

OPEN LETTER OF POOR CLARES AND CARMELITES OF ITALY
TO PRESIDENT SERGIO MATTARELLA AND PRIME MINISTER
GIUSEPPE CONTE.

Dear Editor,

We would like to share with you and all readers of "Avvenire," the open letter that, inspired by the Gospel of Matthew (23.8): "you are all brothers", we sent to the President Mattarella and the Prime Minister Conte last July 11th 2019, feast of St. Benedict Abbot.

Dear Mr President Sergio Mattarella,

Dear Mr President of the Council of Ministers Giuseppe Conte,

We Sisters of some monasteries of Poor Clares (Clarisse) and the Discalced Carmelites, United by one desire to **express concern at the spread in Italy of feelings of intolerance, rejection and violent discrimination against migrants and refugees seeking** protection and welcome in our land. We were unable to contact all the existing monastic fraternities in the country, but we know we are in communion with as many of them and share the same concerns and the same desire for a more humane society.

With this open letter we would like to **give voice to our brothers and sisters migrants fleeing from war, persecution and famine**, they face interminable trips and inhumane treatment, suffer humiliation and violence of all kinds that now no one can deny. The stories of survivors and rescuers, in fact, as statistics from international institutions such as UNHCR/Unhcr or the International Organization for migration and the journalists reports that explore the phenomenon

of migration, show us an increasingly dramatic situation.

We make our own the appeal contained in the [document on human brotherhood signed by the Pope and the imam of al-Azhar Ahmed al-Tayyeb](#) asking "to world leaders, international and economic policy creators, to engage in earnest and seriously to spread the culture of tolerance, coexistence and peace." And all this in particular "in the name of orphans, widows, refugees and exiles from their homes and from their countries; of all the victims of war, persecution and injustices; of the weak, those who live in fear, and tortured prisoners of war anywhere in the world, without distinction."

We too, therefore, we beg you: protect the lives of migrants!

Through you we ask that government institutions will become guarantors of their dignity, to help them, protect their pathways to integration and the insurgence of racism and a mentality that considers them just an obstacle to national welfare. Next to the many problems and difficulties there are countless examples of immigrants who build friendships, they fit properly into the labor market and the University, creating businesses, trade unions and volunteers. These riches should not be devalued and many potential should be recognized and promoted.

Our simple life of sisters testifies that being together is challenging and sometimes exhausting, but possible and constructive. Only the patient art of mutual acceptance can keep us humans and fulfil our potential as a people. We are deeply convinced that it is not naïve to believe that effective solidarity, undoubtedly well organized, can enrich our history and, in the long run, our economic and social situation. Quite the contrary: it's naïve to believe that a civilization that closes its doors is destined for a long and happy future, a society that closes the ports to migrants, and at the same time, as pointed out by Pope Francis, «open the ports to ships uploaded with sophisticated and expensive weapons systems. " What seems to be lacking today in

many policy choices is a wise reading of a past made by peoples who have migrated and a foresight able to Intuit for tomorrow the consequences of choices today.

Many Italian monasteries belonging to the various orders, are inquiring about how to contribute concretely to the welcoming of refugees, supporting the Diocesan institutions. Some already are offering spaces and aid. And, at the same time, we are all trying to listen to our people to understand their sufferings and fears.

We want to put ourselves next to all the poor of our country and, now more than ever, to all who come to Italy and are rejected what is right for every man and every woman on Earth: peace and dignity. Many of us have also had the opportunity to see up close and to learn all about their tragedies.

We want to support those who devote time, energy and heart to the defense of refugees and the fight against all forms of racism, even simply by stating an opinion. We thank all those who, for this reason, are ridiculed, thwarted and accused. It is still valid the art. 21 of our Constitution that enshrines for everyone "the right to freely express their thoughts in speech, writing or any other means of communication."

We wish to distance ourselves from all forms of use of the Christian faith that does not result in charity and service.

Finally, in communion with the Pope's Magisterium of brotherhood and solidarity, we obey our conscience of women, God's daughters and sisters of every person on this earth, expressing publicly our voice.

Thank you for the attention with which you have read our appeal. We thank you, Mr Mattarella, for your continuous calls for peace and for your trust in dialogue that allows, as you said on the occasion of

Republic day of June 2, "to overcome differences and to promote the mutual interest in the International community». We thank you, Mr Conte, for your not easy role as mediator and guarantor of the institutional framework within the Government. We thank you sincerely for what you already do in favor of peaceful coexistence and of a more welcoming society. We assure you of our prayers for you, for those who work in the institutions, for our country and for Europe, because together we collaborate in promoting the true good for everyone»

Sisters:

Clarisse di Lovere (Bg), Carmelitane scalze di Sassuolo (Mo), Clarisse di Milano, Clarisse di Fanano (Mo); Carmelitane scalze di Crotona, Clarisse di Grottaglie (Ta), Carmelitane scalze di Parma, Clarisse di Padova, Carmelitane scalze di Cividino (Bg), Clarisse di Montagnana (Pd), Carmelitane scalze di Venezia, Clarisse di Mantova, Carmelitane scalze di Savona, Clarisse di Urbania (Pu), Clarisse urbaniste di Montalto (Ap), Clarisse di Imperia Porto Maurizio (Im), Clarisse urbaniste di Montone (Pg), Clarisse cappuccine di Fiera di Primiero (Tn), Clarisse di S. Severino Marche (Mc), Clarisse urbaniste di S. Benedetto del Tronto (Ap), Clarisse di Vicoforte (Cn), Clarisse di Bra (Cn), Clarisse di Sant'Agata Feltria (Rn), Clarisse di Roasio (Vc), Clarisse di Verona, Clarisse di S. Lucia di Serino (Av), Clarisse urbaniste di Altamura (Ba), Clarisse di Otranto (Le), Clarisse di Carpi (Mo), Clarisse di Leivi (Ge), Clarisse di Alcamo (Tp) - Monastero Sacro Cuore, Clarisse di Alcamo (Tp) - Monastero santa Chiara, Clarisse di Bologna, Clarisse di Boves (Cn), Clarisse di Sassoferrato (An), Clarisse di Termini Imerese (Pa), Carmelitane scalze di Monte S. Quirico (Lu), Clarisse di Chieti, Carmelitane scalze di Arezzo, Clarisse di Pollenza (Mc), Clarisse cappuccine di Napoli, Clarisse urbaniste di Osimo (An), Clarisse cappuccine

di Mercatello sul Metauro (Pu), Clarisse di Castelbuono (Pa), Clarisse di Porto Viro (Ro), Clarisse cappuccine di Brescia, Clarisse di Bergamo, Carmelitane scalze di Bologna, Clarisse di Rimini, Clarisse di Manduria (Ta), Clarisse di Urbino (Pu), Clarisse di Bienno (BS), Clarisse di Scigliano (Cs), Clarisse di Sarzana (Sp), Carmelitane scalze di Piacenza, Clarisse di Caltanissetta, Clarisse di Ferrara, Clarisse di Iglesias (Ci), Carmelitane scalze di Legnano (MI), Clarisse di San Marino (Repubblica di San Marino), Carmelitane scalze di Nuoro, Clarisse cappuccine di Città di Castello (Pg)