

Biography of His Beatitude Mar Bechara Peter Al-Rahi

Bechara Boutros Al-Rahi was born in Himlaya, Matn District, Lebanon on 25 February 1940. He attended college at Notre Dame de Jamhour , a Jesuit school in Lebanon. He entered the Mariamite Maronite order on 31 July 1962 and was ordained as a priest on 3 September 1967. From 1967 to 1975 he has been responsible for the Arabic transmissions of Vatican Radio. In 1975 he was awarded a PhD in Canon and Civil Law. He also studied for three years at the Lateran University in Rome.

Religious Positions

He was consecrated as auxiliary bishop of Antioch on 12 July 1986, by Patriarch Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir and on 9 June 1990, he was appointed bishop of Byblos. In 2003 he was elected Secretary of the Maronite Synod, and in 2009 he was appointed President of the Lebanese Episcopal Commission for the Media.

Maronite Patriarch

At 71, he was elected patriarch of the Maronites on 15 March 2011, after getting more than two-thirds of the votes of the 39 bishops and replacing Nasrallah Sfeir. The Mass for the inauguration of his patriarchate took place on March 25, 2011, in Bkerke, the see of the Maronite Catholic Patriarchate. As is customary for all Maronite Patriarchs Rahi took the additional name Boutros, that of Saint Peter, who briefly held the see of Antioch before moving to Rome to become bishop there.

On March 7, 2012 he was appointed a member of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

Religio-political views

In April 2011 Patriarch Rahi said that, for the sake of communion and love, he would work “to establish a sincere and complete dialogue“ with Muslims “and build together a future in common life and cooperation.“ Patriarch Rahi said his predecessor “struggled with insistence to free both the national decision-making and the land of Lebanon from all forms of tutelage and occupation, worked for reconciliation in Mount Lebanon and realized needed church reforms. All of these constitute an extension of the church’s spring time started by the Second Vatican Council.“

