

VISIT TO REFUGEES
SPEECHES OF HIS BEATITUDE IERONYMOS, ARCHBISHOP OF ATHENS AND
OF ALL GREECE,
OF HIS HOLINESS BARTHOLOMEW, ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH OF
CONSTANTINOPLE
AND OF POPE FRANCIS

Mòria Refugee Camp, Lesvos

16 April 2016

[Link](#)

POPE FRANCIS

Dear brothers and sisters,

I have wanted to be with you today. I want to tell you that you are not alone. In these weeks and months, you have endured much suffering in your search for a better life. Many of you felt forced to flee situations of conflict and persecution for the sake, above all, of your children, your little ones. You have made great sacrifices for your families. You know the pain of having left behind everything that is dear to you and – what is perhaps most difficult – not knowing what the future will bring. Many others like you are also in camps or towns, waiting, hoping to build a new life on this continent.

I have come here with my brothers, Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop Ieronymos, simply to be with you and to hear your stories. We have come to call the attention of the world to this grave humanitarian crisis and to plead for its resolution. As people of faith, we wish to join our voices to speak out on your behalf. We hope that the world will heed these scenes of tragic and indeed desperate need, and respond in a way worthy of our common humanity.

God created mankind to be one family; when any of our brothers and sisters suffer, we are all affected. We all know from experience how easy it is for some to ignore other people's suffering and even to exploit their vulnerability. But we also know that these crises can bring out the very best in us. You have seen this among yourselves and among the Greek people, who have generously responded to your needs amid their own difficulties. You have also seen it in the many people, especially the young from throughout Europe and the world, who have come to help you. Yes, so much more needs to be done! But let us thank God that in our suffering he never leaves us alone. There is always someone who can reach out and help us.

This is the message I want to leave with you today: do not lose hope! The greatest gift we can offer one another is love: a merciful look, a readiness to listen and understand, a word of encouragement, a prayer. May you share this gift with one another. We Christians love to tell the story of the Good Samaritan, a foreigner who saw a man in need and immediately stopped to help. For us, it is a story about God's mercy which is meant for everyone, for God is the All-Merciful. It is also a summons to show that same mercy to those in need. May all our brothers and sisters on this continent, like the Good Samaritan, come to your aid in the spirit of

fraternity, solidarity and respect for human dignity that has distinguished its long history.

Dear brothers and sisters, may God bless all of you and, in a special way, your children, the elderly and all those who suffer in body and spirit! I embrace all of you with affection. Upon you, and those who accompany you, I invoke his gifts of strength and peace.