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THE HOLY SEE AND THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS: A STUDY OF THE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH'S SOFT POWER

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By Lauren A. Newman

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for completion  
Of the Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies  
Croft Institute for International Studies  
Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College  
The University of Mississippi

University, Mississippi  
May 2019

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to begin by thanking all those who assisted me in the writing process of my thesis. For my advisor, Professor Williams, thank you for patiently listening to me talk through my ideas and helping me form them into something coherent. For my second reader, Dr. Howard, thank you for your detailed feedback and suggestions. For my third reader, Professor Czarnetzky, thank you for sharing your expertise on this topic and all the invaluable, hard-to-find, have-to-be-there information.

Thank you to the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College for helping to fund a trip to Rome, Italy to speak with staff members of the Migrants and Refugees Section. A very special thank you is due to the staff of the Section. Sister Josepha, thank you for welcoming me to the Section with open arms and helping me understand the Church's theological foundation for its treatment of migrants and refugees. Ms. Debbané, thank you for our wonderful conversation and all the information on how the Church and the Section operate in the Middle East.

Finally, thank you to my family and friends for all of the support, advice, guidance, and patience. I am beyond grateful to have you all in my life.

## ABSTRACT

The Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis has created 5.6 million refugees who have fled outside of Syria and 6.1 million internally displaced peoples within Syria. Undoubtedly, it is one of the largest humanitarian crises of the modern day. The Catholic Church joins governments and NGOs in responding to the conflict, but modern scholarship has not focused heavily on its role. This paper seeks to investigate how the Catholic Church interacts in the secular field of international relations by looking at its response to the Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis. In order to analyze the Church's response, this paper looks at the statements of the Holy See's mission to the United Nations as well as statements and actions of local churches that address the conflict on the ground in Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria. Joseph Nye's definition of soft power provided a useful framework to analyze the Church's actions. The research indicates that the Catholic Church uses soft power methods through its actions at the UN and its local churches to pursue its goals in responding to the crisis.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

#### Background

The modern conception of migrants, refugees, and other displaced people has been a priority of the Catholic Church since the 20th century, particularly since the end of World War II. The devastation wrought by the war created an abundance of migrants and displaced peoples, spurring unprecedented attention from the Church. *Exsul Familia*, an encyclical written in 1952 by Pope Pius XII, equated all migrants regardless of religious identity to the archetype of the Holy Family seeking refuge, and the Pope called for Europe to open its borders to all those affected by the violence.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Pope Pius XII explicitly wrote:

The émigré Holy Family of Nazareth, fleeing into Egypt, is the archetype of every refugee family. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, living in exile in Egypt to escape the fury of an evil king, are, for all times and all places, the models and protectors of every migrant, alien and refugee of whatever kind who, whether compelled by fear of persecution or by want, is forced to leave his native land, his beloved parents and relatives, his close friends, and to seek a foreign soil.<sup>2</sup>

Since then, the Vatican has designated a succession of departments to focus specifically on migrants, defined as “people have been forced to leave their homes due to persecution,

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<sup>1</sup> Todd J. Scribner, “‘Not Because They Are Catholic, But Because We Are Catholic’: The Bishops' Engagement with the Migration Issue in Twentieth-Century America,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 101, no. 1 (2015): 86.

<sup>2</sup> Pope Pius XII, “*Exsul Familia Nazarethana*,” *Papal Encyclicals Online*, 1952.

violence, natural disasters and the scourge of poverty.”<sup>3</sup> The most recent iteration is the Migrants and Refugees Section, which began operations on January 1, 2017. It is one of the only Sections of the Holy See (HS) that reports directly to Pope Francis instead of to a cardinal, reflecting his particular concern with the Refugee Crisis. In a speech given in February of 2017, a month after the Section opened its doors, Pope Francis expressed his view that protecting migrants and refugees is a “moral imperative” that must be achieved through 1) national and international legal efforts; 2) fair political choices; 3) sustainable, long-term “processes,” 4) programs to fight human trafficking, and 5) coordinating the efforts of all involved actors, “among which, you may be assured will always be the Church.”<sup>4</sup>

The Catholic Church occupies a distinctive space in the realm of states as the only religion with its own country. The Pope is both the head of the largest Christian denomination in the world as well as the absolute monarch of the smallest sovereign country in the world. The HS sends out nuncios all over the globe and to the UN, where it has voluntary observer state status. When Pope Francis said the Church would always be a global actor working to address migration, what did that mean? What role does the Holy See have in an international crisis in light of its dual status as state and religion? How does it work to accomplish its goals when those goals involve international states and actors, not just human souls?

