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UDIENZA AI MEMBRI DELLA DELEGAZIONE DI CRISTIANI PALESTINESI DELL'ORGANIZZAZIONE PER LA LIBERAZIONE DELLA PALESTINA

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Alle 11 di questa mattina il Santo Padre ha ricevuto in Udienza i Membri della Delegazione di Cristiani Palestinesi dell'Organizzazione per la Liberazione della Palestina ed ha loro rivolto le parole di saluto che pubblichiamo di seguito:

• SALUTO DEL SANTO PADRE

Distinguished Guests,

I am pleased to welcome your Delegation and I ask you kindly to convey my greetings and good wishes to President Yasser Arafat and to all the Palestinian people. I am confident that this visit of prominent Palestinian Christians to the Holy See will lead to a better understanding of the situation of Christians in the Palestinian territories and the significant role which they can play in promoting the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

Despite the recent setbacks on the road to peace and fresh outbreaks of violence and injustice, we must continue to affirm that peace is possible and that the resolution of differences can only come about through the patient dialogue and persevering commitment of people of good will on both sides. Terrorism must be condemned in all its forms, for it is not only a betrayal of our common humanity, but is absolutely incapable of laying the necessary political, moral and spiritual foundations for a people's freedom and authentic self-determination. I once again call upon all parties to respect fully the resolutions of the United Nations and the commitments made in the acceptance of the peace process, with engagement in a common quest for reconciliation, justice and the building of a secure and harmonious coexistence in the Holy Land. I likewise voice my hope that the national Constitution presently being drafted will give expression to the highest aspirations and the most cherished values of all the Palestinian people, with due recognition of all religious communities and adequate legal protection of their freedom of worship and expression.

Dear friends, through you I send warm greetings to the Christians of the Holy Land, who have an altogether

special place in my heart. Upon you and all the Palestinian people I invoke God's blessings of wisdom, strength and peace.

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