

Press Release 11 July 2016

Yet more violence in Aleppo, in the area next to the Franciscan Monastery of San Antonio. The summer camp and adult catechism class have both been suspended. In the words of Father Firas Lufti: "We are in the hands of the Lord." The Association pro Terra Sancta remains committed to supporting the Franciscan friars who remain in Syria.

ESCALATION, AND THE WITNESS OF FATHER LUFTI

A renewed escalation of violence in Aleppo. Dozens of rockets have been fired at, and caused great damage in, the area around the Franciscan Saint Anthony School (one of the properties of the Custody, which in recent years has been supported by the Custody of the Holy Land). No strike on the monastery itself, but the neighborhood has been greatly damaged. The number of victims is at least 40, with another 200 injured. All of this due to the intensified efforts by the rebels and the Islamist al Nusra Front, to clash with the government forces and take the area. From the city – which has become a symbol of the civil war – speaks Fr. Firas Lufti, vice pastor of the Latin Rite parish in the city: "One rocket in a Luna Park [an amusement park], causing the death of many children who were having fun during Eid al-Fitr [the Islamic festival celebrated after the close of Ramadan]. The hospital in front of our school could not help the wounded and maimed – who were for the most part children – quickly enough. Yesterday, we were not able to sleep for the whole night. Continuous gunfire and bombings. One of the women associated with our monastery lost her house due to a missile that destroyed practically all of it. We have had to suspend the summer camp we had organized for the children of the parish. We fear that this escalation will last for the length of this period. Even the adult catechism class, which we have ever Monday following the 6:00 mass, has been suspended until this period of intense bombing has ended. In short, nothing is resolved. There is talk of truce, but the idea is abandoned before it is even posed." "We are still in the hands of the Lord," confesses the Franciscan, who concludes with words of hope: "Pray for us that the Lord will grant us peace, for which we have waited and hoped for so long."

HOW TO SUPPORT THE ACTIVITY OF THE CUSTODY AND DONATE TO SYRIA

The Association pro Terra Sancta been committed for years to support the Syrian people and to give concrete support to all friars and religious living in Syria. The Association, an NGO in support of the Custody of the Holy Land, coordinates humanitarian aid even in those Middle Eastern countries to which Syrian refugees have fled (especially Lebanon and Jordan). Every contribution counts.

You can make a donation in the following ways:

ONLINE - Credit card and PayPal

BANK TRANSFER - IBAN: IT67 W050 0000 18,121,010 0,122,691 BIC / Swift Code: CCRTIT2T84A

MAIL IN - Current Account: 1012244214 payable to the Association pro Terra Sancta

For more information and to learn about ways to support, please contact:

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