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Announcement
from His Excellency Bishop Selim Sfeir
Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus
on the occasion of the appointment of
Father Bruno Varriano
Bishop of the Latin Church on the island of Cyprus

“So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” Isaiah 55:11

To our beloved brothers, we are pleased to share with you the news of the appointment of His Holiness Pope Francis, Father Bruno Varriano, as Bishop of the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem, as he continues to fill his position as Patriarchal Vicar of the Latin Church in Cyprus.

We rejoice with you today, we are happy and joyful as brothers, but we are not surprised. Your ordination does not surprise us, because in your service among us on the land of this Island, you reflected to us the image of a bishop, a caring father, and a silent administrator who dealt with all issues with humility and calm. In all situations and circumstances, you always had a smile of peace on your face and spread the hope of your faith to those around you, and you were an example to follow.

We stand beside you today, as children of the omniscient God, who guides the work of his servants in his field. Coincidences do not determine our lives, and there is no place for luck in our journey. Rather, it is the trust in the One on whom we have placed our hope, and He is the One who directs and guides our steps in our walk with Him. It is He who knew us before He formed us in the womb, and granted us the privilege of being His servants just as He knew His prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:5).

He is the One who fills us with the spirit of wisdom according to what He has apportioned for us in His service, just as He filled Joshua the son of Nun when Moses laid his hands on him, and the children of Israel listened to him (Deuteronomy 9:34). He is the one who chose us, and we were not the ones who chose him. He is the one who qualified us and appointed us to work in his field and reap his fruits (John 15:16).

Today we share the responsibility with you. We carry the cross together with joy and we walk around with you throughout the island, spreading the Word of God across its good land, from the south to the north, and from the east to the west. In the darkest and brightest of times, you will find us beside you, and we know that the word of God does not return to Him empty. For “Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.” (Psalm 126:6).

While expressing our deep gratitude to our Father, His Holiness Pope Francis, for his love and care, His Eminence Patriarch Cardinal Mar Beshara Boutros El Raii, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, myself, and all the priests and faithful of the Maronite Archdiocese of Cyprus, we extend, to your Excellency, to His Eminence Cardinal Pizzaballa and the Bishops of the Holy Land, along with our brothers in the Latin Church, and to our faithful on the dearest island of Cyprus, our warmest congratulations on your election bishop in the Church, my brother Bruno.

Be sure that what unites us is the trust based on the hope in Christ, and the love that he lived as an example and loved us with it, and the message that he conveyed to us in his ministry in partnership and in synodality in this journey towards the Kingdom.

Nicosia, January 9, 2024

† Selim Sfeir

Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus