

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is an occasion of recognition of one of our major figures in philosophy and political science: Charles Malik. I will leave it to our guest speaker Mr. Cecil Hourani to give us a vivid picture on the author of *Al-Muquaddima*, and the co-author of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

I would like, on the other hand, to highlight the identity of our new **Institute of Lebanese Thought (ILT)**. This is a new body at NDU who takes care of prominent Lebanese figures such as Charles Malik, the subject of our meeting today. I will focus just on few points for us to clarify the role of this body:

The Institute for Lebanese Thought is an inter-disciplinary body working on publications and other academic activities to explore a range of themes pertaining to the study of Lebanese culture and heritage as reflected in Lebanese literature, history, theology, philosophy, political science, and other aspects related to the characteristics of Lebanon, past and present.

The major aspiration of the institute is to well discover the human intellectual outcomes, in the form of written texts, in diversified fields of humanities and social sciences. This endeavor focuses on the significance of the Lebanese intellectual and spiritual contribution to other civilizations, Eastern and Western. This goes in parallel with the University mission that inspires the Catholic Maronite heritage and that fosters excellence in scholarship, lifelong learning, and enlightened citizenship.

The *ILT* has been involved so far in several intellectual activities such as the conference on Kamal Al-Hage, the proceedings of which have been recently published, the exhibition of unknown works of Kahlil Gibran, the scholarly work of editing and introducing the manuscripts of Charles Malik and preparing them for publication. A study on *Al-Makshouf* Literary Journal that has been prepared and reviewed in preparation for publication and other similar activities.

Along with the abovementioned projects, the **ILT** is comprehensively involved in building a national bibliographic database on the publications of Lebanese authors since the beginning of the seventeenth century, date of launching the Lebanese Renaissance movement with the **Maronite College of Rome**. This database shall be built chronologically by areas of disciplines covering main authors from the seventeenth century till today and covering areas related to theology, philosophy, literature, history, Arabic language, and other related topics.

We hope that with the development of the national bibliography the Institute will be ready, next year, to design and publish, its own website, in order to electronically circulate some of the outcomes of their research work together with related illustrations.

Let me remind you of two pioneering events at NDU in relation to Charles Malik:

- 1) The **ILT** has started a pioneering scholarly work, conducted by Mr. Tony Nasrallah, for the editing and publishing of Malik's manuscripts.
- 2) His bust at NDU is the first act of recognition and appreciation of Charles Malik of its kind in Lebanon.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A special welcome to Mr. Cecil Hourani as our guest speaker today at NDU, and welcome to you all on this distinguished event.

Fr. Walid Moussa
President