

Freedom in Syria?!

Dear friends,

The day for a “new Syria” has dawned. The light seems to be coming through. All of Syria is now facing an uncertain future. The old regime has vanished like the fog when the sun breaks through. It all happened with the speed of a domino effect, within a matter of only 12 days. What was previously unthinkable has now become reality. Unlike in 2011, it has been a largely bloodless process.

A new era is now beginning in Syria. People on the ground have mixed feelings, – a combination of joy and fear. Joy that something new is beginning and fear of the anticipated chaos. Some people are dancing and singing in the streets, others are hiding in their homes for fear of skirmishes and fighting. What is happening in Syria now is like a dream.

We don't know what the next government will be like: Islamist? Liberal? Will the freedom promised by HTS (Committee for the Liberation of Syria) come indeed? Or will we have to deal with a Taliban government? My attitude is: Whatever comes, we Christians should continue to work and stand on the side of the poor and suffering people. Let us hold on to Christ, who says: “Do not be afraid, little flock”, “I am with you until the end of the world”, “Do not have fear!”, “Those who remain steadfast will be saved”. These words of Jesus have great priority for me now. I firmly believe that Christians can continue to exist if they hold on to their faith in Jesus. These words of Jesus now have great priority for me. I firmly believe that Christians can continue to exist if they remain steadfast in their faith in Jesus, the true liberator. A lot of work now begins for the Christians in Syria. Please let us not abandon them. We bear a certain responsibility for the worn-down people there. We Christians have an important contribution to make towards peace, stabilization and a good development in the country.

Damascus is now in the hands of the so-called “rebels”. The Syrian army has been dissolved. The soldiers have taken off their uniforms. They have broken their IDs, taken to the streets and cheered for revolution and freedom. The ministries and authorities are still functioning in a limited way. Many people prefer to stay at home at the moment and wait to see what happens next. Our bakery is operating continuously. I expect that production will have to be further increased in the future, as many state bakeries will close down.

Personally, I am very optimistic about the events, especially for Christians, provided that Christians do not remain inactive. Because of the events, all churches had decided to limit Christmas celebrations to prayers only. I believe they now can celebrate Christmas

in a real sense, with much joy, because I hope that our salvation will come. We are hoping for true salvation for the people of Syria.

Today, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. Back then, God started something completely new in order to bring salvation to mankind. Let us trust Him to make the seemingly impossible come true, today as then, and let us hope that we, like the Holy Mary, are able to listen to what He is saying to us.

I wish you all a blessed new Advent week full of joy and grace!

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Hanna Ghoneim

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