

Beat: News

## **WE REACH A TURNING POINT FOR CHURCHES UNITED ON THE PATH OF PEACE & SOLIDARITY**

**SAID BARI RICCARDI FROM SAINT EGIDIO**

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**USPA NEWS** - Bari represents a turning point in the history of ecumenism," says Andrea Riccardi commenting on the recent meeting between Pope Francis and the leaders of the Middle East churches. "It's no longer just bilateral meetings or theological dialogues," says the founder of the Community of Sant'Egidio, "but almost a" synod "between the pope and the leaders of the Middle East churches in the face of a terrible emergency

Bari represents a turning point in the history of ecumenism," says Andrea Riccardi commenting on the recent meeting between Pope Francis and the leaders of the Middle East churches. "It's no longer just bilateral meetings or theological dialogues," says the founder of the Community of Sant'Egidio, "but almost a" synod "between the pope and the leaders of the Middle East churches in the face of a terrible emergency. war in its many aspects, and the collapse of the presence of Christians in the region. This experience inaugurates a new path that Christians can take in the Middle East and other parts of the world: a united and synodal ecumenism. The tragedy of war and misery encourages Christians to be more united. Pope Francis said it clearly, placing himself in the middle and not above the others. The patriarch of Constantinople Athenagoras said: "Brotherly people, sister churches". Friendship between peoples is inciting the churches to work more intensely for peace. In Bari there was a prayer for peace, but also a cry of peace from Christians. Pope Francis took advantage of the relations with the heads of the churches: the Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew, the Coptic Patriarch Tawadoros, the Patriarch of Moscow Kirill, the Syriac Patriarch Ephrem.

"It is from this network of personal relationships," concludes Andrea Riccardi, "that a truly original and important event took place on the very day (July 7) where we remember the death of a father of ecumenism, the Patriarch Athenagoras, who was the interlocutor of Paul VI in Constantinople in 1964".

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