Kairos Palestine Congratulations letter to His Holiness Pope Leo XIV

A Message of Faith, Hope, and Urgent Witness from Palestine

Bethlehem, May 20th, 2025

His Holiness Pope Leo XIV

Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church

On behalf of Kairos Palestine, together with all Palestinian Christian organizations and the faithful across our beloved land, especially the ones who continue to witness steadfastly in Gaza, we extend our heartfelt congratulations on your election as the Pope of the Catholic Church.

Your election comes at a moment of profound suffering and moral urgency for us in Palestine. Our homeland - the land of Christ's birth, ministry, death, and resurrection - is bleeding. The Christian presence in Palestine, particularly in Gaza, is under existential threat. In Gaza, families now live under siege, destruction, genocide and ethnic cleansing. The community of believers is shrinking, forcibly displaced, and dying—not only from bombs and bullets, but from the abandonment of a silent world that no longer hears our cry. In Bethlehem—the cradle of our faith—we are witnessing a different but equally grave situation as in Gaza, one that deeply threatens our presence and the continuity of Christian presence in Palestine. The local economy, heavily reliant on tourism, has been devastated by the ongoing war and the sharp decline in visitors.

As the Apostle Paul wrote: *"If one member suffers, all suffer together with it"* (1 Corinthians 12:26). We therefore appeal to your Holiness, as our spiritual shepherd, and as a moral voice to the nations: we urge you to act quickly to help preserve and protect the Christian presence in the land of Jesus.

We implore you to come and see. Come to Bethlehem. Come to Gaza. As a pilgrim, as a witness and a peacemaker. We ask you to stay in Gaza, even if only for a short while, and stand with our people under siege, Muslim and Christian alike. Your presence could awaken conscience, stop the war, and perhaps even raise the deaf ears of the global political leaders to finally act for justice and peace.

The Gospel tells us, *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God"* (Matthew 5:9). Your Holiness, we believe in the power of your witness, your voice, and your courage to speak truth to power. We have strong hope that under your leadership, the Church will not merely pray for peace, but actively intervene to restore the conditions for life and dignity in this land and elsewhere.

As Kairos Palestine, we wrote in our foundational document: "This is a moment of truth." We ask you to help bring that truth to the world in words and in prophetic actions. Speak loudly against the occupation, against the genocide and ethnic cleansing of Gaza, against the weapons that destroy our homes, schools, churches, and mosques. Speak for the right of every Palestinian, Christian and Muslim, to live in freedom, justice, and peace.

We are inspired by the words of Jesus: *"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me"* (Matthew 25:40). We are among those "least", forgotten, endangered, and yet clinging to hope. And our hope is renewed by your election.

May the Holy Spirit guide your steps, strengthen your voice, and guide your ministry with courage. We await your visit. We long for your embrace. We plead for your solidarity.

In faith, hope, and love, For the glory of God and the life of our people,

Kairos Palestine Board of Directors

And on behalf of the Palestinian Christian organizations and the faithful especially in Gaza and Bethlehem

Cc:

HE Cardinal Pietro Parolin
Secretary of State
Holy See
Vatican City