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ASIA/SYRIA - Melkite Archbishop of Aleppo: "Chaos and rubble in Syria. United with the Pope we call for dialogue "

Aleppo (Agenzia Fides) - "We see only chaos and destruction in a conflict that is against everything and everyone. In a country disfigured, with the civilian population led to the slaughter, Pope Francis' appeal calls for dialogue and reconciliation. Concrete steps are urgently needed and we hope that the Conference in Geneva is the turning point for a political solution to the Syrian conflict " says to Fides His Exc Mgr. Jean-Clément Jeanbart, Metropolitan Archbishop of Aleppo for the Greek-Catholic (Melkite). The Archbishop expresses gratitude to the Pope for the words spoken at the Angelus yesterday, June 2, stating that they give "consolation and hope." The Pope recalled "the troubled situation of war, death, destruction, significant economic and environmental damage, as well as the scourge of kidnapping," ensuring "prayer and solidarity" and urging " the kidnappers to release the victims" .
Mgr. Jeanbart expresses his concern and sadness "to see a country reduced to rubble," and "to see so much violence, terrible killings of civilians and children, kidnapping, that scar the face of the Syrian people", in a sort of "degradation of humanity itself."
With regards to the two bishops kidnapped (the Syriac Orthodox Gregory Yohanna Ibrahim and the Greek-Orthodox Boulos al-Yazigi) and the two priests kidnapped since February (the Armenian Catholic Michel Kayyal and the Greek Orthodox Maher Mahfouz), the Archbishop says: "There is no news, nothing is known and this is a sign of the chaos. The kidnapped are people who were carrying out humanitarian work, helping people to live in this tragic situation. It is very worrying. Where will this lead to? "
When faced with terrible suffering, "Our fear is that Christians continue to leave the country in search of a decent life." "One suffers for lack of goods, fuel, electricity, sometimes for food. But what makes us suffer most is to see that the future gets darker and darker. The future for us Christians and for all Syrians can only be based on full citizenship, freedom, dignity and respect for others. Otherwise what will happen to us? "
Syria is "a holy land that saw the birth of the universal Church. The Pope's appeal is precious – explains Msg. Jeanbart - because it draws the whole world to do something for us. We hope that the forthcoming conference in Geneva is able to open a real glimmer of peace, to offer real openness towards dialogue and a political solution."
Yesterday in Syrian churches and communities of the Diaspora, "we prayed with the Pope at the hour of the Eucharistic Adoration, a very important moment to pray for Syria and invoke peace," says the Archbishop. (PA)
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