

**GREETING TO YOUNG REFUGEES ASSISTED BY THE SALESIANS ADDRESS  
OF THE HOLY FATHER**

*Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Istanbul*

*30 November 2014*

[Link](#)

I have greatly desired to meet with you, youth from Turkey, Syria, Iraq and other countries of the Middle East and Africa. I would have liked to have met more refugees but this has not been possible. You represent hundreds of your peers, many of whom are exiles and refugees who are helped every day by the Salesians. I wish to assure you that I share your sufferings; I hope my visit, by the grace of God, may offer you some consolation in your difficult situation. Yours is the sad consequence of brutal conflicts and war, which are always evils and which never solve problems. Rather, they only create new ones.

Refugees, such as yourselves, often find themselves deprived, sometimes for long periods, of basic needs such as a dignified home, healthcare, education and work. They have had to abandon not only their material possessions, but above all their freedom, closeness to family, their homeland and cultural traditions. The degrading conditions in which so many refugees are forced to live are intolerable! For this reason, we must do everything possible to eradicate the causes of this situation. I appeal for greater international cooperation to resolve the conflicts which are causing bloodshed in your homelands, to counter the other causes which are driving people to leave their home countries, and to improve conditions so that people may remain or return home. I encourage all who are working generously and steadfastly for justice and peace not to lose heart. I ask political leaders to always remember that the great majority of their people long for peace, even if at times they lack the strength and voice to demand it.

Many organizations are doing a great deal for refugees. I am especially pleased by the good work of so many Catholic groups which offer generous aid to many in need without discriminating. I wish also to express deep gratitude to the Turkish authorities for the great efforts they have made in assisting the displaced, in particular Syrian and Iraqi refugees, and for the authorities' tangible commitment in trying to meet their needs. I hope that the necessary support of the international community may not be lacking.[...]