SF Religious Leaders Denounce Massacre of Coptic Christians

April 11, 2017, San Francisco -- At the threshold of this sacred and holy season, when our Christian and Jewish sisters and brothers observe and celebrate the hope of new life and liberation from oppression, we are reminded that terrorism takes no holiday.

Gruesome images of torturous atrocities committed by Islamist militants (so-called ISIS) against Coptic Christians in Egypt, praying on Palm Sunday in their sacred sanctuaries, justifiably haunt the consciences of those who live in lands where the freedom to practice religion is enshrined in and protected by the laws by which they are governed.

As San Francisco Bay Area religious leaders, we speak out with a unified voice to decry these acts of horror and denounce all expressions and acts of religious persecution. We pray for those who have perished and all who have suffered as the result of these crimes against humanity.

We recognize that these actions of so-called ISIS and other terrorist groups, perpetrated in the name of Islam and the Quran, do not reflect the true image and teachings of Islam, and we stand in solidarity with the great number of Muslims who abhor what is being done in the name of their religion.

We affirm the common aspiration of all religious teaching and traditions: the propagation of peace, justice, nonviolence, and civil and human rights for all of creation.

G.L. Hodge, Chair, San Francisco Interfaith Council
Rita R. Semel, Past Chair, San Francisco Interfaith Council
Michael G. Pappas, Executive Director, San Francisco Interfaith Council

The Rt. Rev. Marc Handley Andrus, Bishop, The Episcopal Diocese of California
Fr. Mesrop Ash, Parish Priest, St. John Armenian Church
Fatih Ferdi Ates, Director, Pacifica Institute
The Rev. Sally Bingham, Canon for the Environment, The Episcopal Diocese of California
Rev. Dr. Amos C. Brown, Pastor, Third Baptist Church & President, SF Branch-NAACP
Bishop Warner H. Brown, Jr., Interim Senior Pastor, GLIDE
Rev. Dr. John Buehrens, Senior Minister, First Unitarian Universalist Society of SF
Most Reverend Salvatore Cordileone, Catholic Archbishop of San Francisco
Sister Chandru Desai, Director, Brahma Kumaris Meditation Center, SF
Pastor Elizabeth Ekdale, Lead Pastor, St. Mark's Lutheran Church
Maha Elgenaidi, Chief Executive Officer, Islamic Networks Group (ING)
Fred Fielding, Board President, Interfaith Center at the Presidio
Rev. Paul J. Fitzgerald, S.J., President, University of San Francisco

His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos, Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco
Iltekhar Hai, President, United Muslims of America Interfaith Alliance
Sari Heidenreich, Regional Coordinator, United Religions Initiative North America
Mark W. Holmerud, Bishop, Sierra Pacific Synod, ELCA
Most Reverend William Justice, Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of San Francisco
The Rev. Victor H. Kazanjian, Jr., Executive Director, United Religions Initiative
Rev. D. Andrew Kille, Chair, Silicon Valley Interreligious Council
Rev. Ronald Kobata, Resident Minister, Buddhist Church of San Francisco
Pui-Yan Kwok, President of the San Francisco Stake, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Fr. Stephen Kyriacou, Dean, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral
Rev. Deborah Lee, (UCC) Program Director, Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity
Rev. Juncheol Lee, Senior Pastor, San Francisco Swedenborgian Church
Rev. Will McGarvey, Executive Director, Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County
Robert T. Phillips, *The Baha'i Faith in San Francisco*
Abby Porth, Executive Director, Jewish Community Relations Council
Rev. Scott Quinn, Acting Director, Marin Interfaith Council
Rabbi Larry Raphael, Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation Sherith Israel
Rabbi Beth Singer, Senior Rabbi, Congregation Emanu-El
Rabbi Jonathan Singer, Senior Rabbi, Congregation Emanu-El
Rev. John Weems, Pastor & Head of Staff, Calvary Presbyterian Church
The Very Rev. Dr. Malcolm Clemens Young, Dean, Grace Cathedral

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