

Basilica of Santa Maria in Cosmedin

Residence of the Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarch

Rome 18 March 2013

## Appeal

On the occasion of the ceremony of papal inauguration in Rome of His Holiness the new Pope Francis, their Beatitudes the Eastern Catholic Patriarchs

- **Nerses Bedros XIX:** Catholicos Patriarch of the Armenian Catholic Church
  - **Gregorios III:** Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, of Alexandria and of Jerusalem for the Melkite Greek Catholic Church
  - **Mar Ignatius Joseph III Younan:** Patriarch of Antioch for the Syriac Catholic Church
  - **Cardinal Beshara Boutros Rai:** Patriarch of Antioch and all the East for the Maronite Church
  - **Louis Raphael I Sakko:** Patriarch for the Chaldean Catholic Church
  - **Ibrahim Ishaq:** Patriarch for the Coptic Catholic Church
  - with apologies for absence from **Fouad Twal:** Patriarch of Jerusalem for the Roman Catholic Church
- met together in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Cosmedin.

They presented, in their name and in the name of the holy synods of their Churches, their congratulations to His Holiness Pope Francis on the occasion of his election and inauguration as successor of Peter, Bishop of the Church of Rome, which presides in charity. They offered their prayers for His Holiness to be able to take on the challenges facing the Church worldwide and in the Middle East in particular, where Christians' lives are endangered and their future threatened. These Christians need His Holiness' solidarity, help and prayers. They also affirmed their ecclesial communion with His Holiness, so that the Church can breathe with both lungs, the Eastern and the Western. They saluted His Holiness for choosing the name Francis in order to be

Pope for the poor, for peace and universal brotherhood, and wished his papal ministry to be exemplary in its service, enabling him to fulfil the Lord's wishes, which he has at heart.

Then they discussed the alarming situations in their countries, as they have at heart the concerns and sufferings of their sons and daughters and fellow-citizens, and prayed for world peace, renewing their call for dialogue and reconciliation as the only way out of the current crises. They emphasised rejection of violence and killing and urged seeking conflict resolution through serious negotiations and peaceful, just, and permanent solutions. They condemned all acts of kidnapping, torture, killing, and the targeting of holy places and well-known figures.

They also expressed their solidarity with the dramatically increasing numbers of refugees and displaced persons in the region, especially in Syria. They are working and will continue to work with social and humanitarian organisations to help them alleviate the tragic situation. They acknowledged the just aspirations of the people of their countries to political, social and economic reforms, which are basic elements paving the way for democracy and enhancing universal freedom and civil rights.

In the name of the common citizenship which Muslims and Christians enjoy, the Patriarchs called upon all inhabitants of the Arab world to enhance their living together by enriching their societies with spiritual and human values, and preserving the dialogue of religions and civilizations that has been present throughout history, in order to build a better future, in which young people can realize their aspirations and hopes.

As glorious Pascha draws near, the Patriarchs address every faithful person saying, "You have a resurrection!" And they address the Arab world saying, "You have a resurrection too." They hope that the peace of the Resurrection of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ will fill our Arab world and all citizens, both Christian and Muslim, so that we can say, "as we have walked together on the way of the cross and suffering, we shall walk together on the roads of the joyful resurrection."