Holly Land Calls for Courageous Peacemaking

The Holy Land is the place Christ embodied our shared call to holiness and the way of peacemaking. As witnesses to this Christ, we join with our broader Catholic community as well as endorse a letter with other Christian organizations to say "Enough" to the most recent horror of violence in Palestine and Israel. In solidarity with others worldwide we call for an immediate end to the violence—as well as its underlying causes—in Palestine and Israel. Over 1200 Palestinians have been killed, mostly civilians, while about 50 Israelis have been killed.

Jesus calls us to "put down our sword" and to have the courage to "love our enemies." In the presence of Israeli President Shimon Peres and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Pope Francis boldly proclaimed that, "peacemaking is more courageous than warfare." But will we as Christians embody this courage? Will we put down our swords and model courageous love of enemies and peacemaking? Will our U.S. leaders be bold enough to take the necessary steps to end the violence on all sides, particularly by ending the blockade and the occupation, as well as addressing the distrust and trauma? For instance, Amnesty International has called for an arms embargo on all parties. Others, such as the Presbyterian Church USA has divested from companies profiting from settlements.

The U.S. Bishops' recent letter quoted the Justice and Peace Commission of the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries in the Holy Land, which declared that all of these killings “are products of the injustice and of the hatred that the occupation fosters in the hearts of those prone to such deeds." Likewise, those who create the policy and enforce the occupation also become increasingly dehumanized, prone to more violence, engaged in collective punishment, and too often deny moral responsibility.

CMSM President Very Rev. John Edmunds, ST declares, "Whether it is immigration reform, unaccompanied children from Central America, gun violence, Syria, Iraq, or the recent violence in Palestine and Israel, we must do better at prioritizing and addressing the root causes of such issues. Otherwise, the wounds will continue to fester and harm will arise over and over again."

Our deep felt prayers are with all those harmed, in fear, and blinded by hatred as we seek healing, grace, and the courage of peacemaking.

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The Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) supports and offers resources for U.S. leaders of Catholic men's religious institutes. CMSM promotes dialogue and collaboration on issues of religious life as well as peace and justice issues with major groups in church and society. There are more than 17,000 religious priests and brothers in the United States.