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TELEGRAMMA DI CORDOGLIO DEL SANTO PADRE FRANCESCO PER LA MORTE DEL PATRIARCA DELLA CHIESA SIRO-ORTODOSSA DI ANTIOCHIA S.S. IGNATIUS ZAKKA I IWAS

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Pubblichiamo di seguito il testo del telegramma di cordoglio di Papa Francesco, per la morte - venerdì scorso 21 marzo - di S.S. Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Patriarca della Chiesa Siro-Ortodossa di Antiochia e di tutto l'Oriente:

• **TELEGRAMMA DEL SANTO PADRE** *TO THE LOCUM TENENS
SYRIAN ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE OF ANTIOCH AND ALL THE EAST*

WITH DEEP SORROW I HAVE LEARNED OF THE PASSING OF HIS HOLINESS IGNATIUS ZAKKA I IWAS, FATHER AND CHIEF PASTOR OF THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ANTIOCH AND ALL THE EAST, AND I HASTEN TO EXPRESS TO YOU, TO THE BISHOPS, CLERGY AND LAY FAITHFUL, MY PERSONAL CONDOLENCES AND THE PRAYERFUL CLOSENESS OF ALL CATHOLICS AT THIS TIME OF DEEPLY-FELT LOSS. THE WHOLE CHRISTIAN WORLD HAS LOST ONE OF ITS OUTSTANDING SPIRITUAL LEADERS, COURAGEOUS AND WISE IN LEADING PEOPLE THROUGH VERY DIFFICULT TIMES. FOLLOWING HIS ELECTION AS PATRIARCH IN 1980 HIS HOLINESS WAS AN ENGAGED WITNESS OF THE SUCCESSIVE VIOLENT CONFLICTS THAT HAVE BROUGHT UNTOLD DEATH AND SUFFERING TO THE MIDDLE EAST, ESPECIALLY TO IRAQ AND MOST RECENTLY SYRIA. HIS HOLINESS WAS A MAN OF DIALOGUE AND PEACE WITH REGARD TO THE FOLLOWERS OF ALL RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS. IN PARTICULAR I GIVE HEARTFELT THANKS TO GOD FOR HIS CONSTANT WORK TO IMPROVE RELATIONS AMONG CHRISTIANS AND, FROM THE TIME HE ATTENDED THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL AS AN OBSERVER, FOR HIS EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTION TO STRENGTHENING COMMUNION BETWEEN SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND THE CATHOLIC FAITHFUL. MAY THE ALMIGHTY RECEIVE HIM INTO HIS KINGDOM AND GRANT HIM ETERNAL REST, AND MAY THE MEMORY OF HIS LONG AND DEVOTED SERVICE TO THE CHURCH LIVE ON AS A CHALLENGE AND A STIMULUS TO ALL.

FRANCISCUS

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