

His Beatitude John X from Balamand: “All things are lawful to me, but all things are not profitable”



On, February 28, 2021, the Divine Liturgy was held in the Monastery of Our Lady of Balamand, at the end of which, Patriarch John X shared the following message:

“Saint Paul the Apostle addresses us all, saying: “All things are lawful to me, but all things are not profitable: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” Our holy fathers have selected this reading from the Epistle to the Corinthians to remind us what is the true meaning of fasting and the coming spiritual struggle. All things are lawful to me. I can perform everything and deal with people as I wish, especially in these days when many slogans prevail: first, the call for values such as freedom and respect for human freedom. Yet, the Apostle says: You can do everything, but not everything is profitable. Some things are profitable and others are useless.

This saying serves as a maxim for our lives and a roadmap for the life in our societies, in the church, and the country. It is a suitable roadmap for our societies, a guide for reconciliation with the self and with others.

Nothing controls me, for I have my free will. This leads to another virtue, which is discernment. To discern between good and bad. In our days, this is a problem at work, in our societies and nations. We must have the will and determination to stay free, only subject to the word of God, not to the rule of interests, jealousy, and lust...

Fasting is not just an external mechanism related to food, diet, practice, and prayers. Rather, it is a process of sanctification and renewal for the human being as a whole. We are called during the fasting of Lent to possess the discernment and have the will and to remain sovereign, not subject to this world's temptations. Looking at the present conditions, this is what causes suffering in our beloved Lebanon. Why?! Because everything is lawful but not everything is profitable. This is a call for officials, authorities, and everybody else to have such maturity. I pray the Lord to grant that we enter this Lent in a spirit of humility, maturity, grandeur, with a deep understanding of life and human relations. May we possess this discernment to be sovereign and free in God's image and likeness. May the Lord give us the strength to complete this journey. He is blessed forever. Amen."

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