

Message of the Italian Nuns on Easter Day

Damascus, 11/4/2024 - Father Elias Zahlawi

The nuns who signed this letter are cloistered nuns, meaning they are nuns who have chosen to live inside their convent for their entire lives without ever leaving it. They belong to the Order of "Clare nuns," established by Saint Clare in Italy in the thirteenth century. They reside in a convent located in the area of Aulla, near Rome. They were allowed to become aware of the phenomenon of the apparitions, which occurred in the Syrian capital of Damascus since late November 1982, due to the striking resemblance between this phenomenon and the "Lily Among Thorns" phenomenon that occurred in Rome, Italy, starting from 2013.

They were exceptionally allowed, based on their own request, to leave their convent and come to Damascus to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Virgin Mary's appearance to Mirna on the night of December 18, 1982. Their one-month stay in Damascus had a profound impact on them. They felt the warmth of human relationships despite difficult circumstances and encountered gentle smiles on the faces of everyone they met. They engaged in various activities, including meetings and participation in prayers in many churches, visits to religious and tourist sites in Damascus, especially their visit to the Great Umayyad Mosque, where they were warmly welcomed by everyone present that day.

And we received this exceptional letter in French from the Mother Superior of their convent, Mother Eucharistica. I felt it was my duty to translate and publish it as widely as possible, to the best of my ability:

« Aulla, Italy, on 2/4/2024

Peace be upon you, Mary!

Tears...

It is Tuesday, April 2, 2024:

We have just celebrated Easter with warmth. We also tasted the joy of our shared life, the fruit of our presence together, which is created by every great feast, a comfort and renewed energy emanating from our presence together...

And this is exactly what happens to varying degrees in all family and/or collective events. But today, the second day of April, our eyes and hearts cannot close to what has been happening to our brothers and sisters for a long time, without relent or mercy, in the neighboring East.

This land, the cradle of the greatest religions in the world, must inevitably be precious to every human being as a spiritual homeland. It became precious to us when we were able to visit it, as we stayed in Damascus for nearly a month. During this time, we were

given the opportunity to appreciate the dignity, faith, and hospitality of its people. Through this experience, we realized that these qualities enabled people from different religions to coexist in peace and cooperation. This deeply impressed us, especially as it seemed to emanate from a pure, deeply rooted spirit of piety.

The image that particularly struck us was of the Muslim believers we met and spent time praying with. It was far removed from the many clichés that often portray them as always fundamentalist, terrorists, and so forth.

We have made a point of maintaining our relationship with many of our friends in the Middle East. Today, we received very recent and highly disturbing news, documented with photos and videos, about the massacre unfolding in Gaza, not only since October 7th, 2023, but also in previous stages spanning seventy years. What a senseless contradiction: here we are immersed in the heart of Easter joys, while they have been drowning in the bloodiest tragedies for decades! While the Western world, in its indifference, is characterized by its widespread disregard for humanitarian tragedies and faith values, our brothers and sisters, amidst the tragedies of these days, celebrate Ramadan with honesty, prayer, and sacrifice, without any laxity, despite their unbearable conditions. They strive to cooperate among themselves despite the drain caused by their constant sorrow and their lack of essential medical expertise.

At every moment, we are deeply moved by the dignity and resilience of the entire people. There are individuals, brothers, sisters, relatives, and friends who face the loss of their loved ones without anger, without uttering words of curse and hatred. Instead, they speak words of forgiveness, mercy, and absolution for the whole world. It is truly something that seems almost unbelievable to us!

We have seen mothers anxiously searching for their missing children, only to find their lifeless bodies, enduring pain far removed from any familiar intimacy in such circumstances, as if they were Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus! In these very moments, as they still carry on their arms the mutilated and dismembered bodies of their children, we have heard them uttering words that are almost unbelievable and unimaginable, words that echo the forgiveness spoken by Jesus on the cross, and with feelings akin to those of Mary, the mother of all, at the foot of the cross!

These are nothing but words and feelings, yet we have endeavored to contemplate them deeply during these sacred days, which our brothers and sisters truly endure in their own flesh, thereby setting a remarkable example for the whole world.

How can we not see in these tragic scenes a real participation in the sacrifice of Christ and in the agonizing pains of His mother?

We Christians know that the wine poured into the cup during the Eucharist will be transformed into the blood of the Lord, with a few drops of water added to it as a symbol of our humanity. In this humanity, we automatically see the tears of the Holy

Virgin, and it is indeed the finest and noblest fruit of humanity. For these mothers, in their turn, shed tears devoid of any bitterness, and with full knowledge, they offer the martyrdom of their sons and their blood as a plea for forgiveness for the world and a quest for peace!

Today, on the second of April, all we can do is come together in prayer after reaching out to many of our friends across the globe to be close to these brothers and sisters in their suffering... Though materially unable to offer much, we can at least join our tears with theirs, as if we hear a voice saying to us:

"Weep! Let whoever has a heart, weep!

For these tears will save the world...

It's their offering, the offering of all these people.

Let prayers ascend to heaven and descend upon the earth to extinguish the fire that consumes us!

And let us ask God for forgiveness for all!

And because of our silence, let us do something tangible:

Our tears are this tangible thing!"

The Clarisse Nuns.»