



The Holy See

ORDINARY PUBLIC CONSISTORY

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS

New Synod Hall

Monday, 20 October 2014

Your Eminences,

Dear Patriarchs and Confreres in the Episcopate,

After the closing of the Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the Family, I wished to dedicate this Consistory, in addition to several causes for canonization, to a different discussion that is very close to my heart, in other words the Middle East, and in particular the situation of Christians in the region. I am grateful for your presence.

We share the desire for peace and stability in the Middle East and the will to foster the resolution of conflicts through dialogue, reconciliation and political commitment. At the same time, we would like to provide as much help as possible to the Christian communities in order to support their continued presence in the region.

As I have had the occasion to reiterate several times, we cannot resign ourselves to thinking of the Middle East without Christians, who have professed the name of Jesus for 2,000 years. Recent events, mostly in Iraq and Syria, are dire. We are witnessing a phenomenon of terrorism of previously unimaginable dimensions. So many of our brothers and sisters are being persecuted and have had to leave their homes, even in a brutal manner. It seems that awareness of the value of human life has been lost. It seems that the person does not count and can be sacrificed for other interests. And all this, unfortunately, with the indifference of so many.

This unjust situation also requires, in addition to our constant prayer, an appropriate response on the part of the International Community. I am certain that, with the Lord's help, today's encounter

will result in valid reflections and suggestions in order to help our brothers and sisters who are suffering and in order to face even the tragedy of reduced Christian presence in the land where Christianity was born and from which it spread.