In recent years, the Syrian Civil War has preoccupied the Vatican. Thus far, the Vatican’s approach has been to discourage violence and encourage peace agreements. In an April 2018 interview, the Vatican’s Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin stated

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<sup>3</sup> “Responding to Refugees and Migrants: Twenty Action Points”, *Migrants and Refugees Section*, 2017, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Pope Francis, “The Pope Receives the Participants in the 6th International Forum on Migration and Peace,” (speech, Vatican City, February 21, 2017), Holy See Press Office.

that the solution to the war was not a military one, as a military victory would not address the underlying tension and conflict in the nation.<sup>5</sup> In the same month, Pope Francis remarked, “I am deeply troubled by the current world situation, in which, despite the instruments available to the international community, there is still difficulty in agreeing to a common action in favour of peace in Syria and other regions of the world.”<sup>6</sup>

Although the Church has not mediated in the peace talks, the Pope and the HS have been vocal about the need for a peaceful solution.

A large part of pursuing a peaceful solution has been addressing the number of migrants and refugees generated from the conflict. According to the UNHCR, the Syrian Civil War has created 5.6 million refugees who have fled outside of Syria, and 6.6 million Syrians displaced within Syria.<sup>7</sup> The HS has focused much of its efforts in addressing the Syrian Refugee Crisis as the most pressing and publicized migration crisis today. In the year of his election, Pope Francis said, “There are so many conflicts in this world which cause me great suffering and worry, but in these days my heart is deeply wounded in particular by what is happening in Syria...”<sup>8</sup> This statement combined with his establishment of the Migrants and Refugees Section shows migration of Syrians garnered a large part of the Pope’s attention. Pope Francis himself has guaranteed that the Church would always be in active participant in working towards peace in Syria, and that protecting migrants and refugees is a large part of that peace. Therefore, the question arises: how has the Catholic Church responded to the Syrian migrant and refugee crisis in

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<sup>5</sup> Inés San Martín, “Top Vatican diplomat speaks on war in Syria, peace in Korea, Chinese bishops, and Alfie Evans,” *Crux*, April 30, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> “Pope Renews Appeal for Syria,” *Vatican News*, April 15, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> “Syrian Refugee Crisis,” UNHCR, <https://www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/syria/>

<sup>8</sup> Pope Francis, “Angelus,” (speech, St. Peter’s Square, Vatican City, September 1, 2013), Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

the wake of the Syrian Civil War? Based on the literature, I argue that the HS uses soft power, as defined by Joseph Nye, to pursue its goals in addressing the Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis through international diplomacy and its pastoral hierarchy.

### Definitions

Before continuing, it is important to define the terms used in this paper. As stated by Archbishop HE Cardinale in his book *The Holy See and the International Order*, the Catholic Church is “the universal society of the faithful, founded by Christ as a hierarchically organized entity in its own right pursuing its own spiritual aims with its own means.”<sup>9</sup> It is the institution that guides billions of people across the globe, and the institution that forms the moral and philosophical background for all of the actions of official bodies of the Church. Cardinale goes on to define the Holy See as, “the Pope together with the central offices of the Roman Curia and various other departments.”<sup>10</sup> The Roman Curia refers to the official bureaucracy of the Catholic Church. To simplify the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Holy See, Cardinale states that a government is to a nation what the Holy See is to the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is the background that gives a purpose to the Holy See, and the Holy See is like a collection of official agencies that execute the worldly goals and needs of the Catholic Church. In contrast, the Vatican merely refers to the land of the Vatican City State. While the term “the Vatican” is used as a metonym to refer to both the Catholic Church and the actions of the HS, for purposes of clarity through this thesis starting at this point, the term “Vatican” will only refer to the city-state in Rome.

