

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Catholic Church Statement on Martyred Coptic Christians

The people and clergy of the American National Catholic Church (ANCC) join all people of good will in expressing deep sadness at the recent murder of twenty-one Coptic Christians in Syria. The ANCC prays for an end to the violence in the Middle East which has taken so many lives and ruined so many others.

More Christians were martyred for their faith in the twentieth century than all the earlier centuries combined. Unfortunately, the twenty-first century threatens to match that record. The murder of the Coptic Christians is but the most recent instance of Christians who suffer for their witness to Christ.

In response to the murders, ANCC Presiding Bishop George Lucey, FCM, said, "we are reminded during this most holy season of Lent that we are called to model Christ, our Lamb of God. We pray for peace and for the repose of the souls of our new martyrs, asking them to intercede for a cessation of violence."

Bishop Lucey, a professed brother in the Franciscan Community of Mercy, pointed out that many of the twenty-one martyrs went to their deaths crying out "Jesus" and "God," thereby dying with the Holy Name on their lips and declaring their faith to the end. Their example, he said, reminded him of the prayer often attributed to St. Francis of Assisi.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy;
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

The American National Catholic Church is an inclusive Catholic community independent of the Roman Catholic Church dedicated to making the world a more caring place. Guided by a presiding bishop, the ANCC celebrates the same sacraments as the Roman Church and follows the spirit of reform initiated by the Second Vatican Council. Although sharing core theological and liturgical practices with Roman Catholicism, the ANCC differs on several major points, such as married clergy, female priests, divorce and re-marriage, same-sex marriage, and lay leadership. The Church has parishes across the U.S. and a host of ministries to the alienated, under-served, and forgotten. For more information, visit www.TheANCC.org.

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