



Office of the President

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Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz
Archbishop of Louisville
President

July 20, 2015

Mr. Rateb Y. Rabie, KCHS
President/CEO
Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation, Inc.
6935 Wisconsin Avenue
Suite 518
Bethesda, MD 20815

Dear Mr. Rabie,

May God bless you!

On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I am happy to greet the participants in the 17th International Conference and Awards Banquet of the Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation (HCEF). The theme of your gathering highlights three principles of great concern to the Church, "Our Faith is Commitment to Justice, Peace and Coexistence."

Our faith does indeed call us to make a commitment to justice, peace and coexistence. For decades our Conference of Bishops has supported a just peace between Israelis and Palestinians, two states for two peoples, with security and dignity for both. Our Conference of Catholic Bishops continues to support a secure and recognized Israel living in peace alongside a viable and independent Palestinian state. The hopes and aspirations of both peoples and the three faiths that share the Holy Land must be met.

Our Conference of Catholic Bishops remains particularly concerned for our sisters and brothers in the Palestinian Christian community. They suffer economic hardships due to the occupation, land confiscations, and even hate crimes.

It is both ironic and tragic that the land where the Prince of Peace was born suffers from such a lack of justice and peace. We truly need a renewed commitment to justice, peace and coexistence.

With prayerful best wishes for the success of your gathering, I remain

Sincerely yours in our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph E. Kurtz".

Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz, D.D.
Archbishop of Louisville
President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops