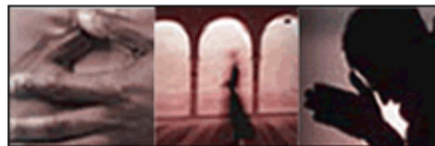




J/P ALERT

CONFERENCE OF MAJOR SUPERIORS OF MEN JUSTICE AND PEACE OFFICE



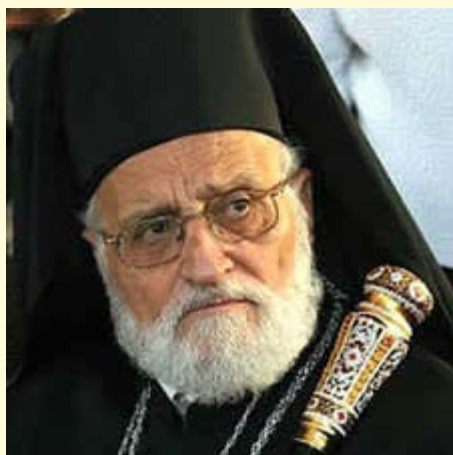
September 2012 (*en español*)

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Patriarch Gregorios III: "Blessed are the Peacemakers"

Damascus, 3 August 2012

With these words Our Lord exalts peacemakers, saying that "they shall be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9). Through these same Gospel words, I should like to explain the Church's attitude to the widespread talk of arming Christians, especially in Damascus:



1. No official has spoken to us about arming Christians.
2. We have never contacted any official and we have never asked for our Christian children to be armed, in Damascus or elsewhere.
3. We have never considered -- and never will -- arming ourselves.
4. Furthermore, we believe that the attempt to arm Christians, from whatever quarter, involves a danger of sectarian conflict and exposes predominantly Christian districts to attacks of

unknown origin.

5. We call upon all our faithful, in all parishes, to refuse offers of arms. We remind them of the teachings of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, "*All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword*" (Matthew 26:52). And also, "*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth... Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God*" (Matthew 5:5 and 9).

6. We remind them likewise of Saint Paul's teaching, "*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men*" (Romans 12:18). Our role as Christians is one of mediation and reconciliation: of being bridge-builders between the children of the same homeland. That is the finest mission that we could carry out for our country, Syria, for our brother and sister fellow-citizens of all denominations, regardless of political party, tribe, region or persuasion.

7. We have not stopped calling for this, ever since the outbreak of the crisis in March, 2011. That is the role of the Church and its pastors -- Patriarchs, bishops, priests --

monks, nuns and lay-persons involved in various sectors of activities and services of the Church. Our churches, schools, institutions and confraternities are all schools of peace, faith, virtue, love and frank, sincere fellow-citizenship and respect for all.

8. I recall a saying of the late Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople, "*I am no longer afraid, because I have laid my weapons down!*"

Our Lord calls us to this in the Holy Gospel, "It is I, be not afraid!" (Matthew 14:27; Mark 6:50; John 6:20) And also, "Be of good cheer! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). And John the Evangelist tells us, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). Let us add: faith in our brethren, our homeland and our sincere, humane national values.

We pray God to deign to bring back love to the hearts of all Syrians, so that they will have no need of weapons or fear of massacres, for they will be living together, as children of the same family and the same homeland.

We implore him: God of peace, grant peace to our country.

+ Gregorios III

Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, of Alexandria and of Jerusalem

CRS/USCCB Action Alert on Syria

Send a letter to Secretary Clinton: click [here](#)

*Although language is provided in the link, here is some additional language you might consider in your letter: "I ask that you work to ensure the U.S. do all it can to promote an end to the violence by both sides, a social and political solution inclusive of all Syrians, and further assistance in the deepening humanitarian crisis. This includes a call to stop providing assistance to the rebels, and only support the nonviolent movement. I also support small-group, but broad restorative justice efforts not only after the violence, but during it in order to defuse the distrust, bitterness, and anger that maintains this violence."

Elections 2012

USCCB Faithful Citizenship [Guide and resources](#)

Core [Themes of Catholic Social Teaching](#)

I encourage you to consider which party more consistently upholds the fuller range of Catholic Social Teaching as we seek to promote the Common Good and Reign of God:

Libertarian: [Platform and Principles](#)

Republican: [Platform](#) and Romney on [Issues](#)

Democrat: [Platform](#) and Obama on [Issues](#)

Green: [Platform](#) and [Ten Key Values](#)

*[Click here](#) to encourage the Republicans, Democrats, and television networks to open the debates to other candidates.

