

## COMMEMORATING THE VICTIMS OF ACTS OF VIOLENCE BASED ON RELIGION

The United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution A/RES/73/296, designated 22 August as the **International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion**.

*“It causes me great pain to know that Christians in the world submit to the greatest amount of such discrimination. Persecution against Christians today is actually worse than in the first centuries of the Church, and there are more Christian martyrs today than in that era. This is happening more than 1.700 years after the edict of Constantine, which gave Christians the freedom to publicly profess their faith.”* These are the words, addressed by Pope Francis on 20 June 2014, to the participants at the international conference on *“Religious freedom and the global clash of values”*.

Last events in Pakistan, and many others in different parts of the world, show the growing intolerance towards Christians; many of them are forced to leave their homes, many are killed, many remain in poverty and in suffering. According to the Pope Francis, *“the debate over religious freedom has become very intense recently”*, and we can affirm that it is also because of the extreme violence in which many Christians lose their lives. There are still brothers and sisters from Iraq who remained without home, waiting in Turkey as refugees, to be accepted in one of the countries like USA, Australia, Sweden or Germany.

Every institution, every state, every religion must confess the fundamental human dignity and transcendent value of the person. And this dignity is expressed in the freedom to confess according to the fundamental truths and values of every religion, what he or she believes about God, his existence, his revelation, his mercy and final judgement at the end of times.

Accordingly, Pope Francis in the same address to the patricians of the conference affirms: *“Reason recognizes in religious freedom a fundamental human right which reflects the highest human dignity, the ability to seek the truth and conform to it, and recognizes in it a condition which is indispensable to the ability to deploy all of one’s own potentiality. Religious freedom is not only that of private thought or worship. It is the liberty to live, both privately and publicly, according to the ethical principles resulting from found truth.”*

This is a great challenge in the globalized world, it is the challenge, to be able to accept each other as brothers and sisters, acknowledging the common destiny of all humanity.

Pope Francis is urging the world leaders and politicians to assure the legal tools for the religious freedom. *“Legal systems, therefore, whether state or international, are called upon to recognize, guarantee and protect religious freedom, which is an intrinsic right inherent to human nature, to the*



*dignity of being free, and is also a sign of a healthy democracy and one of the principal sources of the legitimacy of the State” is pleading the Pope Francis, and his cry need to be heard today by the leaders of the world, by religious leaders and by those who educate young generations.*

Let us pray that God, Creator of every human being, may enlighten human hearts and make them open to the truth, that human being is not created for religion, but that religion should serve human being, showing him that all of us are called to serve God and adore him by living according to the principles of universal brotherhood, justice and love.

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We pray that God, the Creator of every human being, would enlighten human hearts and make them open to the truth, namely that human beings were not created for religion, but that religion should serve human beings, showing them that we all are called to serve God and worship him by living according to the principles of universal brotherhood, justice and love.



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