

November 13, 2019

His Eminence Bechara Boutros Cardinal Rai  
Patriarch of Antioch of the Maronites and  
All the East

His Eminence Louis Raphael Cardinal Sako  
Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans

His Beatitude Mar Ignatius Joseph III Younan  
Primate and Patriarch of the Syriac Catholic  
Church

His Beatitude Gregory Petros XX Ghabroyan  
Patriarch of Cilicia of the Armenian Catholic  
Church

His Beatitude Youssef Absi  
Patriarch of Antioch of the Greek Melkites

[transmitted via email]

Your Beatitudes:

Please receive our respectful greetings in Christ the Lord.

The Catholic bishops of the United States and the Knights of Columbus stand in prayerful solidarity with you and your people at this difficult time.

Today, in Lebanon and Iraq, we are witnessing critical moments as protests grow against corruption and foreign interference. We pray that the effect of these protests will be a more just society for all the citizens of these two countries. We urge the Iraqi and Lebanese governments to engage in a meaningful dialogue with those demonstrating, and we stand with you in urging governments to remember that they exist to serve the common good of their people.

We join Pope Francis in calling on the Iraqi government to “listen to the cry of the people who are asking for a dignified and peaceful life,” especially in light of the attacks on protesters that have killed hundreds in recent weeks.

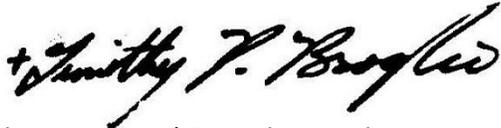
With regard to Lebanon, we once again echo the Holy Father who said a resolution to the crisis there would be “for the benefit of the entire Middle East Region, which suffers so much.” The recent protests in Lebanon have generally not been met with violence. Nonetheless, we are aware of the growing instability. Lebanon, which in the words of Saint Pope John Paul II, “is more than a country, it is a message of freedom and example of pluralism for East and West.”

We believe that it is important that the outcome in both Iraq and Lebanon respect the sovereignty and autonomy of these two countries.

We stand in prayerful solidarity with the Christians and other peoples of Iraq and Lebanon in these days. At the same time, we continue also to watch closely and with concern the situation in other countries in the region where so many have suffered from war and violence, and in the case of Christians, have been targeted often simply for professing their belief in Christ. We pray that peace and security may come to this region, and that those who have suffered so much may be able to rebuild their lives in an environment consistent with their rights to human dignity.

Willingly we avail ourselves of this opportunity to renew to Your Beatitudes our sentiments of profound respect and the highest regard.

Sincerely in Christ,

Handwritten signature of Timothy J. Broglio in black ink.

(The Most Rev.) Timothy Broglio  
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Handwritten signature of Carl A. Anderson in black ink.

Mr. Carl A. Anderson  
Supreme Knight  
Knights of Columbus