



The Holy See

VIDEO MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS ON THE OCCASION OF THE APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO EGYPT

[28-29 APRIL 2017]

Dear People of Egypt, As-salamu alaykum! Peace be with you!

With a heart full of joy and gratitude I will soon visit your beloved country, the cradle of civilization, the gift of the Nile, the land of sun and hospitality, the land where Patriarchs and Prophets lived, and where God, Benevolent and Merciful, the Almighty and One God, made his voice heard.

I am truly happy to be coming as a friend, as a messenger of peace, and a pilgrim to the country that, over two thousand years ago, gave refuge and hospitality to the Holy Family as they fled the threats of King Herod (cf. *Mt* 2:10-16). I am honoured to visit the land visited by the Holy Family!

I greet all of you warmly and I thank you for your invitation to visit Egypt, which you call '*Umm il Dugna* – Mother of the universe!

I offer heartfelt thanks to the President of the Republic, to His Holiness Patriarch Tawadros II, to the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, and to the Coptic-Catholic Patriarch, all of whom invited me. I also thank each of you for opening your hearts to me, and in particular all those who worked so hard to make this journey possible.

I would like this visit to be a witness of my affection, comfort and encouragement for all the Christians of the Middle East, a message of friendship and respect for all the inhabitants of Egypt and the region, and a message of brotherhood and reconciliation with all the children of Abraham, particularly the Muslim world, in which Egypt holds so important a place. I would also hope that my visit will make a fruitful contribution to interreligious dialogue with the followers of Islam and to ecumenical dialogue with the venerable and beloved Coptic Orthodox Church.

Our world is torn by blind violence, a violence that has also struck the heart of your beloved land.

Our world needs peace, love and mercy. It needs peacemakers, people who are free and who set others free, men and women of courage who can learn from the past in order to build the future, free of every form of prejudice. Our world needs people who can build bridges of peace, dialogue, fraternity, justice and humanity.

Dear Egyptian brothers and sisters, young and old, women and men, Muslims and Christians, rich and poor... I embrace you warmly and I ask Almighty God to bless you and protect your country from every evil.

Please pray for me! *Shukran wa Tahiai Misr!* (Thank you and may Egypt flourish!).