### Framework

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<sup>9</sup> HE Cardinale, *The Holy See and the International Order*, (Macmillan of Canada, 1976), Maclean-Hunter Press. xi.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

An analysis of the HS's response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis benefits from a background on how the HS fits into the realm of international relations and how it has worked to accomplish its goals in the past. I will discuss the HS's diplomacy using Joseph Nye's description of soft power. Nye defines soft power simply as "the ability to shape the preferences of others." He elaborates by saying, "The soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority.)"<sup>11</sup> This analysis will focus on the actions of the HS in context to determine how the Holy See exhibits soft power in its quest to accomplish its goals regarding the Syrian Refugee Crisis.

A general analysis of the Catholic Church's approach to international relations is beneficial for understanding the way HS agents behave. David Ryall writes about the foundation and development of the HS's international strategy. He argues that the HS's diplomatic role is based on the new direction of Catholic Social Teaching that began in 1961, which saw the Church shift its focus to viewing people in poverty as victims of structural injustice. Catholic theologians and scholars in the post-World War II era spurred this change by expanding on church father St. Thomas Aquinas's views of the social common good as well as earlier church encyclicals that addressed inequality created by the rise of modern capitalism.<sup>12</sup> Ryall argues this shift in teaching demanded the HS to reform its international political approach to address the causes of injustice.<sup>13</sup> The development of Catholic Social Teaching provided the "normative basis of the

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<sup>11</sup> Joseph S. Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (2008): 96.

<sup>12</sup> David Ryall, "How Many Divisions? The Modern Development of Catholic International Relations," *International Relations* 14, no. 2 (1998): 27.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

Church's international relations" that has continued to the modern era.<sup>14</sup> The Church's guiding principles to international relations transformed to identifying injustice and treating its causes, and moved away from other concerns, such as gaining papal territory.

Ryall continues by writing on the HS's modern emphasis on conflict resolution, describing it as the most important goal of HS diplomacy. In the Church's view, conflict harms the common good by undermining the dignity of human life through killing and destruction. Ryall states that the Church's focus on conflict resolution began with Benedict XV during the First World War. His plea for nations to stop fighting spurred later popes to make "peace their priority in international relations."<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the HS's foreign policy is interest driven, like other international players. However, the HS differs from other states in that its objective is not merely to gain power, but to gain power for "eschatological" goals that manifest themselves most visibly through pursuing the common good by expressing concern for human rights and by addressing conflict, injustice created by conflict, and conflict's root causes. Fittingly, popes have viewed the idea of a cooperative international society as ideal in pursuing their normative goals, and the United Nations enjoys papal interest and support (with reservations due to the inefficiency of the Security Council veto.)<sup>16</sup> Considering the stock the HS puts into the UN and conflict resolution, analyzing HS activity at the UN is necessary for understanding the HS's response to the Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis.

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<sup>14</sup> Ryall, "How Many Divisions?", 27.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 29.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 30.

When looking at how the HS uses the UN to pursue its goals, it is important to recognize, that the HS is a non-member state observer at the United Nations.<sup>17</sup> Non-member states gain their status if a majority of UN member states recognizes the statehood of the entity in question, and the non-member state requests non-member observer status from the Secretary-General. Non-member observer states enjoy most privileges of member states, except that they cannot vote in the General Assembly.<sup>18</sup> By virtue of its current designation of non-member observer state, the majority of UN states support the state status of the HS for UN purposes. Their recognition empowers the HS to advocate for its policy goals at the largest international organization in the world, where it has the ability to wield considerable influence. The HS's mission to the UN is one of the most prominent tools the HS has to promote its goals. As such, this thesis analyzes the HS's actions and statements at the UN to determine how the HS works to address the Syrian Refugee Crisis.

