



PATRIARCHATUS LATINUS - JERUSALEM

بطريركية القدس لللاتين

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Dearest Friends of the Holy Land,

The American President's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's official capital has aroused mixed feelings and sent ripples across the local political scene, with many voicing strong support and others warning that any hopes for a two-state solution would immediately vanish.

While rhetoric has been heated, thankfully, there is little evidence of anticipated turmoil in Jerusalem.

The unilateral nature of the President's action will not provide a solution to the difficult problem of Jerusalem's status. It is a unique city, a treasure of all humanity and sacred to millions of people worldwide who regard it as their spiritual capital. Granting an exclusive claim to Jerusalem runs contrary to its logic, an international city belonging to all.

Locally, our people, though inured to unfavorable actions and prolonged subjection, are greatly hurt and disappointed by this latest action. Some remain hopeful and others watch as their hopes grow dim. Nevertheless, they are a people of faith, trusting Divine Providence, who provides the remedy for the malady.

All of us here are cognizant of the tremendous support that we receive from friends, especially the Friends of the Holy Land. In moments of sadness, the awareness of your prayers and solidarity bolster flagging spirits. The consistent encouragement and support that Holy Land Christians have received from you has helped them to remain strong and self-sufficient in a very challenging environment. Your friendship, encouragement and prayers are a great boon, particularly at this time.

The present time of Advent prepares us to remember the first coming, and exhorts us lift up our eyes to the second, which will fulfill time and history. It is therefore a time of hope, of expectation, of vigilance: throughout these weeks we hear the invitation to watch in confident expectation. It is a call to be alert to the Spirit of God, all the while remaining fully active in daily living. While waiting, we strive to be a people of unflinching hope, not dismayed by the undesirable and unacceptable. We are chosen for the purposes, the interests of God, may we be true to our calling.

Jesus does not call us to cope with a decaying culture, but to transform it. Transformation happened in 20 past decaying empires and it can happen in our quaking modern empire, but only by facing reality with a humility born of the realization that we are ordinary men and women, but with a hope born of the realization that no challenge is too great for ordinary men and women who walk with Jesus Christ in the Spirit of the Father

I solicit your prayerful support and express my profound gratitude for your uncommon kindness and generosity. May your Advent journey bring you to a deeper union of mind and heart with the Lord and Savior of humankind in the celebration of the Birth of Our Saviour!



Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa