



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
ON THE OCCASION OF THE GLOBAL CHRISTIAN FORUM
[TIRANA, 2-4 NOVEMBER 2015]**

His Eminence Cardinal Kurt Koch

President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

I extend greetings to you and all those participating in the Global Christian Forum Consultation, to be held in Tirana from 2 to 4 November 2015, as you reflect on the theme "Discrimination, persecution, martyrdom: following Christ together". In a particular way, I wish to greet our brothers and sisters of different Christian traditions who represent communities suffering for their profession of faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. I think with great sadness of the escalating discrimination and persecution against Christians in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and elsewhere throughout the world. Your gathering shows that, as Christians, we are not indifferent to our suffering brothers and sisters. In various parts of the world, the witness to Christ, even to the shedding of blood, has become a shared experience of Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans, Protestants, Evangelicals and Pentecostals, which is deeper and stronger than the differences which still separate our Churches and Ecclesial Communities. The *communio martyrum* is the greatest sign of our journeying together. At the same time, your gathering will give voice to the victims of such injustice and violence, and seek to show the path that will lead the human family out of this tragic situation. With these sentiments, I assure you of my spiritual closeness. May the martyrs of today, belonging to many Christian traditions, help us to understand that all the baptised are members of the same Body of Christ, his Church (cf. I Cor 12:12-30). Let us see this profound truth as a call to persevere on our ecumenical journey towards full and visible communion, growing more and more in love and mutual understanding.

Francis

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