



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
TO LEBANON
(14-16 SEPTEMBER 2012)

**LUNCHEON WITH THE PATRIARCHS AND THE BISHOPS OF LEBANON,
MEMBERS OF THE SPECIAL COUNCIL FOR THE MIDDLE EAST
OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS AND THE PAPAL ENTOURAGE**

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI

Refectory of the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate of Bzommar
Saturday, 15 September 2012

Your Beatitude,
Venerable Patriarchs,
Dear Brother Bishops and Priests,
Dear Members of the Special Council of the Synod of Bishops for the Middle East,
Dear Members of the Armenian Catholic Synod,
Dear Seminarians, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I express my deep gratitude both to Patriarch Nersès Bédros for his invitation and for the words which he has just addressed to me, and to the Superior of this house. I cordially greet all the guests.

Divine Providence has allowed our meeting to take place here in this convent of Bzommar, which is so emblematic for the Armenian Catholic Church. The monk Hagop, more commonly known as *Méghabarde* — the sinner — is an example for us of prayer, of detachment from material things and of faithfulness to Christ the Redeemer. Five hundred years ago, he promoted the printing of the *Friday Book*, thus establishing a bridge between Christians of East and West. From his example, we can learn the meaning of mission, the courage of truth and the value of fraternity in

unity. As we prepare to replenish our strength with this meal which has been lovingly prepared and generously offered, the monk Hagop also reminds us that the spiritual thirst and the quest for higher things must remain always alive in our hearts, for “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (*Mt 4:4*).

Dear friends, through the intercession of the Apostles Bartholomew and Thaddeus, and of Saint Gregory the Illuminator, let us ask the Lord to bless the Armenian community, so sorely tried down through the ages, and to send to its harvest numerous saintly workers who, because of Christ, are enabled to change the face of our societies, to heal hearts that are broken and to offer courage, strength and hope to those who despair. Thank you!