

An open letter from a Syrian Arab Priest to Pope Francis

Your Holiness,

In a few days, the whole world will, one way or another, celebrate the memory of the birth of Jesus Christ.

I would have loved to offer you greetings on this occasion, as you are his official representative on earth...

I have found myself refrain from doing this, however, for a reason that is both simple but dangerous at the same time.

This is that he was, repeatedly and openly, in himself, and in many of his statements, identified with every human being, especially the tormented.

The tormented people, today, across the whole world, east and west, north and south, have become billions, especially in the Arab World, especially in Palestine, Yemen, Libya, Iraq, Lebanon, the Sudan, and Syria, my homeland, while you are, truly and effectively, ignoring all these tormented people...

You only call for "Prayer for Peace". I have never heard you, not even once, denounce the haughty on earth, especially in the United States, and then their protégés in England, Canada, Australia, France, Germany, Italy, and in many Arab countries, who have, continuously, and for tens of years, been destroying all these countries in cold blood, systematic viciousness, and insane expenditure!

If Jesus Christ were in your place, would he have only called for prayer?!

And you roam all over the place in many countries, for example, the United States towards the end of September of 2015; also, Canada, two months ago, apologising for the shameful acts committed in Catholic educational establishments a long time ago. Among these countries are also some Arab countries, like the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, and Bahrain in order to "maintain" the "Islamic-Christian brotherhood" when you see, and the whole world sees, that work on emptying the whole Arab East from the "original" Christianity in it, starting in Palestine, is going on in every illegal way possible with unabated determination, in the service of Israel!

Yes, your holiness, the representative of Jesus Christ, who identified with all the tormented people on earth... Why is this absolute silence from you, and consequently, from all officials in the churches of the West, towards the haughty on this earth, who trample all values, and stifle all hopes in billions of God's creatures across the world?

Why?

In this vein, also, a United Nations delegation, headed by Mrs Alena Duhan, has visited Syria for twelve days, following which Mrs Alena Duhan issued a stark statement in which she denounced the inhuman siege that is imposed on Syria, following an unjust global war that has gone on for ten years!

For a United Nations' employee to denounce the UN's unjust measures against my country, knowing fully well that she could be expelled from her job, or be subjected to even worse procedure...

And for the representative of Jesus Christ, and with him, and like him, all the officials in the churches of the West to maintain silence towards this injustice, and the many other injustices that have swept the whole world, and still do, so much so that these have become a threat to the continuity of life on this wonderful planet of ours...

These are two stances that I can find no explanation for, nor justification!

I beg you to accept from me, the Catholic Priest in his nineties, this new reprimand!

And I have seen fit, as is my usual habit, to write this today also, publicly, with honesty and pain, and with respect and hope, propelled by my obligation towards my Lord Jesus Christ, towards you, his representative on earth, towards my crucified homeland, and towards every human being!

Your Holiness,

You know fully well, that Lord Jesus Christ visited Damascus between 1984 and 2014, and that on each visit, he spoke words that were extremely important and grave about the unjust war that has been launched against Syria and its people...

Is not worthy of you, then, that you, in turn, visit it, so that you pray with all its children, Moslems and Christians, for its coming resurrection on the face of the earth, as He, himself, promised us?

I beg you not to belittle my imploration?

Fr Elias Zahlaoui
Damascus, 12/12/2022