

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO MEMBERS OF CATHOLIC ORGANIZATIONS SERVING IN IRAQ, SYRIA AND NEIGHBOURING TERRITORIES

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[...] We must note with great sadness that since our last meeting a year ago, despite extensive efforts made in a variety of areas, the logic of arms and oppression, hidden interests and violence continues to wreak devastation on these countries and that, even now, we have not been able to put an end to the exasperating suffering and repeated violations of human rights. The dramatic consequences of the crisis are already visible well beyond the borders of the region. This is seen in the grave phenomenon of migration. [...]

[...] Seeing the many suffering faces in Syria, in Iraq and in the neighbouring and distant countries where millions of refugees are forced to seek shelter and protection, the Church beholds the face of her Lord in his Passion.

The work of all who like you, represent so many workers in the field, who are committed to helping refugees and to safeguarding their dignity, is certainly a reflection of God's mercy and, as such, a sign that evil has limits and does not have the last word. This is a sign of great hope, for which I wish to thank you, and also the many unnamed people – though not nameless to God – who, especially in this Jubilee Year, are praying and interceding in silence for the victims of conflicts, particularly for children and the weak, and who in this way are also supporting your work. In Aleppo, children have to drink polluted water! [...]