait l'espoir là où il n'y en avait pas.

Les écrits de Said Akl ne passionnaient. Je cherchais un moyen de rencontrer ce grand homme à l'allure majestueuse et au Verbe cassant et saisissant. Je cherchais à écrire un livre sur lui. Un jour, l'opportunité se présenta.

Le jour convenu, j'étais fin prêt. Je voulais lui parler de mon dessein. Il m'accueillit dans son bureau à Ain Remaneh dans la banlieue de Beyrouth. Il commença par me raconter le rôle clef joué par le poète Salah Labaki qui le premier a reconnu le talent littéraire du jeune Akl.

Salah Labaki étant de passage à Zahlé dans le cadre d'une affaire judiciaire, il fut invité à écouter le jeune poète en herbe. Après l'avoir entendu, Salah Labaki prononça ces mots prophétiques : quand se jeune homme commencera à écrire nous casserons tous nos plumes. Salah Labaki et d'autres poètes firent en sorte que Akl descendit s'établir à Beyrouth pour se lancer dans sa carrière littéraire.

Said Akl poursuivit : Salah Labaki est un grand poète. Je veux organiser une grande manifestation poétique internationale en son honneur. J'ai d'ailleurs écrit le poème que je prononcerais à cette occasion. Mais je n'accepterais qu'une manifestation internationale de grande ampleur et rien de moins.

Une fois la glace rompue par cette histoire impromptue, je racontais à Said Akl l'influence qu'il eut sur ma destinée et il en fut agréablement surpris et étonné. Enfin, je lui fis part de mon dessein d'écrire un livre sur lui.

Il me donna une autre idée consistant à traiter un aspect particulier de son œuvre. Il fut convenu que je lui rendrais visite dans sa résidence d'été dans le Kesrouan. Il ajouta : si tu écris ce livre tu pourras en vivre confortablement financièrement.

Je lui rendis visite pendant tout un été sans rater aucun rendez-vous. On discutait alors des choses intellectuelles les plus raffinées. En revoyant mes notes, je vais en citer quelques unes.

-Je voudrais dit-il fonder le plus grand littéraire au monde : vingt fois plus important que le prix Nobel. Dieu est généreux, il aime les généreux. Les radins n'ont pas de place auprès de lui. Moi, je gagne ma vie grâce à mes livres. Je dépense une partie de mes gains pour donner un prix littéraire. On appelle cela à Zahlé *Biet-fakouane* ce qui veut dire qu'on dépense sur ce qui nous fait plaisir ou nous intéresse. Quand je donnais mon prix littéraire tout le monde retenait son souffle pour savoir qui a obtenu le prix Said Akl. Le président Tunisien Habib Bourguiba avait demandé à son ambassadeur à Beyrouth de lui communiquer régulièrement le nom de l'heureux titulaire du prix. Ce mécène savait où placer son argent et n'en avait cure.



Une autre fois, il me parla de ses rapports avec la politique et les politiciens. Il s'estimait au dessus de ces derniers qu'il détestait à cause de leurs fourberies, leurs incompétence et mal qu'ils faisaient au Liban. Une fois, il fut invité à prononcer le discours de la cérémonie de remise des diplômes dans une université libanaise connue. Le matin même de la cérémonie, il tomba par hasard sur le carton d'invitation qui disait que la cérémonie était placée sous l'égide du Président de la République. Coup de colère inimaginable de Said Akl qui refusa de participer à la cérémonie malgré les supplications de l'Université en question et l'intervention d'un grand nombre de personnalités de premier plan. Moi, Said Akl me dit-il fièrement, je suis plus important que le Président de la République et tous les politiciens.

A ce propos un des plus grands richards de la politique libanaise chercha à le rencontrer. En vain! Said Akl ne daigna même pas répondre à son appel. -Sans son argent me dit-il, ce type ne vaut rien. C'est quelqu'un dénudé de tout, un pauvre type qui n'est rien du tout.

Mais si la valeur des écrits littéraires est incontestablement reconnue car elle s'impose d'elle-même que ses détracteurs le veuillent ou pas, certains de ses propos politiques surtout à propos des palestiniens ont été fortement critiqués. Mais c'était un homme courageux et clair. Tout ce qui pouvait nuire au Liban le rendait inflexible. Dans ce cas, il était impitoyable contre ses détracteurs.

A ce propos, il me raconta l'épisode suivant : durant la guerre du Liban, Arafat avait un jour déclaré un jour qu'il avait gouverné le Liban. Personne n'osa lui répondre. Said Akl décida de le faire. Il le fit sur la première page de son journal le Liban à travers un grand titre qui était le suivant : *Al alout* (le salopard).

