

Islam a 'religion of mercy'

'I ask first that Christians look with eyes and hearts of mercy.. for all Muslims'

Stefan Gigacz, *Global Pulse*, 15 December 2015



Fr. Jacques Mourad (Photo: www.terrasanta.net)

Syrian priest, Fr Jacques Mourad, who spent four months as a captive of the Islamic State, is heading back to the conflict zone calling on Muslims to remember that Islam is a religion of mercy.

"I will return right away to the Middle East. It's God who asks us to continue our mission," Fr Mourad told Rome press conference organized by the pastoral charity Aid to the Church in Need. He said Christian outreach to Muslims can be part of the Church's Year of Mercy.

"I ask first that Christians look with eyes and hearts of mercy and carry out the mission of mercy for all Muslims. It's a way of combating violence. In this way they are a witness, a true testimony for our brothers."

"I want to tell Muslims to remember that they are a religion of mercy," he added.

"They understand Christians well, they accept them because they are mentioned in the Quran. They have nothing to do with religion and war. One can't use religion to make war. Religion is a call to a righteous life, to peace, not to war."

He characterized Deir Mar Musa as "a symbol of dialogue between Christianity and Islam." He said it works to provide "aid and closeness" to the people, especially those in need. The monastery helped families, the sick, migrants and the displaced.

"In the period in which I received migrants in the monastery, I didn't do it because they were Christians or Muslims, but because they were people."

Meanwhile, Syrian Christian communities report that jihadists have destroyed or desecrated at least 17 Christian churches and shrines over the course of the conflict, Fides reports.