

**Address of Rev. Fr. Talal Hachem  
Inauguration of the UNYC  
September 27, 2024**

Good afternoon everyone,

- Today, we gather here not just to inaugurate an academic center, but to celebrate the vision of the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK), its mission, and its strong commitment to preserving and promoting our rich cultural heritage and national identity.
- It is with immense pride and joy that we open the doors of our UNYC, as a beacon of Lebanese culture in one of the most vibrant and diverse cities in the world.
- This center stands as a testament to our belief that culture is the very foundation of our identity. It is our stories, our traditions, our languages, and our values that shape who we are as individuals, and as a USEK dynamic and solid community that has always extended beyond borders.
- Our mission here is clear: to create a space where our culture can flourish, where it can be shared, celebrated, and preserved for generations to come.
- The UNYC will serve multiple purposes. It is a gathering place for intellectually curious Lebanese and American community members interested in engaging in cultural activities, workshops, trainings, and courses that highlight the vibrancy of Lebanese heritage. We will host lectures, art exhibitions, and workshops that reflect the breadth and depth of Lebanese culture, inviting individuals from all walks of life to experience our story.
- Furthermore, the UNYC will act as a bridge between our homeland and the Lebanese expats living in the States. It will strengthen the ties that connect us to our roots while allowing us to engage with the diverse cultural landscape of this remarkable city.
- As we celebrate this new milestone in USEK life, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to the establishment of our UNYC:
  - o our Chancellor for his unwavering support that fuels our ambitious spirit.
  - o Mr. Mjadi Ramadan, Charge d’Affaire in New York for his constant support to our activities in the US.
  - o the Chair and members of our Board of Trustees who believe in USEK mission and who graciously dedicate their time and efforts to help USEK thrive.
  - o USEK leadership teams and community members who consistently strive to elevate USEK’s commitment to innovation and development.
  - o And every individual, both in the States and in Lebanon, who supports USEK vision and nurtures it.

- As we move forward, we keep in mind that preserving our cultural heritage is not a passive endeavor. It requires active participation, creativity, and the willingness to adapt and evolve. Therefore, we encourage everyone to bring their voices and their passion to our UNYC to cultivate a vibrant cultural ecosystem.
- Let us embrace all together this moment as a new chapter in USEK journey. Let's commit ourselves to the mission of our UNYC and work hand in hand to ensure that our heritage not only survives but thrives.
- Thank you all for being here today and we are all looking forward to nurturing further USEK vision and to sharing it with the world with pride and resilience.