

A public declaration by the Focolare Movement in Jordan

“We, Christians and Muslims of the Focolare Movement in Jordan, wish to express our great dismay for what has taken place in these days and is continuing at this very moment in the Middle East. In Syria there is a war that has lasted more than three years, destroying a nation and forcing millions of people to flee for their lives. There is the Gaza conflict that does not spare civilians and innocent children as it highlights an unresolved situation between two peoples, and a serious lack of articulated commitment from the international community toward resolving it. There has been the recent advance of extremist militants in north Iraq, who are spreading terror among several religions, forcing them to live like displaced people in their own land. Among these displaced people there are more than a hundred thousand Christians who have been rooted in this land for 2000 years. They were obliged to leave their homes in the middle of the night. It is a true catastrophe! Then there is the deliberate destruction of their religious and cultural patrimony, which is also the patrimony of all humanity.

We are committed to do what we can to alleviate the suffering of these people, many of whom we know personally, first by praying for them but also raising funds to help meet their most urgent needs; opening our homes to them if necessary. We urge the international community to take action immediately to ensure that these communities being targeted in Iraq can return to their homes as soon as possible!

We condemn every act of violence against any human being! We condemn the disproportionate production and sale of weapons of war, no matter the institution that finances them, as well as all those who put them in the hands of terrorist and subversive groups!

We wish to underline, especially concerning the events in Iraq, that those who commit these abominable acts do not have a religion, and if they claim to have one, they do nothing but undermine it. In fact, the essence of religion is precisely the encounter between God, man and the entire creation.

We are tired of seeing religion being exploited to create divisions in humanity and foment conflict. We are outraged with those – groups, persons or States – who have plans and strategies for dividing and creating separated ghettos in places where people have been living side by side for hundreds of years.

We are aware that dialogue between members of the Christian and Muslim communities is not always easy; but we wish to recall that for some time now noteworthy efforts are being made to calm misunderstandings in a spirit of mutual respect, knowing that the one God has raised different paths that converge in the same direction: mercy, love, compassion and all those virtues that He alone possesses in full. He has made us in His own image to live them with one another, and so we wish to follow His teachings in order to construct our societies on the basis of pluralism where the right to profess one’s faith without any restrictions is ensured for every citizen and community.

Jordan has a long history of good relations between Christians and Muslims and the recent visit of Pope Francis, invited by our beloved King Abdallah Ibn Al-Hussein, has strengthened those relations even more with an impulse to work together, more intensely for the good of society.

The Focolare community of Jordan also wishes to confirm its commitment to work side by side to build a peaceful and harmonious society, in the defence of every human being – regardless of religious creed, ethnicity or tradition – and continuing to work for peace, brotherhood and the protection of nature. We believe that acting in this way we can bring about good, sustain it and spread it wherever it is already present. We are certain that evil can never have the last say. Our faith in God guarantees this, just like the strong relationship among us.”

Amman, August 13, 2014