Le matin même de la parution de son journal, Said Akl reçut un coup de fil qui lui faisait savoir que la Sureté Générale avait interdit sa parution à cause du titre. Furieux, Akl demanda sur le champ rendez-vous auprès du Président de la République Elias Sarkis.

Akl se présenta au Palais présidentiel à Baabda. Il se tint debout à la porte du bureau du Président de la République et s'adressa à lui en ses termes : je ne vous connais pas mais voilà. Arafat a prétendu qu'il a gouverné le Liban. Personne n'a osé lui répondre sauf moi. Mais la Sureté Générale empêche la parution de mon journal. Je vous demande d'ordonner à la Sureté Générale de laisser mon journal paraître sinon je mènerai

une campagne virulente contre vous. Et Said Akl de poursuivre : le Président Sarkis décrocha sur le champ même son téléphone sur le champ même et ordonna de laisser paraître le journal.



Une autre fois, je fus avec ma femme Samar témoin de cet épisode marrant. Une fois, nous sommes arrivés chez le grand poète Akl. Il y avait un homme qui était venu prendre l'avis de Said Akl sur ces poèmes. Said Akl lui demanda : que faites-vous dans la vie ? Je suis professeur de mathématiques. Et Said Akl de répondre : je suis fort surpris que vous le soyez car un poème est une construction mathématiques ce qui manque dans vos poèmes. Gardez vos poèmes pour vous-même, et surtout ne dites jamais que vous êtes poète. Embarrassés nous cherchâmes ma femme et moi-même à sauver la situation. Mais Said Akl demeura inflexible.

J'ai surtout été frappé par l'énergie positive qui émanait de ce grand homme. Son grand savoir lui a donné une grande spiritualité qui émanait de tout son être. Une fois, je déplorais la situation du pays, il me dit : il faut toujours construire sur ce qui est positif dans la vie. Les choses négatives ne mènent

à rien. En réalité, il vivait tellement dans la vérité qu'il disait des choses d'une grande profondeur intellectuelle et spirituelle fruits de l'esprit de la vérité qui animait tout son être.

Il était le parrain de notre fille Aurèlie Georges Labaki. La cérémonie fut belle et la suite donna lieu à la tenue d'un grand salon littéraire dans un climat cordial dans notre foyer. Mais j'éprouve deux regrets : Aurèlie n'a pu le rencontrer vers la fin de ses jours ce qu'elle me reproche amèrement. En outre, il voulait m'accorder son prix littéraire mais des difficultés logistiques ne le permirent point.

Somme toute, Said Akl dépasse a marqué son temps. Par son esthétique et la valeur de ses poèmes c'est un grand demiurge. Un jour il me dit : les Arabes n'ont pas connu la poésie. Mais son œuvre gagnera-t-elle l'éternité ? Résistera-t-elle à l'usure du temps ? Au niveau de sa valeur littéraire la réponse est positive. Mais les ennemis de Said Al feront tout pour le dénigrer dans le monde arabe pour des raisons politiques et non littéraires.

DU HAUT DES CEDRES DU LIBAN ON S'INCLINE DEVANT TON GENIE



SI LE LIBAN M'ETAIT CONTÉ

La Débâcle

PROF. GEORGES LABAKI*

Comme tous les premiers du mois, Jamil se rendait à la banque pour régler les factures accumulées au cours du mois. Ce matin, il y avait une grande foule venue pour les mêmes raisons. Jamil fut obligé de faire la queue chose qu'il détestait le plus au monde comme ses compatriotes. Mais que faire ! Tout retard de paiement risquait de lui coûter cher. Il prit son malheur en peine et fit la queue comme tout le monde ce qui il considérait presque comme une insulte. Soudain, il vit dans la foulée Salim son camarade de jeunesse au village. Il alla vers lui pour s'enquérir de ses nouvelles car cela faisait des années qu'il ne l'avait pas revu. Salim était étudiant en droit quand la guerre éclata. Les gens prirent leur peine en patience car ils croyaient que la guerre n'allait durer que l'espace de quelques semaines. Mais les choses se compliquaient de jours en jours. De nouveaux fronts étaient ouverts toutes les semaines. On comptabilisait les semaines de combat en pensant que la semaine en cours était la dernière du conflit. On en était au quinzième round. Le calibre des armes augmentait de plus en plus. Salim décida de quitter la capitale devenue peu sûre pour se réfugier dans son village situé au fin fond de la campagne. Salim adorait son village. Au début, il fut content d'y retourner. Cela lui assurait un certain repos et après tout le conflit n'allait pas durer trop longtemps. Mais son analyse de la situation du pays se révéla complètement erronée. Non seulement le conflit ne s'arrêtait pas mais il se rapprochait du village. En outre, il était devenu presque impossible de rentrer dans la capitale.

