To the Priests working in the United Arab Emirates and other Countries of the Arabian Peninsula

Dear Brothers,

The journey that I had the grace to make to Abu Dhabi gave me the opportunity to meet you. I confess that when I saw you I was moved, for I saw that you were a small group but with a great love for the Lord. I sensed too your great desire to serve the people of Abu Dhabi and the peninsula, the people of your communities of origin who are migrant workers there.

I was moved when I greeted the more elderly among you who have been working there for some years. I viewed them as a seed that allowed itself to be sown in the desert, and also as a candle that little by little is consumed by the fire of love, by the small daily acts of love as well as that great gesture of love by which they committed to always giving of themselves. They are our pioneers.

Brothers, do not be afraid to be a seed and a candle. Allow yourselves to be sown so as to bear fruit; allow yourselves to be consumed each day from that little flame of witness, without which the world would be very dark.
You come from different cultures, ecclesial traditions and with different family histories. And, together with your Bishop, you constitute an ecclesial body. Brothers, do not fear to live in harmony, make an effort to allow charity, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to form and strengthen your unity. And, please, I ask you to avoid all divisions, quarrels and murmuring among yourselves. The Devil will always seek to overcome you by the way of lovelessness. I ask you, please, to offer a witness in all meekness to one another. In this way the light of Christ will shine, and the faithful will see the good work of unity among so many of your other good works, and will glorify the Father who is in heaven.

Brothers, be assured of my prayers and of my deep affection for you. Let us look together at the tenderness of our vocation to which we have been called and let us ask the Lord to make us instruments of his peace. Please do not forget to pray for me.

May Jesus bless you and the Holy Virgin watch over you.

With fraternal good wishes.

From the Vatican, 9 February 2019

Francis