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MESSAGE TO THE FAITHFUL OF THE APOSTOLIC VICARIATE OF NORTHERN ARABIA

"What I am for you terrifies me ; what I am with you consoles me. For you I am a bishop ; but with you I am a Christian. The former is a duty; the latter a grace. The former is a danger; the latter, salvation."

St Augustine of Hippo (Sermon 340 : « On the Anniversary of Ordination »)

On the day Pope Francis announces my appointment, my thoughts are going out to you, dear faithful, clergy, religious men and women, and laity, of the Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Arabia. I want to greet you and express my joy at becoming your pastor.

Our Church is a wonderful Church : one in faith in Jesus-Christ, in communion with the Father by the grace of the Holy Spirit. The diversity in our Vicariate is a blessing for the praise of the Holy Trinity. May the Lord keep this unity strong as a true testimony in the Arabian Peninsula.

I greet the clergy, diocesan priests and members of the different religious Orders and Congregations. Our priesthood is for the Proclamation of the Gospel, the sanctification of the Church and the spiritual growth of the faithful. May we sanctify ourselves in our shared ministry!

I greet the religious sisters presents in our vicariate. May we feel, through your dedication, the tenderness of the Lord!

I greet the civil authority of our 4 countries and through them all the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula. May our faith in the One God open ways of dialogue and cooperation!

I send my gratitude to the Holy Father, Pope Francis, who chose me. I thank him for his trust and I promise to give my life for this Church.

I thank Bishop Paul Hinder, O.F.M. Cap, our present Apostolic administrator. He was always a father to me. His experience and wisdom are a lamp as I take my first steps.

With loving memory, I want to express my affection to the late Bishop Camillo Ballin, M.C.C.J. We miss him a greatly, but his legacy remains in our hearts. I ask for his blessing and prayer.

Soon, I will join you and visit you. Together, we will celebrate our salvation and our communion. Our Mother Mary, Our Lady of Arabia, will accompany us to Jesus.

Yours in the Most Holy Trinity,

Fr. Aldo Berardi, O.SS.T.

Apostolic Vicar Elect