Une nuit, les villageois furent réveillés par le bruit des explosions qu'on entendait au loin. Pour la première fois, la guerre était devenue une réalité et non plus un épisode reporté par les médias. Plus alarmant on parlait de barrages ambulants et inopinés exécutés par des hommes armés qui enlevaient les gens pour les massacrer selon leur appartenance politiques ou confessionnelles.

Les habitants du village prirent peur surtout que leur village était isolé au fin fonds du pays. De plus, il était situé dans une plaine ce qui rendait sa défense plus difficile que les localités situées dans les montagnes plus facilement défendables.

Une réunion fut convenue pour discuter de la gravité de la situation. Deux opinions s'affrontaient : la première opinion, défendue par des gens plutôt âgés qui préféraient négocier et trouver une sortie honorable au conflit ou plutôt une reddition qui ne porterait pas son nom; quant à la seconde opinion, elle défendue par des jeunes -à leur tête Salim-qui refusait toute négociation et préféraient se battre jusqu'au bout. Toute autre solution était assimilée à une trahison.

Les choses prirent une tournure dramatique. Les injures commencèrent à fuser et les voix à s'élever. On en vain presque aux mains entre les deux parties. Salim à la tête du second groupe cria à tue tête. Soudain, il se saisit d'une chaise qu'il lança sur ses opposants. Plus pacifiques, ces derniers laissèrent tomber et se hâtèrent de se retirer.

Salim était au summum de sa joie. Son patriotisme avait triomphé sur le défaitisme. La nation ne méritait-elle pas d'être défendue fut-ce au prix de la vie ? Gare aux poltrons qui menaçaient l'existence même de son village millénaire qu'il aimait au plus profond de son être.

Très rapidement des armes furent acquises. Des longues veilles furent organisées à l'affût d'un ennemi invisible. Mais la guerre se rapprochait jours après jours du village. Les villageois étaient déterminés à défendre leurs villages. Et un village ça compte dans le pays. En effet, ici on aborde toute personne qu'on rencontre par une seule question principale : d'où es-tu ? Salim avait une allure svelte. Il était très déterminé et avait de l'espoir là où il n'y en avait guerre. En effet, le village était isolé dans la montagne dans une région hostile et inhospitalière.

Ce qui devait arriver, arriva. L'armée nationale se désintégra et toutes les casernes tombèrent entre les mains des rebelles qui saisirent armes et munitions. Le rapport de force était devenu inégal pour le village de Salim et ses habitants. L'attaque du village ne se fit pas attendre. Dans la foulée de leur fulgurante avancée,

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les mutins voulait en finir des villages fiers de leur appartenance. L'attaque eut lieu à heure du matin d'une nuit sombre ou la lumière de la lune et des étoiles avaient disparue.

L'attaque fut vaillamment repoussée malgré un rapport de force défavorable aux défenseurs. Les hordes renouvelèrent leurs attaques toutes les nuits pendant cent jours. Ils furent repoussés cent fois de suite. Plus on en tuait, plus ils en venaient.

Finalement, on du se rendre à l'évidence : malgré la bravoure des villageois on ne pourrait pas tenir pour longtemps. On commençait à chercher une issue. Il fallait trouver la bonne car en cas d'échec on risquait le massacre général.

Salim se porta volontaire pour aider les villageois à s'échapper. Ils furent divisés en petit groupe à commencer par les enfants et les vieillards. La nuit venue, il fallait traverser le territoire tenu par l'ennemi à travers un ravin étroit et fort escarpée et rocailleux. La marche devait durer près de quatre heures dans un silence total sous peine de se faire repérer et massacrer.

Le scénario se répéta pendant plusieurs semaines. Salim redoublait d'ingéniosité pour faire passer les civils. Plus d'une fois en rentrant il risquait de tomber nez à nez sur l'ennemi. Maintes fois, il dut passer toute la journée blottie sous un bosquet ou dans l'eau de la rivière pour éviter l'ennemi.

Ce dernier redoublait ses attaques et cherchait désespérément à gagner du terrain. L'assaut final ne devait plus tarder. Heureusement, les civils avaient quitté le patelin. Il n'en restait plus que quelques vieillards.

Une nuit, l'attaque fut si violente que les défenses du village s'effondrèrent lentement mais surement. Il fallait fuir coute que coute. Salim assura la couverture de la retraite des derniers villageois.

Il resta sur les barricades tout seul faisant face à l'ennemi. Ces derniers n'étaient qu'à quelques mètres de Salim. Pourtant ce dernier ne prit pas peur. Il devait couvrir la retraite de tout les villageois sans exception. Le matin commençait à poindre. Le village était vidé de ses habitants. Salim se trouvait dans une situation de plus en plus critique. Il lança quelques grenades vers les positions ennemies et se retira. Il traversa les dédales du village qu'il connaissait bien ce qui lui donnait un certain avantage. Mais l'ennemi affluait de tous les cotés.

