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PRIESTS OF THE SACRED HEART

May 1, 2024

Dear Friends of the Sacred Heart,

The Israel-Hamas conflict has been ongoing for some time. Calls by religious and world leaders, international organizations, and university students for a ceasefire and the safe passage of humanitarian aid have largely been ignored. Consequently, innocent and powerless people, especially children, are caught in the middle and suffer greatly. The situation in the Gaza Strip can be described perfectly by the African proverb, "When elephants fight, the grass gets trampled."

Our province's JPR Ministry and I want to support peace and humanitarian aid for the suffering people in the region. News reports reveal that more than two million people in the Gaza Strip need urgent humanitarian aid and protection. Nearly half of them are on the verge of starvation and dire medical needs. Both governmental and non-governmental agencies have collaborated and coordinated with various partners to address this pressing humanitarian crisis.

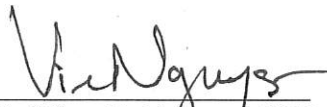
One of the nongovernmental international groups that was brought to our attention is the Freedom Flotilla Coalition. This peaceful civilian initiative consists of three ships carrying volunteers and aid workers from over 40 countries. They plan to set sail towards the Gaza Strip to raise awareness about the deepening humanitarian situation in Gaza. The flotilla mission aims to carry over 5,000 tons of life-saving aid to the besieged people of Gaza. I encourage you to learn more about their efforts and the history of the situation in Gaza. Here are some links that might be helpful.

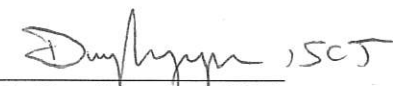
- The flotilla mission. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/21/gaza-aid-flotilla-turkey-israel/>
- History of the conflict. <https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-44124396>

What can we do at the personal level? One thing is to educate ourselves about the situation in the Gaza Strip. We can reach out to our members of Congress and urge them to call for a ceasefire and to allow unrestricted humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip. Additionally, we can donate to humanitarian aid efforts focused on Gaza.

Joining our brothers and sisters throughout the world, we continue to pray for peace.

Sincerely,


Fr. Vien V. Nguyen, SCJ
Provincial Superior


Fr. Duy Nguyen, SCJ
Provincial Director of Justice, Peace,
and Reconciliation Ministry