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Fondata nel 1927

ASIA/LEBANON - Patriarch Rai consecrates Lebanon to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

Harissa (Agenzia Fides) - The Patriarch of Antioch of the Maronites Boutros Bechara Rai consecrated Lebanon and the entire Middle East to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, praying that all the peoples of the region are freed "from the sins that lead to divisions, aggression and violence ". The solemn Act of Consecration took place yesterday, Sunday, June 16, with the recitation of a prayer read during the Eucharist Liturgy presided by the Patriarch in the National Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in Harissa, in the presence of Lebanese President Michel Sleiman and designated Prime Minister Tammam Salam.
A multitude of believers gathered around the Basilica to implore with the Act of Consecration that the Country of the cedars is not overwhelmed by the contagion of sectarian conflict that is afflicting Syria.
During the homily, His Beatitude Rai recalled that Lebanon is the only Country where the Solemnity of the Annunciation, on March 25, is celebrated by Christians and Muslims together as a national holiday. The Patriarch also reiterated the urgent need for reconciliation between the political forces and in particular between the two opposing coalitions – that on March 8th and March 14 - which he stigmatized for having compromised "the image of Lebanon and its co-existence ", crippling institutions and pushing the Lebanese people to get involved in the Syrian conflict. The Head of the Maronite Church also reiterated his full support to President Sleiman and described the regular Lebanese army as the only legitimate "protector" of Lebanon. (GV) (Agenzia Fides 17/06/2013).

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