



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO HIS HOLINESS ABUNA MATTHIAS
PATRIARCH OF THE ETHIOPIAN TEWAHEDO ORTHODOX CHURCH**

*To His Holiness Abuna Matthias
Patriarch of the Ethiopian Tewahedo Orthodox Church*

With great distress and sadness I learn of the further shocking violence perpetrated against innocent Christians in Lybia. I know that Your Holiness is suffering deeply in heart and mind at the sight of your faithful children being killed for the sole reason that they are followers of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I reach out to you in heartfelt spiritual solidarity to assure you of my closeness in prayer at the continuing martyrdom being so cruelly inflicted on Christians in Africa, the Middle East and some parts of Asia.

It makes no difference whether the victims are Catholic, Copt, Orthodox or Protestant. Their blood is one and the same in their confession of Christ! The blood of our Christian brothers and sisters is a testimony which cries out to be heard by everyone who can still distinguish between good and evil. All the more this cry must be heard by those who have the destiny of peoples in their hands.

At this time we are filled with the Easter joy of the disciples to whom the women had brought the news that "Christ has risen from the dead". This year, that joy – which never fades – is tinged with profound sorrow. Yet we know that the life we live in God's merciful love is stronger than the pain all Christians feel, a pain shared by men and women of good will in all religious traditions.

With heartfelt condolences I exchange with Your Holiness the embrace of peace in Christ Our Lord.

From the Vatican, 20 April 2015

Franciscus
