

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
EASTER 2017**

16 April 2017

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[...]He takes upon himself all those victimized by old and new forms of slavery, inhuman labour, illegal trafficking, exploitation and discrimination, and grave forms of addiction. He takes upon himself children and adolescents deprived of their carefree innocence and exploited, and those deeply hurt by acts of violence that take place within the walls of their own home.

The Risen Shepherd walks beside all those forced to leave their homelands as a result of armed conflicts, terrorist attacks, famine and oppressive regimes. Everywhere he helps these forced migrants to encounter brothers and sisters, with whom they can share bread and hope on their journey.

Especially in these days, may he sustain the efforts of all those actively engaged in bringing comfort and relief to the civil population in beloved Syria, so greatly suffering from a war that continues to sow horror and death. Yesterday saw the latest vile attack on fleeing refugees, resulting in the death and injury of many. May he grant peace to the entire Middle East, beginning with the Holy Land, as well as in Iraq and Yemen. [...]