

24/10/2023

Archepiscopal Encyclical to the Vicariate for Palestinian & Jordanian Orthodox Christian Communities in America



ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

Prot. No. 293/2023

Archepiscopal Encyclical to the Vicariate for Palestinian & Jordanian
Orthodox Christian Communities in America

October 20, 2023

Unto the Pious Priests and Deacons, Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Day and Afternoon Schools, Youth Orthodox Organizations, and entirety of the Christ-loving Plenitude of the Vicariate for Palestinian & Jordanian Orthodox Christian Communities in America of the Sacred Archdiocese of America:

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (Matthew 5:9)

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

I greet you with compassion in the peace and love of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ. I am writing to you today with heavy heart and a deep sense of sorrow for the recent events that have unfolded in the Holy Land. Violence has once more brought suffering and hardship to countless innocent lives, and I want to express my sincerest sympathy and wholehearted solidarity with the members of our beloved Vicariate for Palestinian & Jordanian Orthodox Christian Communities in America during these challenging times.

It is deeply distressing to witness the loss of innocent life that has occurred, and I want you to know that my thoughts and prayers are with you and your loved ones. The unconceivable destruction of lives, homes, infrastructure, and places of worship – including most recently the historic Church of Saint Porphyrios – is an unimaginable burden that no one should have to endure.

Pain and suffering are blind to race, religion or citizenship. In times of strife, it is all too easy for misunderstanding and division to grow. Yet, it is precisely in such moments that we must remember our shared humanity as we strive for peace and reconciliation through prayer and dialogue.

Allow me to recall the powerful words of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in response to these events: “While many deem violence as a necessary means of dispute resolution, we can never see it as part of God’s good creation, nor can we ever approve the use of violence to pursue peace. Instead, we must look back to the ‘good’ that God first created and the perfect peace to which he desires us to go, exhorting with the Psalmist: ‘Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it’ (Psalm 34:14).”

To all the members of our beloved Vicariate, we love you, we are praying for you and your loved ones surrounded by danger, and we will continue to support you and all those affected by this conflict during this difficult time.

May the grace of the God of Peace continue to inspire you with courage and compassion, granting you hope and love.

With paternal love in our Lord Jesus Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS

Archbishop of America

goarch.org