



ASIA/LEBANON - Maronite priest Paul Karam new President of Caritas Lebanon

Beirut (Agenzia Fides) - The Council of Catholic Patriarchates and Priests which convenes under Maronite Patriarch Beshara Rai in Bkirki appointed Maronite priest Paul Karam as new president of Caritas Lebanon on January 31. Father Karam is currently the National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Lebanon. The decision was made by the Council of the Patriarchates after assessing Caritas Lebanon's role in light of increasing social challenges posed with the deluge of Syrian refugees (nearly 900 thousand according to UN sources, more than a million according to the Lebanese authorities) and the catastrophic conditions in which many of them live. Father Paul Karam, 47, who hails from the Jbeil village of Qartaba, will assume his post in April for an initial three-year term. "I hope to be worthy of this great responsibility", said the newly-elected President to Fides. "I hope to be able to help those who are suffering and in need. Father Karam's predecessor, Father Simon Faddoul, on January 13 was appointed the first Apostolic Exarch of Western and Central Africa and is preparing to move to the Nigerian city of Ibadan where he will start his new, challenging and exciting mission. (GV) (Agency Fides 01/02/2014)