

Talk by Cardinal Timothy Dolan at an Evening Prayer for Peace held in Manhattan, New, York at the Holy Family Church on June 27, 2016

We just heard proclaimed, in our scripture reading from St. Paul's letter to the Colossians, a prayer, a prayer from the Apostle himself, for "knowledge of God's will," for "wisdom and spiritual insight" . . . and I suggest to all of you this evening that this prayer is actually being answered in this very gathering.

Think about it: here we assemble in prayer at the parish church where the nations worship, in a city perhaps the most cosmopolitan on the planet, with dignitaries from the Church, from the UN, from our state and local government, with cherished neighbors from the ecumenical and inter-religious community, with our beloved Lebanese and Maronite family, with Gregory, their bishop, to welcome and pray with one of the most influential and respected spiritual leaders in the lands called holy, the soil we all claim as our religious home, His Beatitude, the Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, His Eminence Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai.

This is indeed the wisdom, the spiritual insight, prompted by the knowledge of God's will prayed for by St. Paul.

Your Beatitude, your visit allows us to sense this answer to St. Paul's prayer, and inspires us to say, we love you, we so appreciate you, we are grateful for your visit, and we welcome you!

St. Paul also asks God for the "strength needed to stand fast, even to endure joyfully whatever may come."

This is our petition this evening, Beatitude, for you and your brave people.

In an area whose turmoil often causes us to wring our hands in frustration, we admire you, one who holds his hands together in prayer, whose hands are raised in blessing, whose hands are often held out to stop bullets, bombs, and bloodshed, and whose arms embrace all.

In a region which causes us to cover our ears lest we hear more bad news, you encourage us to open our ears to hear God's word of justice and peace, to listen to Jesus call for reconciliation and mercy.

In acres of the earth where people are exhausted and wail, "There's nothing we can do. . ." you do so much, for refugees, for dialogue, for rebuilding, "multiplying good works" as St. Paul encourages.

In a beautiful country sadly blistered by battle, and blood, many despair and claim, "There's nothing to say," but you speak clearly, boldly, like the prophets of the Old Testament who knew your land so well, like St. John the Baptist, urging us to sanity and hope.

St. Paul writes of standing fast, of strength needed, of enduring joyfully, and we beg the Holy Spirit to give you all three in abundance, so that you and your people, "a light from the East," will never dim, never eclipse, never fail, for it is indeed the light of Christ.

You are a friend, Beatitude, and you are among friends!