

## Pope Supports Lebanon's Identity

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Pope Discusses Plight of Christians with Suleiman

Pope Supports Lebanon's Identity

Pope Benedict XVI gave his support Friday to Lebanon's "characteristic" identity and called for a "just and rapid" settlement of the Palestinian problem.

He made his remarks in a 25-minute audience with Lebanon's President Michel Suleiman, the Vatican press service said.

The pontiff repeated "the continued commitment of the Holy See in favor of Lebanon", a country where many faiths coexist, and "the safeguarding of its so characteristic &hellip; identity".

Benedict and Suleiman also discussed "the delicate regional situation, expressing the wish that the Palestinian question finds a just and rapid solution".

"The conditions of life and the problems of Christian communities in the Middle East" were also reviewed, the press service said.(AFP)

Beirut, 31 Oct 08, 18:14

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Italy - lbc report - Guitta Iyeme Nahhal - 31/10/2008  
{youtube}D3jPc9QyGos{/youtube}

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Pope Discusses Plight of Christians with Suleiman

Pope Benedict XVI Friday discussed the plight of Christians in the Middle East with Lebanese President Michel Suleiman.

The pontiff met with Suleiman for 25 minutes, the Vatican's press service said and expressed strong support for "the continued commitment of the Holy See in favor of Lebanon."

"The conditions of life and the problems of Christian communities in the Middle East" were also reviewed, the press service added.

Christians account for around 37 percent of Lebanon's population but their numbers have declined steadily in recent decades.

By custom, the position of president is reserved for a Maronite Christian and the prime minister is a Sunni Muslim.

The number of Christians in Iraq has also fallen by more than 200,000 since the 2003 U.S. invasion, with a string of sectarian attacks prompting a large exodus.

The 59-year-old Suleiman, a former commander-in-chief of Lebanon's army, was elected president by parliament in May after months of political paralysis, during which time the pope urged Lebanese leaders to unify as a "symbol" of peaceful coexistence between different religious communities.(AFP)

Beirut, 31 Oct 08, 20:33

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