

FOUNDERS' DAY
Haigazian University
October, 15, 2012
Twelve Noon

PRESIDENT'S WORD

In this symbolic celebration, as I ponder upon the founding of Haigazian University back in 1955 by the Armenian Evangelical Church and the Armenian Missionary Association of America, two key timeless lessons come to mind:

ONE: No matter how challenging the circumstances, we always have noble choices we can make. It is secret to none that the first half of the twentieth century was a most trying and tragic period for the Armenian nation. Not only a genocide was perpetrated against this relatively small nation, but also deportation, deprivation, resettlement in new societies, paralleled by a lack of basic resources for sustenance and safety. A few years after such a situation, schools were bustling with action and optimism, and a few dozen years later, a college was to start: Haigazian by name.

Tragedy and loss may lock us in the past, or they may free us to create. Our purpose in life is not survival, but creation of what is good, the development of what gives hope and life. What eventually counts is what we do with our woundedness, and how we become agents of healing. Haigazian University is named after a martyr, Armenag Haigazian. HU was founded as a living monument in his honor, a dynamic one. At the same time, this became a testimony of God's goodness to us, and a symbol of the strong faith capital of a people.

TWO: The type of training we undergo defines the type of course we plan to run. Haigazian University was brought into existence to prepare individuals who can lead others, who can cross boundaries, who can bring about a good spirit, an example of life to others. We sometimes call this a well-rounded training. No academic degree or professional preparation counts without a gentle spirit, without a peaceful, broad-minded personal approach. Haigazian University was founded to train people for the good of society. It was not founded to simply have people compete in the market, but rather to bring spirit to the market, to the school, to the family, to the neighborhood, to empower the heart alongside the professional and the

academic preparation. The course to run is life itself, thus a university has to prepare for more than a job or a task or a profession.

The guest of honor today is the founder and president of the Beirut Marathon Association: Mrs. May El-Khalil.

Mrs. May El-Khalil's determination to run, and organize races perhaps stems from her "nearfatal" accident that occurred while training for the Dubai Marathon years ago. Hospitalized for over 2 years and in a coma for a short period of time, gave May the will and spirit to fight back and overcome the severe injuries and pain that she endured during her accident. Seeing the marathon growing into an internationally recognized event has been the joy of her ever burning passion and ambition to do great things for others and for her country.

Initiated in 2003, with Beirut International Marathon slogan "Run Beirut Run", some 6500 participants from 49 different nationalities, ran the course.

In 2010, with 28,000 runners, the BLOM Beirut Marathon gained international recognition, and has been awarded the IAAF Bronze Label. The BLOM Beirut marathon 2011 attracted 31,136 participants.

Over the years since its first edition, the Beirut Marathon has become the single largest sporting activity in Lebanon, attracting people from all aspects of life, running for different causes, for peace, for love, for numerous NGOs.

Haigazian University, alongside many other universities, recently signed an agreement for partnership, and some of you students will volunteer, others will run, other will participate in the photography competition of the November 11, 2012 marathon. For more of all of this, I invite a most positive image and symbol of wellness in Lebanon, May El-Khalil to the podium.

*Rev. Paul Haidostian, Ph.D.
President*