

**Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I greet you from Jerusalem that needs your prayers for justice. I would have loved to be present in person but the war prevented me.

Our world today is in dire need of cooperation between parliamentarians and religious leaders in order to together work for the common values of justice, harmony, living together and reconciliation.

In the midst of war and the illegal occupation, I would like to speak on four principles:

- 1. The sanctity of every life. God has created us on God's image and Jesus Christ on His cross retained the sanctity and dignity of every life regardless of religion, ethnicity, religious or party affiliation. As an Arab Palestinian Christian Evangelical Lutheran Bishop and a Palestinian refugee, I affirm the every human being bears God's image, Palestinians, Israelis, Jews, Christians, Muslims have equal dignity.**
- 2. Justice and only justice must be our aim in our societies and our broken world. Some like to speak on peace. I always emphatically say: we need peace based on justice in the whole world including the Palestinian Israeli conflict. Pope Leo XIV succinctly said: "Earth will rest. Justice will prevail, the poor will rejoice and peace will**

return. Once we no longer act as predators, but as pilgrims no longer for ourselves, but walking only side by side.”

3. We have together to combat any kind of religious or political extremism. Religious extremism is a perversion of true religion. It is the antithesis of loving God and loving your neighbour as yourself. Extremism makes our world less safer. We only need robust moderation that respects human rights, gender justice, freedom of religion, freedom of expression and equal citizenship that embraces diversity.
4. We together must promote respect of Holy Sites of all faiths and together to combat any disrespect, desecration or abuse when they are exploited for violent hostile purposes. As I come from Jerusalem, I emphasize on the respect of the historical Status Quo of the Holy Sites. Holy Places must not be places of war, conflict and incitement, they are places of worship, meditation and spiritual growth.

I really long for peace based on justice in Palestine and Israel. I pray that we can together work for this holy mission of peace based on justice in Israel and Palestine.

May God give wisdom to the powerful as Prophet Micah says: “What does God demand of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8).

May God bless you all.