

FOUNDERS' DAY

Haigazian University

October 16, 2023

President's Remarks

While awaiting our 70th anniversary to be marked throughout the next academic year, it is time to mark our Founders' Day. We would not do that by telling each other how great we are, but reflecting on how better our world could be if we did things properly. We are grateful as always to our founders in the Armenian Evangelical Church and the AMAA for their vision and continuous leadership and support. We are grateful to all the Foundations, especially the Philibosian Foundation for their generosity, and we remember all those who are not with us today, and who have played a major role in making HU what it is today. We are thankful and humbled.

Friends, we are here as a university to shape minds and skills, but also attitudes, and values.

In past years, on Founders' Day events, we have highlighted education, social work, health work, leadership and business. This year, we are focusing on environmental matters and how our care of and attitude towards creation are of critical importance. And in this regard, we need increasing awareness, deeper education, and changing habits.

The environment is not only the non-human. Therefore, care of the human mind, soul and body are part of our sensitivity to creation, and a way of showing gratitude for the wider and deeper gifts we enjoy, but unfortunately these are often taken for granted.

We, humans, are part of the general environment and a focal part of it, but if we disrespect human rights, what chances do we have to respect the general natural environment around us?

We certainly cannot separate the human from the non-human as we often do. Indeed, in these few weeks, and with great sadness, we have witnessed many existential crises that are close to our heart as Lebanese, as Armenians, as Middle Easterners, and simply as human beings. These are disappointing days. And yet, focusing on one matter does not mean that we should neglect the others.

As Haigazian University we have always aspired to have graduates, staff and faculty who are known for their civic consciousness, awareness of their general environment, friendship, servanthood, warmth and gentleness. Our focus on our natural environment this year, is part of the same value system, under God, the God who cares about the lilies of the field and the birds of the sky. So, we are here to learn to do better.

In line with all this, our focal organization we are honoring today is A ROCHA-Lebanon, about which we will learn today.

Our speaker, then, is the national co-director of A Rocha, Dr. Guillaume Augustin de Vault, a professor of philosophy from the University of Strasbourg, and with us also is the chair of their Board. We salute A Rocha and value their noble mission.

Finally, may this be a year of new learning for HU and its wider community. Be encouraged. We have a great mission and we value it highly. Great things could happen even in the lowest points of history.

Let us imagine, plan, pray and work to turn calamities into experiences of learning and service.

May HU be blessed this day and always. Thank you.