



## Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City Prayer and Action Network

**PEACE IN SYRIA:** Pope Francis reminds us that "peace is a precious gift, which must be promoted and protected" and that "all men and women of good will are bound by the task of pursuing peace." In advance of congressional deliberations about a military strike against Syria, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops stated: "We are anguished by the terrible suffering of the Syrian people and again affirm the need for dialogue and negotiation to resolve this conflict that has wrought so much devastation. The use of chemical weapons is particularly abhorrent and we urgently pray for the victims of such atrocities and for their loved ones. And we applaud the work done by those bringing humanitarian aid to people affected by this crisis and pray for their efforts to ease the suffering of our brothers and sisters."

Pope Francis has exhorted "the international community to make every effort to promote clear proposals for peace, ...a peace based on dialogue and negotiation, for the good of the entire Syrian people."

Last Friday, the USCCB reaffirmed an earlier message of the Holy Father "that the path of dialogue and negotiation between all components of Syrian society, with the support of the international community, is the only option to put an end to the conflict." USCCB urged "the United States to work with other governments to obtain a ceasefire, initiate serious negotiations, provide impartial and neutral humanitarian assistance, and encourage building an inclusive society in Syria that protects the rights of all its citizens, including Christians and other minorities."

The Catholic Bishops "ask all U.S. Catholics and people of goodwill to join us in witnessing to the hope we have in our hearts for peace for the Syrian people. May our prayers, fasting, and advocacy move our nation to promote a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Syria. And may Mary, Queen of Peace, pray for us and the people of Syria."

**What can you do?** Bishop Wester encourages all Utah Catholics to engage in **a day of prayer and fasting** for peace in Syria and the whole Middle East on **Sept. 14**. For more information on Catholic teaching on Syria, USCCB resources, and prayers, see <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/take-action-now/capwiz/capwiz-alerts-syria.cfm>.

**Contact your Utah representative and senators** and urge them to support a resolution that would intensify U.S. diplomatic engagement with other nations in calling for a ceasefire and peace negotiations, ensure immediate, unrestricted access by humanitarian organizations to the people of Syria, and provide humanitarian aid to all those affected by the ongoing violence in Syria and among Syrian refugee communities. Emails may be sent by clicking on the contact link at the following websites: Rep. Rob Bishop [www.robishop.house.gov](http://www.robishop.house.gov); Rep. Chris Stewart [www.stewart.house.gov](http://www.stewart.house.gov); Rep. Jason Chaffetz [www.chaffetz.house.gov](http://www.chaffetz.house.gov); and Rep. Jim Matheson [www.Matheson.house.gov](http://www.Matheson.house.gov). Sen. Hatch [www.hatch.senate.gov](http://www.hatch.senate.gov); Sen. Lee [www.lee.senate.gov](http://www.lee.senate.gov).

**PRAYER:** Almighty eternal God, source of all compassion, the promise of your mercy and saving help fills our hearts with hope.

Hear the cries of the people of Syria;  
bring healing to those suffering from the violence, and comfort to those mourning the dead.

Empower and encourage Syria's neighbors in their care and welcome for refugees.  
Convert the hearts of those who have taken up arms, and strengthen the resolve of those committed to peace.

O God of hope and Father of mercy,  
your Holy Spirit inspires us to look beyond ourselves and our own needs.  
Inspire leaders to choose peace over violence and to seek reconciliation with enemies.  
Inspire the Church around the world with compassion for the people of Syria, and fill us with hope for a future of peace built on justice for all.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace and Light of the World, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.  
Amen.

*Source: USCCB*