



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II TO HIS BEATITUDE MICHEL SABBAH

*To His Beatitude Michel Sabbah
Patriarch of Jerusalem for Latins
President of the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land*

The trials which the peoples of the Holy Land are enduring at this time are a cause of great suffering to me and I wish to express to everyone, without exception, my deepest solidarity.

Without doubt, the violent change from negotiation to confrontation represents a setback for peace, yet no one must be resigned to fatalism: the Israeli and Palestinian peoples are called by geography and history to live together.

They can achieve this in a peaceful and lasting way only if fundamental rights are guaranteed for everyone: both the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples have the right to live in their own homes in dignity and security.

Only a return to the negotiating table, on an equal footing and with respect for international law, can lead to a future of brotherhood and peace for those living in that blessed land.

Recalling my pilgrimage among you some months ago, I am deeply moved to think of all those places which speak of God's history with man and are a call to work together so that violence, hatred and suspicion may never again disfigure that part of the world.

I encourage you, the Catholic Bishops of the Holy Land, and all leaders of Christian communities to renew your efforts so that mutual respect, with humility and trust, may inspire your relations.

I also appeal to those who have the task of guiding the faithful of Judaism and Islam, that they may find in their faith all the necessary energy for the internal and external peace for which these peoples long to become a reality.

I invite the international community to continue its efforts to help both sides to find solutions that guarantee the desired security and tranquillity, which are the prerogatives of every nation and the preconditions for the life and progress of all

society.

As I invoke upon all people of good will the blessing of almighty God, who proclaims peace to his people, to his faithful ones, to those who put their hope in him (cf. *Ps* 85: 9), I also impart an affectionate Apostolic Blessing to Your Beatitude, to your Brother Bishops and to all the faithful entrusted to their care.

From the Vatican, 6 November 2000.

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