**Please pray for the churches and people of Lebanon in their hour of need.**

Our attention has quite rightly been drawn to Lebanon by the massive explosion of a fertilizer warehouse at the docks in central Beirut last Tuesday. At least 220 are now known to have died and 7,000 have been injured. As well as this, some 300,000 people have been made homeless because their homes have either been destroyed in the blast or made unsafe to live in. Bishop Philip has issued an appeal for financial support for a church in the port area which is giving practical help to those affected.

But this disaster is only the latest in a string of calamities to hit this troubled country. An economy already stretched by hosting 1.5 M refugees, principally from Syria (25% of the population now) started to implode eight months ago. The banking system is collapsing, the Lebanese pound has lost 80% of its value and inflation is rampant (currently 90%) meaning that everybody’s wages are devalued, and they can only buy half as much of basic goods than they did a year ago. For the third of the population who have lost their jobs it’s even worse. The economic crisis has also triggered a political crisis with mass demonstration calling for the resignation of a government seen to be ineffective and corrupt. These had ceased because of the spread of COVID. But have now started up again.

NGOs and churches are all working to alleviate the hunger of those who can’t make ends meet. May the churches have wisdom to know how best to use the resources they have in people, buildings and finance to help those affected. They ask us to pray for a miracle. May God save Lebanon they ask and feed the poor.

Please also pray for calm as passions are running high and that change may be able to come without people resorting to violence.

DMF

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