

LEBANESE CATHOLIC EPISCOPATE ASSEMBLY ISSUES CONCLUSIONS*

At the close of the Assembly of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops of Lebanon, which took place in Beirut from 21 June to 25 July, the Executive Commission of the Assembly issued the following communique.

The Assembly of Patriarchs and Bishops has held various successive meetings on the occasion of the ordinary session for 1972. The Assembly has discussed the various subjects on the agenda, on the basis of the data and the documents prepared by the various episcopal commissions with the help of numerous specialists: priests, religious and laymen.

The Assembly wished the decisions to be a step forward in the perspectives:

- of strengthening the spiritual bonds among the sons of the Church and particularly among those, ecclesiastics or laymen, who are engaged in the apostolate;
- of promoting a wider opening to the data of social life and an effort that is more aware of the needs on the part of responsible service.

ON THE INTERNAL PLANE

On the internal plane, the Assembly adopted the following measures:

1. Participation in the work of the Superiors General and Major Superiors of the various religious orders and institutes.
2. Creation of a General Secretariat of the Assembly and election of Mons. Ignace Maroun to this office.
3. Creation of a unified University center, which will ensure higher ecclesiastical education in its different branches, with a view to the preparation of ecclesiastics for priestly or

* L'Osservatore Romano, 24 August 1972.

religious life, and to allow those laymen who so desire to acquire a deep culture at the University level in the field of religious and ecclesiastical sciences.

4. Organization of co-education in Catholic schools according to the principles and conditions that the episcopal commission concerned is qualified to establish since it has the task of giving Catholic schools precise directives, binding upon them, with regard to certain methods for which modern pedagogy calls.

5. Granting the Episcopal Commission for the Media of Social Communication appropriate prerogatives and the means available to emphasize the importance of its mission and contribute to implementing it adequately.

EXTERNAL AND PUBLIC PLANE

As regards questions on the external and public plane, the Assembly has been guided in adopting its resolutions by the principles of responsible participation in permanent dialogue and loyal cooperation.

It is in this spirit, therefore, that the Commission has voted the following decisions. Among the most important resolutions:

1. Publication of a declaration that specifies the attitude of the Assembly with regard to Scholastic, pedagogical and cultural questions, to which it attributes the greatest importance.

2. Constitution of the Executive Episcopal Commission as a "Permanent Council" for public questions, delegating it to take an interest in all the problems of national life under the different aspects and inviting it to cooperate closely with laymen, who, in the diversity of their functions and situations have a large share of responsibility in the Church.

3. Proposal of amendments and projects regarding the laws that regulate personal status, in order to set up a more adequate justice and promote the ecclesiastical magistrature along the lines of the Lebanese magistrature.

4. Constitution of a special organism for University and student questions.

5. Creation of a religious and ecclesiastical information bureau at the General Secretariat of the Commission for the Media of social communication.

6. Celebration of the International Book Year, in connection with the proposals of the international coordination Ecclesiastical Committee to take the "book of books" (Holy Scripture) as centre of the activities they should carry out, in cooperation with the other Christian communities, schools, the various centres, publishing houses, bookshops and printing presses concerned.

The members of the Assembly expressed their deep and heartfelt grief at the loss that has befallen the Christian world, with the death of His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, a man of charity, brotherhood and unity among Christians.

EPISCOPAL ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Let us pray for our Bishops on the occasion of their episcopal ordination anniversaries.

Most Rev. Teopisto V. Alberto, D.D.
October 7, 1952

Most Rev. Odilo Etspueler, S.V.D.
October 11, 1956

Most Rev. Felix Zafra, D.D.
October 22, 1967

Most Rev. Epifanio B. Surban, D.D.
October 23, 1955

Most Rev. Juan B. Velasco, O.P.
October 23, 1955

His Eminence Rufino Card. Santos, D.D.
October 24, 1947

Most Rev. Hernando Y. Antiporda, D.D.
October 28, 1954

Most Rev. Henry Byrne, S.S.C.
October 29, 1956
