

The Most Reverend Richard Henning  
Archbishop of Boston  
Archdiocese of Boston  
66 Brooks Drive  
Braintree, MA 02184

January 27, 2024

Your Excellency:

On December 13, 2024 we members of Pax Christi, Massachusetts sent you a letter requesting you call for a ceasefire in the Middle East and requesting a meeting. One week later, Monsignor Bryan Hehir relayed that you were not prepared to make a statement at this time and that you were too busy to meet with us. At the Jubilee Mass on December 29, we held a witness in front of the cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston, alerting the public to your refusal to address the issue.

Some of us attended the Jubilee Mass on that day, and while you did not call for a ceasefire, we were very pleased that before the final blessing, you led the congregation in praying for Mary's intercession throughout the world, especially in the Holy Land, after "a very horrific year of terrible violence." You continued, "By your grace, may we seek true justice and peace for one another. That we may lay down our weapons and take up the weapons and armor of light." We thank you for your statement.

As you know, a ceasefire agreement was reached in Gaza on January 15, 2025. The agreement is tenuous, however, and Israel reserves the right to continue fighting if implementation talks for Phase 2 are not satisfactory to them. Furthermore, Israel has just begun an assault on Jenin, in the occupied Palestinian West Bank. We request your support, therefore, to make this ceasefire permanent and apply to all of Palestine; to allow desperately needed humanitarian aid into Gaza; and to ensure that all Palestinian political prisoners incarcerated unjustly, and all Israelis taken hostage on October 7, 2023 be returned to their families.

Our sisters and brothers in Gaza have suffered unfathomably during the past 15 months. Please do not let the same horrors occur in the West Bank. Once again, we look to you as our archbishop to follow Pope Francis in exercising your position and influence to spread peace in the region.

Please follow-up on your December 29th statement by:

- Sending a letter to all parishes to be read at all Masses during one weekend which asks congregants to pray for a permanent end to hostilities, release of all prisoners, an increase in humanitarian aid, and divine intercession in rebuilding Gaza as a self-governing region, free from foreign occupation;
- Taking a collection at Mass for one of many charities that work tirelessly to help end the suffering in Gaza;

· Posting a statement on the archdiocese website to show that the Church values Palestinian lives as much as Israeli lives. The site contains a statement condemning the atrocities on October 7, released on October 8, 2023, but not a word condemning many more crimes against humanity perpetrated against Palestinians over the past 15 months.

In August 2024 you stated that you saw yourself as a local bishop, a statement repeated to a congregant leaving Mass when asked why you would not call for a ceasefire. Your statement at Mass indicates however, that you do not limit yourself to local issues.

Moreover, many residents within the archdiocese continue to suffer from homelessness, food insecurity, and inadequate healthcare, among other serious hardships. As a local bishop, please advocate for our neighbors in need and help pressure lawmakers toward funding causes far worthier of taxpayers' money than bombing children in Gaza and the occupied West Bank. It is estimated that Boston would receive close to \$47 million if their taxes sent to Israel were used locally instead.

Finally, we once again ask you to meet with members of Pax Christi to discuss the issue further and determine how we can together “take up the weapons and armor of light.” We will continue to follow the teachings and example of Jesus Christ to wage peace, and we pray that you will do the same. Regardless of political pressure to remain silent in the face of obvious evil, our world desperately needs moral voices with the courage to speak up against such obvious and extreme moral depravity.

We request your timely response to this issue and will follow up if we don't hear back from you.

Respectfully yours in Christ,

***Pax Christi, Massachusetts***

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