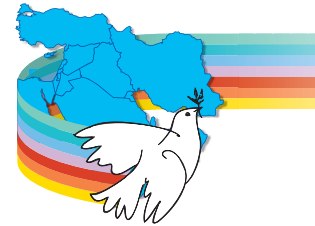


**CHRISTIANS
IN THE
MIDDLE EAST:
WHAT FUTURE?**

INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE

Bari
April 29-30
2015

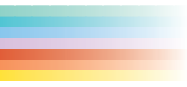


The complex and dramatic situation of Christians in the Middle East, too long forgotten by the western public opinion, challenges all Christian Churches to a renewed and urgent sense of responsibility.

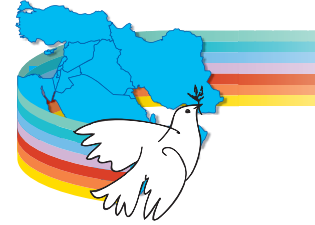
These are men, women, elderly and children most often relegated to the margins of society, forced to emigrate, to leave the country where they were born and where they would have all rights to continue living. They are minorities often unheard and discriminated against, subject to violence and concrete forms of persecution.

Until 1948 Christians of different denominations accounted for 20% of the population of the Middle East: they are now just 6%, and this figure is expected to fall further.

On several occasions Pope Francis has stated that the survival of the Christians of the East is not only a matter of religious freedom, it is to put at risk the very existence of a civilization and its values. For this the fate of Christians cannot be of concern to those believers alone, but we are all called into question, even non-believers, and we cannot close our eyes or turn our head the other way and not see what is happening not far from us.



Wednesday
April 29th
afternoon



The Joint Declaration of Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew of November 2014 has a strong focus: the common concern for the situation in Iraq, Syria and throughout the Middle East. The text, signed by both, speaks of “ecumenism of suffering” and it states that “the terrible situation of Christians and all those who are suffering in the Middle East requires not only a constant prayer, but also an appropriate response from the international community.”

In this framework, the Community of Sant'Egidio - which for many years has been deeply involved with the Christians of those lands – have promoted together with the Archdiocese of Bari-Bitonto an International Conference on the future of Christians in the Middle East.

The conference, which is entitled “*Christians in the Middle East: What Future?*” takes place in Bari, on 29 and 30 April 2015. Patriarchs and Heads of the Catholic, Orthodox and Oriental Churches in the Middle East, together with international politics and representatives of the governments, will join the event.

4.00 p.m.

Città Metropolitana di Bari
Lungomare Nazario Sauro, 29

Opening Session
Christians in the Middle East: What Future?

I PART

Chairperson

Francesco Cacucci

Archbishop of Bari-Bitonto

Inaugural greetings

Leonardo Sandri

Cardinal, Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, Holy See

Brian Farrell

Bishop, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christians Unity, Holy See

Nunzio Galantino

Bishop, Secretary General of the Italian Bishops' Conference

Marco Impagliazzo

President of the Community of Sant'Egidio

Contribution

Tarek Mitri

Director of I.F. Institute, American University of Beirut, Lebanon

Wednesday
April 29th
afternoon

II PART

Chairperson

Vincenzo Paglia

Archbishop, President of the Pontifical Council for the Family, Holy See

Free Contributions

Representatives of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches
in the Middle East, diplomats and political figures

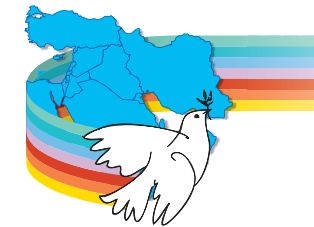
Conclusions

7.00 p.m.

Basilica of Saint Nicolas
Largo Abate Elia, 13

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Thursday
April 30th
morning



09.30 a.m.

Città Metropolitana di Bari
Lungomare Nazario Sauro, 29

Plenary Session

I PART

Chairperson

Marco Impagliazzo

President of the Community of Sant'Egidio

Opening Speech

Andrea Riccardi

Founder of the Community of Sant'Egidio

Interventions

Paolo Gentiloni

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Italy

Paul Richard Gallagher

Archbishop, Secretary for Relations with States, Holy See

Remarks

Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem II

Syrian-orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East

Gregorios III Laham

Greek Melkite Catholic Patriarch of Antioch and All the East

Chrysostomos II

Archbishop of Nea Iustiniana and All Cyprus

Thursday
April 30th
morning

Yousif Mirkis
Archbishop, Patriarchate of Babylon of Chaldeans

Ignace Youssif III Younan
Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch

Ibrahim Isaac Sidrak
Copt Catholic Patriarch of Alexandria

11.45 a.m.

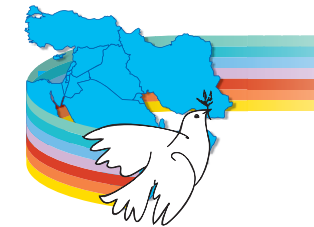
Coffee Break

12.00 p.m.

II PART
Chairperson
Pierbattista Pizzaballa
Custodian of the Holy Land

Free Contributions
Representatives of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches
in the Middle East, diplomats and political figures

Thursday
April 30th
afternoon



4.30 p.m.

Città Metropolitana di Bari
Lungomare Nazario Sauro, 29

Plenary Session

Chairperson
Andrea Palmieri
Undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christians Unity,
Holy See

Free Contributions
Representatives of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches
in the Middle East, diplomats and political figures

6.00 p.m.

Conclusions
Tarek Mitri
Director of I.F. Institute, American University of Beirut, Lebanon
Andrea Riccardi
Founder of the Community of Sant'Egidio



WE THANKS



Auswärtiges Amt

and



REGIONE PUGLIA

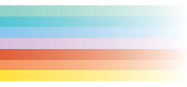
Area Politiche per lo Sviluppo Rurale

CITTÀ METROPOLITANA DI BARI



COMUNE DI BARI





ORGANIZING SECRETARIAT
Community of Sant'Egidio
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