



Office of the President

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The Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio, J.C.D.
Archbishop for the Military Services
President

October 2, 2024
+Holy Guardian Angels

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,

The 7th of October will mark the first anniversary of the horrific attack by Hamas on Israel in which some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed. The trauma of that day—the deadliest for the Jewish people since the Holocaust—continues for Israelis and for the Jewish community worldwide, who cry out for the return of those still held as hostages and who struggle with the dramatic rise of antisemitic incidents around the world.

In the ensuing war against Hamas in Gaza, over 40,000 people, the majority of whom are civilians, are estimated to have been killed. In the West Bank, attacks on civilian Palestinians have also increased. In the U.S. and internationally, anti-Muslim incidents have risen dramatically over the last year. And in recent days, along the Israeli-Lebanese border, the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel has tragically intensified to armed conflict.

The terrible loss of life in Israel and in Gaza, as well as the spike in crimes of hate here in the U.S. and elsewhere, is a source of great sorrow to us as Catholics. Compassion is not a zero-sum game. We hear the cries of lament of all our brothers and sisters—Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Muslims and Christians—all of whom have been traumatized by these events. We join in mourning all whose lives have been cut short. We share the earnest desire for lasting peace.

Both Jewish and Islamic tradition teach that “whoever destroys a life, it is as if they have destroyed a whole world, and whoever saves a life, it is as if they have saved a whole world” (Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin 4:9; The Qur’an, 5:32). This reminds us of the immense cost when human life is destroyed, but also of our obligation to work to save life.

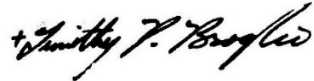
On September 16th, our Muslim brothers and sisters observed the feast of Mawlid al-Nabi, the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. On the evening of October 2nd, our Jewish brothers and sisters mark the beginning of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year. Celebrations of new birth are meant to fill us with hope, but this year these celebrations come at a time of great anguish.

As you know, our Catholic faith teaches us to hope even amidst the darkest of circumstances, for Christ is risen from the dead. Out of death God brings forth a new creation. As this anniversary approaches, in a time of anguish and trauma, let us seek ways to express our solidarity with our Jewish and Muslim brothers and sisters. Let us also commit ourselves to combat all forms of hatred directed towards Jews and Muslims, and to work for a lasting peace in the land of the Lord Jesus’ birth.

The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, has asked the clergy and lay faithful of his diocese to observe October 7th as a day of prayer, fasting and penance. I ask you to share this letter with the clergy and lay faithful of your own local Churches to invite them to join the Christians of the Holy Land, together with the Holy Father, Pope Francis, in fervent prayer for an end to the violence in the Holy Land, for the safe and prompt return of all hostages, and for the conversion of hearts so that hatred may be overcome, opening a pathway to reconciliation and peace.

Grateful for your attention to this missive and with fervent renewed hope, I remain

Fraternally in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Timothy P. Broglio". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

(The Most Reverend) Timothy P. Broglio
Archbishop for the Military Services, USA
President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops