

Speech of Professor Salim Daccache s.j. at the Mexican dinner in l'Atelier, on April 23, 2018

Your Excellency Mr. Jose Ignacio Madraso and Dear Friends,

It is with great happiness that we are celebrating the Mexican cuisine week at Saint Joseph University of Beirut. Gastronomy is a good way to build up good relations between people. I want to express my gratitude to Mr Christian Taoutel, professor at the USJ and lover of Mexico, and to the SUN Holiday agency for sponsoring the trip of the culinary chef Eva Raygossa who came especially from Mexico to animate this event. We are particularly pleased that this Mexican week is being held here at the USJ, at the restaurant of our young students l'Atelier. My thanks go to the team of the restaurant, to Mr Joseph Tannous, to chef Hanna, and to Miss Cynthia Ghobril Andrea for setting up this week with the Atelier team.

With Mexico, it is a long and great story that can be summed up in one beautiful quote from President Adolfo Lopez Mateos: " El que no tenga a amigo libanes, que lo busque " which means " He who does not have a Lebanese friend, should find one!"

Indeed, for nearly 125 years, the Lebanese community has settled in Mexico and today this community is made up of 700,000 inhabitants of Lebanese origins, who have become perfectly integrated into the socio-economic life of Mexico.

On both trips of the USJ delegation to Mexico in 2017 and 2018, we rejoice meeting them, and seeing their successes and feeling their love for Lebanon and Mexico.

These Lebanese citizens live under the blessing of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Patroness of Mexico, and carry deep in their hearts Our Lady of Lebanon in Harissa.

Also it is not by chance that the same statue of a peasant carrying a sack on his back and looking towards the sea exists in both countries. In Mexico City and in Beirut, the statue of the emigrant is the formidable symbol of the link between Lebanon and Mexico.

Tonight we celebrate this friendship in music and colors.

On this evening, we also remember with fondness Don Antonio Trabulse who left us only a few weeks ago. He was present along with our great friend Dr. Georges Hayek at the start of the beautiful friendship between Saint Joseph University and Mexico.

Long lives Mexico, Long lives Lebanon.