



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

18 February 2015

Rev. Fr. Rewis Rofaiel
St. Mary & St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church
5803 11A Avenue NW
Edmonton AB T6L 6A8

Dear Fr. Rewis:

In the wake of the unspeakable violence perpetrated against your brothers and countrymen in Libya last week, I am writing to express my most profound condolences to you and to the entire Coptic Orthodox community residing here in the Edmonton region. At the same time, I want to assure you of my personal prayers and those of all the Catholic community of our Archdiocese, who join with me in expressing deep, deep sadness for the events that have taken place.

No one should experience the kind of fear, intimidation and violence that your community experienced last week. The mind can scarcely grasp, and the heart cannot fathom, the utter destruction that has befallen the families of these new martyrs of our faith, killed for the sole reason of their belief in Jesus Christ.

We are deeply troubled that such hate-filled attitudes and the actions that accompany them continue to exist in our world. In addressing such evil, His Holiness Pope Francis reminded us recently that “we are all capable of doing so much good, but we are also capable of destroying; destroying in great things and small things.” We rely on the Lord to help us always to choose the good path and not allow ourselves “to be deceived by the seductions that bring us on the wrong path.”

At the beginning of this holy season of Lent, we pledge to redouble our efforts to choose the path of goodness over the way of destruction and death. We join with you in mourning the loss of these martyr-brothers. We stand with you in working to overcome hatred and violence wherever it may be found in our world; and we hope with you for a new era of peace, justice, and interreligious understanding in our day. Please be assured of our loving



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concern for the parish of St. Mary & St. Mark community as you contend with the repercussions of this senseless act.

With the assurance of our prayers,

Archbishop Richard Smith
Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton