



5th Novemebr, 2021

Dear Brothers in Christ,

In my capacity as Patron of the Catholic charity, Fellowship and Aid to the Christians of the East (FACE), I am very happy to commend to you the International Day of Prayer for Eastern Christians, which takes place each year on the Sixth Sunday of Easter (next observance: 22nd May, 2022).

The Day of Prayer for Eastern Christians was launched by l'*Oeuvre d'Orient*, a French charitable body which has been actively supporting Eastern Christians for over 160 years. From its inception, in 2016, the Day of Prayer has been supported by the Congregation for Oriental Churches. Over the past three years, thanks to the initiative and organisation of the British charity, *Fellowship and Aid to the Christians of the East* (FACE), the Day of Prayer has been observed by dioceses across England, Wales and Scotland.

This Day of Prayer for Eastern Christians, which brings Eastern and Western Christians together, offers an opportunity to give thanks to God for all that we owe the Oriental Churches: the first preaching of the Gospel, the origins of the monastic tradition, many of the early Church Fathers, and, above all, the witness of the Eastern Christians down the centuries which has been, and still is, an inspiration to our faith.

Today, Eastern Christians are a diminishing presence in the Middle East. Maintaining their presence in those lands is essential for stability in the wider region, as well as for guaranteeing Western Christians an unbroken heritage and tradition from the source of our faith. Our Catholic charity, Fellowship and Aid to the Christians of the East (FACE), devotes itself exclusively to supporting the Eastern Catholic Churches in the Middle East, the Horn of Africa and India, through long-term projects in education, healthcare, pastoral support and interreligious dialogue, so that Eastern Christians may remain in their homelands.

Accordingly, I would plead that this Day of Prayer for Eastern Christians be observed in your diocese on the Sixth Sunday of Easter, and that an opportunity be given to the faithful not only to pray in union with these Christians but also to show their solidarity with them through an optional collection in aid of FACE's projects under the patronage of the Eastern Catholic Churches.

With the assurance of my prayers and warmest wishes,

Yours in Christ

Michael Cardinal Fitzgerald M.Afr.

Fellowship and Aid to the Christians of the East

Registered Charity No.:1178592 | Trading Name: FACE | info@facecharity.org | www.facecharity.org

Address: FACE Charity, Judge Sykes Frixou, York House, 23 Kingsway, London, WC2B 6YF