

Address to

**His Excellency
President Mahmoud Abbas**

(Tuesday 15 September 2015)

From:

**Cardinal Péter Erdö
Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest
President of the Council of Europe's Episcopal Conferences**

Mr. President

On behalf of the Heads of Episcopal Conferences in all Europe, I would like to express our heartfelt thanks for kindly accepting to welcome us.

In these days, representatives of Catholic bishops, coming from 45 European countries, met here in the Holy Land. Here we held the general session of our Conference, and we discussed the joys and sufferings of the Catholic Church in different European countries.

Mr. President

I am accompanied on my trip by several Heads of delegation who took part in this important meeting.

We discussed indeed different types of crises. But most of the time we spoke about faith which restores for us hope, showing us the good way to live together within a human society. The beginning and centrality of our faith lies in the person of Jesus Christ. Accordingly we visited some of the Holy Places linked to His life. We met some Christian groups and some families of this country. Through our meetings with these families, including many children, we expressed our solidarity, our sympathy, our wish – and their wish too – to restore peace and justice.

Mr. President

I joyfully recall our meeting few years ago in Budapest. You were kind enough to invite me, and you offered me then some beautiful gifts produced by Palestinian craftsmen, representors of the fundamental values of our faith.

We hope in all sincerity that the Palestinian people will be able to develop his creativity in an effective cooperation with peoples of Europe.

We pray for the cause of peace in Palestine and in all countries of the Middle East. This peace bears direct influence on the future and culture of Europe.