



APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR OF NORTHERN ARABIA
(BAHRAIN, KUWAIT, QATAR, KSA)

To all the priests, religious and lay faithful in the Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Arabia,

Dear brothers and sisters,

Peace be with you!

With decree signed on May 13, 2020 by His Eminence Cardinal Tagle, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, I have been appointed Apostolic Administrator for the Vicariate of Northern Arabia. It is my task to serve the Northern Vicariate, left without Apostolic Vicar after the untimely death of H. E. Bishop Camillo Ballin.

First of all, I wish to give homage to late Bishop Camillo, asking the Risen Lord to grant him the eternal peace and joy and give him a place at the heavenly banquet. We were in close relationship during all the years since his ordination as bishop in 2005 when he became Apostolic Vicar of Kuwait. On May 31, 2011 Bahrain, Qatar and Saudi Arabia passed over to his jurisdiction, forming with Kuwait the new Vicariate of Northern Arabia. I met him for the last time on February 17 in Rome when he was already seriously ill. I know that you all were close to his heart and mind until the end of his life. I am sure that he continues to intercede for his Vicariate from heaven. He knows the struggles you have to go through. He will not forget you now that he joined the Father's House.

I wish to greet all of you with the words of the Risen Lord to his disciples "Peace be with you". This is also the greeting of bishops at the beginning of the Holy Eucharist. As I am daily praying for all the faithful of my own Vicariate, I shall do also for all of you. I know that many of you are living in fear to be infected by Covid-19 or to lose the job during the economic break-down. In most of our countries we are still not able to gather and to celebrate together our faith. This makes the life for many even more difficult. I can only remind you the last words of Jesus in the gospel of Matthew, where he promises "I am with you always until the end of times." Keep this in mind, especially during bad times!

Dear brothers and sisters, I am given the responsibility to administrate the Vicariate of Northern Arabia with the help of all of you, especially of the priests and religious. I thank you for your support. I shall do my best to continue the excellent work Bishop Camillo has done. Because of the Covid-19 the possibility of travelling is very limited. Therefore, I shall be obliged to do my work mainly through telephone and electronic means. I shall also appoint in each country a priest who will be my delegate and act in close contact with me on my behalf, especially when it comes to legal questions.

I wish to thank Fr. Antony Lopez OFM Cap, chancellor and judge, in Kuwait, who managed things after the death of Bishop Camillo until this date. He remains the chancellor and judge. I shall confirm or appoint other officials at a later moment when I have better insight into the situation of the Vicariate. I am committing myself to be the shepherd for all regardless of their nationality, rite,

religious family or language. I am asking you to support me in my task of guiding the migrant Church of Northern Arabia to the best of my ability, as long as the Holy See deems appropriate.

Sending you my blessings and keeping you in my prayers,

Abu Dhabi, 1st June 2020

+ *Paul Hinder*

Bishop Paul Hinder OFM Cap
Apostolic Administrator of Northern Arabia