

**Letter of the Rector  
to the university community  
of the Saint Joseph University**

Dear Friends,

It is not usual for the Rector of the University to speak, at the threshold of a new academic year, to the friends, alumni, instructors, students, and staff members who all contribute, directly or indirectly, to the fulfillment of the mission of our University. However, these are unusual times and the dramatic event we shared force us to work in new conditions. It is certainly not the first time that our University lives through storms. From 1975 until 1990, it had to face terrible moments; it knew how to go through them and was able to resurface and even shine during these last years, always attempting to progress and, therefore, accomplish its mission in the service of Lebanon and the populations of the region.

Yet, here is a new disaster that hit the country. This time, our community has suffered less in its fields than the families of all its friends and partners. There are those of the South and the suburbs who lost everything; there are those who were directly hit by the economic upheaval. There is also, beyond the frontier of our community, the sorrow of so many people that were devastated by the war.

It is clear that in such a context we cannot stay passive and imagine for a single moment that our new academic year can go on as if nothing has happened. The Saint Joseph University has a charter, and it has a mission: it should remain a haven of knowledge, research and knowledge transmission. It cannot abandon the solidarity requirement that links it unfailingly to those with whom it lives and can only exist by serving them. Its concern is to train students to several professions, however this would be useless if these trainings could not immediately lead to help the people who have just fallen in despair and misery.

Therefore, in agreement with all the members of our community who have invested themselves since July 12 in the service of the destitute, we have decided to give this 2006-2007 year a unique character. Some suggested the **"7<sup>th</sup> Day Operation"**: during six days we study and on the seventh day we rest and express ourselves differently, by giving. "The Seventh Day" is a song by Dalida and a movie by Carlos Saura; it is and will be, for the coming year and for all those of our community who wish and who can, a time of donation, a sign of generosity to a Lebanon that needs to be rebuilt, and a moment of solidarity.

Beyond our political and religious sensitivities, we will be able to meet as citizens of the same country that should be rebuilt and that should regain its economic, cultural as well as spiritual dynamism. Together with the governmental authorities who will organize this reconstruction and the many civil society authorities who have already participated in this process, we shall try to contribute as a University concerned with the training of participants and contributors as well as the application on the field of the acquired, or in the process of being acquired, professionalism.

In concrete terms, intervention units are already set and you will soon receive invitations to participate. In accordance with its vocation, the University will have contributed, in its own way, to the revival of Lebanon, by reinforcing the links necessary to the national feeling and the citizenship awareness. It is the most important thing for the moment. It should be a priority for us all.