

**Dear Friends of Notre Dame University – Louaize, Lebanon,  
Good evening...**

**With great pleasure, I arrived yesterday to Detroit coming from Lebanon to participate in this remarkable event and express to you my delight and joyfulness. I am very glad to be here among you this evening, and welcome you to the 2007 Fall Banquet of the American Friends of Notre Dame University – Louaize, Lebanon.**

**There are three issues I want to share with you this evening:**

**First, I am very happy and I feel very much encouraged by your presence. Your presence here tonight is a real encouragement for us to go on with our mission in Lebanon. It makes me more convinced that you believe in what we at NDU are doing. Your support for our efforts is very significant to us and it really makes a difference. We, at NDU, definitely count on it.**

**Second, allow me dear friends to put you in the picture of NDU, knowing that for many of you, it is not the first time you hear about it. Notre Dame University-Louaize is currently celebrating its 20th anniversary (1987-2007). NDU is unique in being the only Catholic institution adopting the American system of higher education in the Middle-East. Since one year ago, NDU has started the process to be American accredited. With the spirit of openness, NDU strives to graduate well-formed students that are successful decision-makers. It instills in them core ethical values and the belief in dialogue, forgiveness and justice. Our success in this endeavor is partly**

measured by the accomplishments of our graduates while pursuing their higher education at major universities in both the United States and Canada. Among such universities are Harvard, MIT, Cornell, Wayne State and many others.

In 20 years, NDU has become one of the largest universities in Lebanon. Seven Colleges with more than 5,000 students enrolled at undergraduate and graduate levels, and 550 faculty members together with 300 staff members being at their service. The number of the alumni has crossed over the 10,000. Impressive three campuses, with a large housing complex at the Main Campus including 450 beds for both male and female students as well as faculty members, this was inaugurated beginning this fall.

However, the dire economic situation in Lebanon has caused a large number of our students to suffer from financial hardship. In spite of its limited resources, NDU has never wavered to respond to the needs of its students. It has significantly increased its financial assistance in order to ease their financial burden. A prolonged and expanded financial assistance program by the university will ultimately hamper its growth and adversely affect its future goals. Therefore, we are seeking the financial support of our alumni, American friends, and the Lebanese communities in North America to provide scholarships for our needy students. Thus, supporting the University to expand its programs, develop new laboratories in emerging technologies and upgrade existing laboratories.

Moreover, NDU can serve its American friends and the Lebanese communities through its student exchange program and the Arabic

summer program. It provides a perfect setting for living the Lebanese cultural experience at the college level.

The third issue I want to share with you this evening is my deep appreciation and gratefulness to all those who have made this event a success. Beside all our guests, whose presence is essential, several people have been working hard for quite a few months to bring about this success.

Allow me at first to acknowledge the great support of Monsignor Michael Kail, who, as always, generously opens the doors of St. Sharbel's Parish to NDU and hosts its activities, and along with him I would like to appreciate the efforts of Fr. Jean Paul Kimes. Nevertheless, my sincere gratitude goes to the Lebanese community for its warm welcome.

We are also greatly grateful to Madonna University for offering their facilities and actively participating in our activities.

Moreover, I cannot but express my indebtedness to the American Friends of NDU Louaize, Michigan Chapter. On behalf of all NDU community, I extend my thankfulness and recognition to all members of the Chapter's Board for this outstanding organization. They have been restlessly working to make us enjoy this evening. These people are:

**Dr. Nabil Chalhoub, *President and Acting-Treasurer***

**Mrs. Helen Habib, *Vice President and Chair of the Public Relations Committee***

**Sr. Nancy Jamroz, *Chair of the Academic Relation Committee***

**Mr. Robert Akouri, *Board Member and Attorney of the Chapter***

**Mr. Giscard Kfoury, *Secretary***

**Dr. Jonathan Swift, Ms. Jo-Ann Nortley, Mr. Mario Jbeily, Mr. Elie Naim, and Fr. Joseph Khalil, *Board Members.***

**Last but not least, my sincere thanks go to many people, who in coordination with the Board members, have been involved in the preparation of this wonderful gathering, among them are NDU students who are in Michigan on a student exchange program with Madonna University in Livonia.**

**Thank you all for being here tonight. And now, let us watch together a short movie about NDU.**

**Fr. Walid Moussa  
President  
Notre Dame University, Louaize, Lebanon**