Federal Budget and Elections

Tips from NETWORK on the Faithful Budget:



FAITHFUL BUDGET CAMPAIGN

Ask candidates/elected officials to commit to “reasonable revenue for responsible programs”. Yes, this means raising taxes, especially for those who have benefitted the most from the past ten years of tax breaks.

You can **talk about responsible programs in your area that are helping people meet their basic needs:** healthcare, housing & supportive services, education, food & nutrition, safety, security and community. Programs like these depend on many sources of funding, and civil society contributions alone are not enough. Government has a responsibility to help its citizens in time of need, and has the right to ask those who have the most, to contribute their fair share for the common good.

If you hear candidates say that wealthy people are “job creators,” ask “What evidence do you have that tax breaks for the upper 2% create jobs?”

If they say that we have to cut spending to reduce the deficit, tell them that deficits aren't just about spending. They are also about declining revenue. Here is a good [website that explains dealing with the deficit](#).

If they say that we can't cut the **military budget**, see this list of talking points on “[Practical Options to Save Billions in the Military Budget](#).”

Here is [a great set of faithful budget resources](#) including “asks” for in-district meetings, domestic poverty, foreign assistance, revenue, etc.

You can go [here to find a sample e-mail message](#) you can send to your candidates for House and Senate. Please edit the message to use your own words about the needs in your area. But please don't stop at e-mail -- try to also make personal contact with the candidates.

Immigration: National Conference and Labor Priests Article



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

National Conference entitled “Migration Policy and Advocacy in 2013 and Beyond: *New Challenges and New Opportunities*.” Purpose: The conference will examine migration from both federal and state/local perspectives and will discuss methods for advancing the migration policy agenda of the Church in 2013 and beyond. Sponsored by USCCB and Catholic Legal Immigration Network—more details click [here](#) .

Read and Reflect on God's Call: “[Labor priests' being trained to help immigrant, low-wage workers](#)”

JP Ministry Tip: Care for Creation Documentary, etc.



a nationwide education project with a short documentary called "Sun Come Up," which depicts some of the world's first climate

refugees. The dates recommended to show the film are Oct. 1-4, with the Feast of St. Francis being Oct. 4. Click [here for more details and a trailer link](#).

The **Franciscan Friars** of Holy Name Province have an excellent set of ministry tips for cultivating the habits of caring for creation. Click [here](#) for more details. There is also a very thorough Franciscan statement on climate change that your order might consider using for education and advocacy: [English version](#); [Spanish version](#).

Job Openings

Center of Concern Announces Presidential Search

The [Center of Concern](#) is a Washington, DC-based research and advocacy organization whose work on behalf of people living in poverty around the world spans the last four decades. The Center was founded in 1971 with the leadership and support of then-Bishop Joseph Bernardin, UN Secretary General U Thant, and Jesuit Superior General Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

The Center seeks a new President who will be its public face, will lead the staff and volunteers, will manage the implementation of its strategic plan, and represent the Center in relations with many domestic and international organizations, including religious leadership institutions across the spectrum.

Candidates must be familiar with Catholic history and culture, be rooted in the Catholic social justice tradition, have a global worldview, and possess graduate level academic credentials or equivalent experience. The President reports to the Board of Directors. For more information, please contact the Center at <SearchCommittee@COC.org>. The application deadline is September 30, 2012. The position is available January, 2013.

President, Jesuit Volunteer Corps

The [Jesuit Volunteer Corps](#) (JVC) has over 50 years of experience providing services in the United States and seven foreign countries by placing full-time volunteers with agencies, schools and organizations that directly serve those in need, to work alongside the poor and marginalized. The President is responsible for promoting JVC's mission and overall financial health by providing leadership consistent with both the JVC mission and the policies of the Board. Location: Baltimore, MD—Washington DC Corridor. [More details about the position](#) are available online.

To Apply: Please direct all questions, suggestions, and resumes to our consultant, Carole Schwartz who can be reached at: Carole Schwartz, CRS Associates LLC, Office: 908-273-6664, Cell: 908-419-1417 <carole@crsassociatesllc.com>.

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- *assists major superiors in their role as leaders;*
- *promotes dialogue and collaboration with the conference of bishops and other major groups in church and society;*
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