



The Holy See

VIDEO-MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO THE CHRISTIANS OF MOSUL, REFUGEES IN ERBIL

Saturday, 6 December 2014 [Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to greet each and every one of you, together with Cardinal Philippe Barbarin, who once again brings you the concern and love of the whole Church. I too would like to be there but, since I can't travel, I'll do it like this... but I am very close to you in these moments of trial. On the return from [my journey in Turkey](#), I said that Christians are being driven out of the Middle East with suffering. I thank you for the witness that you give; there is so much suffering in your witness. Thank you! Thank you so much!

It seems that they don't want Christians to be there, but you bear witness of Christ. I think of the wounds, the pain of mothers with their children, of elderly people and of displaced people, of the injuries of victims of every kind of violence.

As I recalled in Ankara, of particular concern is the fact that, due mostly to a group of extremists and fundamentalists, entire communities, especially — but not only — Christians and Yazidis have suffered and are still suffering inhuman violence because of their ethnic and religious identity. Christians and Yazidis have been driven by force from their homes, have had to abandon everything to save their own lives and not reject their faith. The violence has struck holy places, monuments, religious symbols and the cultural patrimony, as though the intention were to erase every trace, every memory of the other.

As religious leaders, we have an obligation to denounce all violations of dignity and of human rights!

Today I would like to draw near to you who are enduring this suffering, to be close to you.... And I think of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus, who said that she and the Church felt like a reed: when the

wind, the storm comes, the reed bends but it does not break! At this moment you are the reed, you bend in pain, but you have the strength to carry forward your faith, which is a testimony for us. Today you are the reeds of God! The reeds that are laid low by this fierce wind, but will rise again!

I would like to give thanks once again. I pray the Spirit that makes all things new, that he give each one of you strength and endurance. It's a gift of the Holy Spirit. And, as I did in Turkey, I strongly ask for a greater convergence of international effort to resolve these conflicts which are soaking your homelands in blood, to counteract the other causes that drive people to leave the lands of their birth and to foster conditions so that they may remain or return. I wish that you all return, that you are able to return.

Dear brothers and sisters, you are in my heart and in my prayers and in the hearts and prayers of all Christian communities whom I will ask to pray in a special way for you on 8 December, to pray to Our Lady that she watch over you: She is mother, may she watch over you.

Brothers and sisters, your endurance is martyrdom, a fruitful dew. Please, I ask you to pray for me. May the Lord bless you, may Our Lady watch over you.

May Almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.