



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
TO LEBANON
(14-16 SEPTEMBER 2012)

**CONSIGNING OF THE POST-SYNODAL APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION
FOR THE MIDDLE EAST**

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI

*Beirut City Center Waterfront
Sunday, 16 September 2012*

[[Video](#)]

*Your Beatitudes, Your Eminences,
Dear Brother Bishops and Priests,
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

The liturgical celebration in which we have just taken part was an opportunity to thank the Lord for the gift of the Special Assembly for the Middle East of the Synod of Bishops, held in October 2010 on the theme: *The Catholic Church in the Middle East: Communion and Witness*. “Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul” (Acts 4:32). I would like to thank all the Synod Fathers for their contribution. My gratitude also goes to the Secretary-General of the Synod of Bishops, Archbishop Eterović, for the work achieved and for his words on your behalf.

Having signed the post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*, I am pleased now to present it to all the local churches through you, the Patriarchs and Bishops, both Eastern and Latin, of the Middle East. With the consigning of this document there now begins its study and appropriation by all the members of the Church, pastors, consecrated persons and lay people, so that everyone will find new joy in the pursuit of his or her mission, encouraged and fortified to put into action the message of communion and witness understood in the various human, doctrinal,

ecclesiological, spiritual and pastoral aspects of this Exhortation. Dear brothers and sisters of Lebanon and the Middle East, I hope that this Exhortation will be a guide to follow the various and complex paths where Christ goes before you. May communion in faith, hope and charity be strengthened in your countries and in every community so as to make credible your witness to the Triune God, who has drawn close to each one of us.

Dear Church in the Middle East, draw from the source of salvation which became a reality in this unique and beloved land! Follow in the footsteps of your fathers in faith, who by tenacity and fidelity opened up the way for humanity to respond to the revelation of God! Among the wonderful diversity of saints who flourished in your land, look for examples and intercessors who will inspire your response to the Lord's call to walk towards the heavenly Jerusalem, where God will wipe away every one of our tears (cf. *Rev 21:4*)! May fraternal communion be a support for you in your daily life and the sign of the universal brotherhood which Jesus, the firstborn of many, came to bring! Thus, in this region which saw his actions and heard his words, may the Gospel continue to resonate as it did 2,000 years ago, and may it be lived today and for ever! Thank you.