Salim fut encerclé entre deux maisons. Impossible de passer car l'ennemi était partout. On voyait déjà les flammes qui s'enlevaient des maisons que les assaillants brulaient après les avoir pillées comme s'ils voulaient cacher leurs forfaits. L'ennemi s'approcha de plus en plus. Finalement, la maison ou Salim se cachait fut repérée. Les couts de feus fusèrent de partout. Le combat était inégal car les assaillants étaient très nombreux.

Salim n'envisagea à aucun moment de se rendre. L'ennemi était en face de lui. Il n'avait plus qu'une issue probable. Sauter dans un ravin situé à cent mètres dans la vallée. Salim n'hésita pas un instant. Il rassembla ses forces et se jeta dans le vide sous le sifflement des balles.

Pendant quelques instants interminables, il vit toute sa vie se dérouler devant lui dans ses moindres détails. C'était pensa-t-il comme un examen de conscience avant la mort finale. Subitement, il sentit son corps plonger dans l'eau de la rivière qui traversait le ravin.

Mais, les malheurs de Salim n'étaient pas prêts de finir. Il fallait traverser les multiples embuscades que l'ennemi avait tendues dans les forêts environnantes. Salim mit plus de deux semaines à arriver en territoire ami.

Son corps était fortement affaibli mais son moral était de fer. Il avait sauvé tous les habitants de son village. Aucun ne fut pris.

- Alors que deviens-tu?
- Je suis devenu un courtier. Je vends des terrains contre des commissions très juteuses.
- Et qui sont tes clients ?
- N'importe qui. Je vends au plus offrant. Ce qui m'intéresse c'est ma commission. D'ailleurs, les habitants du terroir n'ont pas les moyens d'acheter quoi que ce soit. Ils tiennent à leurs terres comme les prunelles de leurs yeux. Ils vivent sur un trésor mais pauvrement.
- Une idée folle traversa mon esprit. Après une certaine hésitation, je lui posais la question :
- J'espère que tu ne vends pas nos ennemis qui ont un jour attaqué notre village.
- Et pourquoi pas ? Business is business dit-il avec un anglais cassé. Tu sais, j'aime bien vendre aux nôtres. Mais, comme ils ont tout perdu, non seulement, ils ne peuvent plus acheter mais ils vendent leurs terrains pour survivre.
- Mais encore !
- Oui nos ennemis d'hier on déjà acheté presque tout le village. Il paye comptant et au prix fort sans discuter. Et de plus ils tiennent leurs paroles.
- Mais voyons, Salim as-tu oublié combien ils ont tué des notre.
- Cela est du passé. D'ailleurs, qui pensent encore aujourd'hui à tous ces sacrifices. Tout est tombé dans l'oubli.
- As-tu oublié combien de personnes tu as porté des kilomètres sur ton dos ?
- Tout ça, c'est fini. Ce qui compte, c'est l'argent. D'ailleurs tu connais bien notre proverbe : tu as un rond tu vaux un rond ; tu n'as rien tu ne vaux rien.
- Je regardais Salim. Son physique s'était fortement embourgeoisé : il était entièrement changé. Il était devenu tout potelé et portait un cigare énorme à la main. Il avait un bracelet et une bague énorme en or à la main. Il était tellement gros qu'il avait de la peine à respirer.
- Dis, je suis obligé de te quitter car j'attends des clients étrangers qui sont intéressés par le Mont de la Lune qui surplombe notre village. Ils offrent un chèque en blanc pour cette belle pinède.
- Mais voyons Salim, vendre la terre c'est vendre l'histoire et la mémoire de tout un peuple. Tu ne peux échanger de la terre ferme contre des billets en papier qui ne vont pas tarder à ternir ou à être dépensés donc à t'échapper, alors que la terre reste éternelle.
- Tu sais, tout le monde le fais. Si ce n'est pas moi ce sera un autre qui le fera et cueillera la commission. Et puis, avec ton idée de résistance, tous les jeunes sont morts à mon avis pour rien.
- Mais tu sais bien qu'ils sont morts pour que nous puissions vivre alors qu'eux n'avaient ni terrain ni fortune. Ils sont morts pour un idéal.
- Bon, je te quitte ! A propos si tu compte vendre ta maison familiale au village fais moi signe. Je peux t'apporter un très bon prix. Les étrangers sont preneurs à n'importe quel prix. Il faut dire qu'entre l'aridité de leur pays, la douceur et la verdure de notre pays il n'y a rien à comparer.

Soudain, j'entendis la guichetière m'appeler pour me présenter au guichet.

