

## Message from the Rector to the Incoming Students of 2022-2023



Dear students,  
Welcome to USJ, your university!

Allow me to address the thousands of students, on behalf of all faculty and staff members, who are newly enrolled in the University's many programs, ranging from one-year programs to bachelor's and master's degrees and even longer programs! All faculty and staff members of the University join me in expressing our joy and pride in having you among us. We want you to spend the most fulfilling years of your life at Saint Joseph University of Beirut. I would like to congratulate the new graduates among you, who despite the difficulties imposed by the crisis, were able to successfully complete their high school studies, some with very honorable marks.

You represent a diverse range of cultural, religious, and social backgrounds; some of you attended private schools, while others attended public schools. Although French is the primary language of instruction, the University is no longer exclusive to French-educated students, as some of you are English-educated and are pursuing your studies in English only! You are now part of a university that, since its founding in 1875, and throughout its history, has viewed diversity as a university community project where help is the order of the day and friendships are forged based on the respect for differences, with values of citizenship despite potential different political sympathies, which represent the foundations of a journey through serenity and mutual appreciation!

In my address to the 2,500 graduates of 2021-2022, I insisted on the importance of hope, not as a passive stance, but as an impetus to change the course of the history of our country, Lebanon! Your hard work, your commitment to your studies, scientific research, and service to the Lebanese society through the community outreach activities undertaken by *Opération 7<sup>e</sup> Jour* for the development of disadvantaged areas and communities, by *USJ en mission* for the welfare of the excluded and marginalized, and by the Department of Student Life, will prove to yourselves and your University that we are the daughters and sons of hope and that change, rooted in honest and righteous actions, is possible. In short, there is no room for moping about and around our University! In the same way that we overcame the tragedy of the Beirut Port explosion (we will never forget the bereaved families who are still fighting for justice), we will always stand tall to prevail over the crisis and its devastating repercussions. Solidarity is not a motto devoid of meaning, but a promise that will be kept daily by providing timely assistance to everyone in need.

Within three years, your University will mark its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary and as of this year, 2022-2023, you will be involved in the drive to celebrate this anniversary, which will include a range of activities and events. Some of you are already part of it: students who are enrolled this year in the three-year undergraduate program will be graduating in the jubilee year of 2025. By focusing on this event, we remember the Jesuit founders of the University by paying them a well-earned tribute, as well as the hundred thousand Alumni of our University, thanks to whom USJ has been able to contribute to the development of our country Lebanon, and the countries of the Middle East region and beyond! May you become, one day, valuable ambassadors of your University, of its values of creativity, co-existence, mutual trust, justice, freedom, love, solidarity, and a spirit of service for the greater glory of God (motto of the Society of Jesus).

Happy academic year!

**Pr. Salim Daccache s.j.,**  
Rector of Saint Joseph University of Beirut