

**VIDEO MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE (ONLINE) MEETING ON THE SYRIAN
AND IRACHEN HUMANITARIAN CRISIS
PROMOTED BY THE DICASTERY FOR THE SERVICE OF INTEGRAL
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

10 December 2020

[Link](#)

Dear friends,

It is with joy that I address this affectionate greeting to you during this meeting organized by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, together with other instances of the Holy See, to discuss and reflect on the very serious problems that still afflict the beloved populations of Syria, Iraq and Neighboring countries.

Every effort - small or large - made to foster the peace process is like laying a brick in the construction of a just society, which is open to welcome, and where everyone can find a place to dwell in peace. My thoughts go especially to the people who had to leave their homes to escape the horrors of war, in search of better living conditions for themselves and their loved ones. In particular, I remember the Christians forced to abandon the places where they were born and grew up, where their faith developed and enriched. We must ensure that the Christian presence, in these lands, continues to be what it has always been: a sign of peace, progress, development and reconciliation between individuals and peoples.

Secondly, my thoughts go to the refugees who want to return to their country. I appeal to the international community to make every effort to encourage this return, guaranteeing the conditions of security and economic conditions necessary for this to happen. Every gesture, every effort in this direction is precious.

A final reflection on the work of Catholic agencies that are engaged in humanitarian aid. A thought of encouragement to all of you who, following the example of the Good Samaritan, are working unreservedly to welcome, care for and accompany migrants and displaced persons in these lands, without distinction of creed and belonging. As I have said many times, the Church is not an NGO. Our charitable action must be inspired by and by the Gospel. This aid must be a tangible sign of the charity of a local Church that helps another Church that is suffering, through these wonderful means which are Catholic

humanitarian aid and development agencies. A Church that helps another Church!

To finish, I want to let you know that when you find yourself operating in these places, you are not alone! The whole Church becomes one, to go out to meet the wounded man who ran into the brigands on the way from Jerusalem to Jericho. In your work, my blessing will always accompany you, which I gladly impart to you today, so that this meeting may bring abundant fruits of prosperity, development and peace to your countries, for a new life. Thanks!