

Mission Letter

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA (WHITE FATHERS)

June 2021

Dear friends and benefactors,

The Catholic Church's commitment to dialogue with other churches and religions flows from the Gospel, but Pope Francis said he knows some Catholics disagree. This he said when he made a visit to Iraq. He is convinced that God wants the Church to continue promoting a sense of belonging to one human family.



Pope Francis in Iraq meeting some representatives of the Muslims of this country.

He visited the birth place of Abraham, the father of all believers in one God (Jews, Christians & Muslims). He said that it was wrong to kill our brothers and sisters in His name or to wage war in His name. He prayed for peace, reconciliation and the rebuilding of this severely damage country where the majority of Christians were forced to leave their homes.

In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis wrote that “issues of human fraternity and social friendship have always been a concern of mine. In the preparation of *Laudato Si*, I had a source of inspiration in my brother Bartholomew, the Orthodox Patriarch, who has spoken forcefully of our need to care for creation. In this case, I have felt encouraged by the Grand Imam Ahmad Al Tayyeb, with whom I met in Abu Dhabi, where we declared that **God has created all human beings equal in rights, duties, and dignity, and has called them to live together as brothers and sisters**, (p.4). In today's world, the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading, and the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia. The process of building

fraternity, be it local or universal, can only be undertaken by spirits that are free and open to authentic encounters.” (p 35)



Pope Francis was most welcome in Irak.

Attentive to Pope Francis' call for Christians to be architects of peace, reconciliation and development, to promote dialogue and to build bridges among peoples, it is incumbent for us Missionaries of Africa to continue, wherever we are, to look for ways that lead Christians to knowing and meeting our brothers and sisters of Islam and of other religions.

To the first missionaries in North Africa, our founder said:” It is forbidden to speak of religion to Kabyles. For the time being, we will confine ourselves to treating the sick, and teaching children... This is not the time to convert; it is the time to win the hearts and trust of the Kabyles through charity and kindness.” Since the beginning we have been involved with migrants, libraries, training institutes, centers for encounter. All this has made us an Institute recognized by the Church as specialist in encounter and dialogue with the faithful of Islam.

Attentive to Pope Francis' call for Christians to be architects of peace, reconciliation and development, to promote dialogue and to build bridges among peoples in the spirit of the Beatitudes, it is incumbent upon us to continue, wherever we are, to look for ways that lead Christians to knowing and meeting our brothers and sisters of Islam.

Even here in Canada where we find hostility to Muslims, Jews and other religions we need to promote mutual respect, peace and reconciliation. Let us all respond to the invitation made by Pope Francis to promote dialogue and encounter with people of different beliefs.

We thank you for the continued support of your prayers and gifts during this time of pandemic which has been very challenging for our brothers in Africa.

Mike Merizzi, M. Afr.