

Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Affirms Pope Francis' call for peace in the Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*

October 29, 2020

"It is my desire that, in this our time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity. Fraternity between all men and women." -- Pope Francis

On October 4th, 2020, the Holy See Press Office published Pope Francis' most recent encyclical which he entitled [*Fratelli tutti*](#): On Fraternity and Social Friendship. The encyclical, which is addressed to "all Christians and people of good will," bears teachings that are relevant to the work of Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP). We are grateful for the leadership of His Holiness Pope Francis and affirm the words of his encyclical as he calls for us to work towards justice and peace.

Pope Francis calls each of us, as Christians, "to be an artisan of peace, by uniting and not dividing, by extinguishing hatred and not holding on to it, by opening paths of dialogue and not by constructing new walls." He challenges us to understand that peace is not a final, fixed state but "a never-ending task that demands the commitment of everyone."

The encyclical sees justice as a precursor and requirement for peace: "Justice is properly sought solely out of love of justice itself, out of respect for the victims, as a means of preventing new crimes and protecting the common good." Alongside justice, Pope Francis calls us to embrace forgiveness as it "is precisely what enables us to pursue justice without falling into a spiral of revenge or the injustice of forgetting."

As religious persecution continues to create divisions around the world, the Holy See reminds us that "One fundamental human right must not be forgotten in the journey towards fraternity and peace. It is religious freedom for believers of all religions." His Holiness Pope Francis calls us to advocate for peace as a form of "political charity" whose goal is to pursue the common good and is "expressed in a spirit of openness to everyone."

CMEP Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon responded to the encyclical: "His Holiness Pope Francis' encyclical helps guide us at CMEP and within the church in understanding what advocating for justice and peace means. His words serve as part of the holistic perspective we embrace in partnering with various Church communions and religious organizations as we work toward being advocates of equality, human rights, security, and justice in the Holy Land and all parts of the Middle East."

We encourage Catholics and the broader ecumenical community to engage with this incredible resource and use it as an opportunity to foster discussion, fellowship, and growth as the church pursues justice, peace, and seeks to live out its mission in the world.

Formed in 1984, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) is a coalition of 29 national church communions and organizations, including Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Evangelical traditions that works to encourage US policies that actively promote a comprehensive resolution to conflicts in the Middle East with a focus on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. CMEP works to mobilize US Christians to embrace a holistic perspective and to be advocates of equality, human rights, security, and justice for Israelis, Palestinians, and all people of the Middle East.