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From the Patriarchal Monastery Saint George Al-Humaira: “Young men, you are rich in thoughts, culture and talents. Do not be afraid and be courageous.”

Wadi Al-Nasara, September 21, 2023

“The Lord lives” with this Gospel verse, His Beatitude John X, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East inaugurated the Christian Youth Forum in Syria at the Patriarchal Monastery Saint George Al-Humaira in Wadi Al-Nasara.

This meeting has brought together more than eighty young men and women from various dioceses of the Antiochian See in Syria. It enhances Antiochian unity on the one hand, and, on the other hand, answers questions and concerns related to youth in this changing world full of challenges. One main challenge is the effect of God’s presence in our lives, our relationship with God, how to face hi-technology

amid the challenges of the times? How do we build our capacities to become ambassadors of the Church dedicated to adherence and enthusiastic ministers of the Gospel? This and other topics were tackled.

The meeting began with the Vespers prayer held by Patriarch John in the church of the monastery, in the presence of the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of the Diocese of Aleppo, Alexandretta, and their dependencies, Metropolitan Efrem Maalouli and many priests.

After the prayer, His Beatitude delivered a welcoming and guidance speech. He stressed the importance of this fraternal meeting of great spiritual benefit to all participants through the exchange of experiences and aspirations.

Then, His Beatitude touched on the words of Saint John the Evangelist, “Young men and women, do not be afraid, for you have overcome the evil one.” He said: “And you, young people, truly deserve this saying because you were raised to love the Church and have proven that you are stronger than all crises. So, stand firm and be strong, for you are rich in the thoughts, culture, and talents, which God has granted you. Let the church be your workshop and show your abilities; we are with you and by your side”.

Patriarch John also indicated in his sermon that the Holy Council of Antioch that should be held in mid-October 2024, will address the issue of canonizing the two martyr priests, Habib and Nicola Khashi. Hence, it is important for young people to learn about their lives, about what the word saints means, and delve into the meaning of holiness.

After that, there was a speech by Father Ignatius Darrouj, the coordinator of the meeting, who stressed that the Christian Youth Forum embodies the unextinguished flame of faith among our youth. This flame gives them the spirit of teamwork, exchange of experiences, prayer, knowledge, and spiritual integration. The most beautiful thing about this Forum is the resulting actions and recommendations because we need to live together the simplicity of the Gospel.

Then, the young men and women went to one of the monastery's halls and sang the hymn of the meeting, written and composed by Brother Abdullah Saba, which states in its introduction: “We all live for God.. Our love for the Beloved has increased

Amidst the furnace of trials...we extinguish the heat of the flame.
All those who prayed were transfigured...so we pray as they did.
And with Christ we resurrect...we glory and find pride in the cross...

Then, the young men and women divided into groups to discuss the impact of the Lord's presence on human life. They deeply deliberated over figures from the Old Testament: Moses the Prophet - Elijah the Prophet - Gideon the Judge - Joseph the Chaste - Peter the Apostle - and Paul the Apostle.

The first day ended with spiritual and cultural sessions where youth delved deep into their Christian Orthodox faith.

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