



ASIA/LEBANON - Cardinal Robert Sarah meets President Suleiman and the Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch: may our Churches be closer, especially in these difficult times

Baalbek (Agenzia Fides) - Cardinal Robert Sarah's visit "is going really well. To the intense program, unexpected and surprising meetings are added, such as what occurred yesterday between the Cardinal and the Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, Ignatius IV Hazim," said Mgr. Simon Faddoul, director of Caritas Lebanon, who offers Fides Agency a synthetic description of the first day in Lebanon land of the President of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, sent by the Pope in the Middle Eastern Country with the task to show the closeness of the Holy See and the universal Church to the people who are suffering due to the conflict in Syria.

Yesterday, November 7, the Cardinal was received by the President of the Republic of Lebanon, the Maronite Catholic Michel Suleiman. Then he met the Maronite Synod of Bishops - taking part in their monthly meeting - and visited the Armenian Catholic Patriarch Nerses Bedros XIX Tarmouni. There was also a "surprise" meeting with the old Orthodox Patriarch, who was born 91 years ago in a Syrian village near Hama. Fr. Faddoul says to Fides: "Patriarch Ignatius normally resides in Damascus. I found out that these days he was in Lebanon for a health check-up. I warned the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, and Cardinal Sarah, who wanted to visit the Orthodox Patriarch in hospital. It was an intense encounter between two men of the Church. The Patriarch thanked the Cardinal, and through him also the Pope, for this initiative, asking for a closer collaboration between our Churches, especially in these difficult times."

Today, Cardinal Sarah moved to Baalbek, in the Beq