The most important actor in the HS's mission to the UN is that of the nuncio, the title for the HS ambassadors. Jodok Troy's article "*The Pope's Own Hand Outstretched*": *Holy See Diplomacy as a Hybrid Mode of Diplomatic Agency* describes the structure of HS diplomacy and where diplomats rest in the intersection of the secular and religious. The first part of the title of his article refers to Pope John XXIII's designation of the nuncio as the "'Pope's own hand outstretched' to the world of states."<sup>19</sup> The second part, their hybrid role, refers to Troy's assertion that nuncios are both religious, in that they are clergymen and representatives of the Pope, as well as

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<sup>17</sup> Yasmin Abdullah, "The Holy See at United Nations Conferences: State or Church?" *Columbia Law Review* 96, no. 7 (1996): 1837.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 1839.

<sup>19</sup> Jodok Troy, "'The Pope's Own Hand Outstretched': Holy See Diplomacy as a Hybrid Mode of Diplomatic Agency." *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* (2017): 521.

secular, in that they have the legal status of diplomat and conduct the same standardized international practices corresponding to that role.<sup>20</sup> This fits into the entire mission of the HS in international relations: the religious entering into the international framework of the secular. The HS deploys nuncios to different countries around the globe as well as to the UN, just like ambassadors. Their training is intensive, involving education in both traditional international relations and the Church's moral stances. Troy describes them as "nominally... moral experts."<sup>21</sup> As soft power can be generated by perceptions of moral authority, nuncios reinforce this idea. They are high-ranking members of the clergy, and thus experts in morality themselves while still operating in the secular realm of international diplomacy. Further, the HS tasks nuncios with appointing bishops and maintaining connections to the country's Catholic community.<sup>22</sup> This role enhances the authority of the nuncios as well as their ability to export the values of the HS around the globe, further enhancing soft power. Troy quotes Joseph Stalin, who once asked, "How many divisions has the Pope?" The answer of course is none, but the HS's diplomatic apparatus and global reach enable the HS to maintain a geopolitical presence as a producer of soft power. Nuncios have played an essential role in addressing the Syrian Refugee Crisis, as this thesis will go on to describe. Most notably, nuncios to the UN have spoken and released statements on the Crisis to encourage the international community to take action.

While the UN is the most public avenue for HS diplomacy, it is not the only tool available for the HS to pursue its goals. Local churches and local Catholic efforts play an essential, complementary role in the HS's international strategy. Members of the clergy

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<sup>20</sup> Troy, "The Pope's Own Hand Outstretched," 522.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 528.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 527.

in areas affected by the Syrian Refugee Crisis in some way can both work to provide aid and assistance at the local level while still communicating with the HS to implement policy and strategy to addressing the Crisis. Timothy Byrnes provides case studies demonstrating the impact of HS diplomacy in shaping global issues by focusing on the role of the local clergy. He emphasizes the role of bishops as both local actors in a given nation and members of a hierarchy under the pope as an avenue for pursuing international goals.<sup>23</sup> One of his examples is the case of Poland in the 1980s-90s. Byrnes writes that, “It is by now a truism to argue that the Catholic Church played a significant role in precipitating the downfall of communism in Poland.”<sup>24</sup> Bishops in Poland maintained communication with Pope John Paul II himself, who had a strong interest in the affairs of the Polish Catholic Church by virtue of his Polish citizenship and his lifelong membership in the clergy of Poland. Pope John Paul II pushed bishops in Poland to maintain their endorsement of changing the government system in Poland. The bishops’ voices were echoed by the Pope’s own in advocating reform, and the transition of Poland from communist to democratic was assisted by both Pope John Paul II’s relationships with other world leaders as well as his connection to the bishops on the ground.<sup>25</sup> The Polish example demonstrates how the influence of a pope’s political preferences can create change with soft power in the form of the ability to make diplomatic connections with allies as well as the ability to connect with ground forces in the form of bishops.

Byrnes then transitions to using Pope Francis’s global goals as a framework to three case studies about the pope’s soft power: one of these cases is refugees. Before

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<sup>23</sup> Timothy Byrnes, “Sovereignty, Supranationalism, and Soft Power: The Holy See in International Relations,” *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 15, no. 4 (2017): 10.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

discussing the refugee case, Byrnes notes that “the Pope is a global celebrity,” and he can shape global policy to his preferences as assisted by “the global media, [...] and the institutional mechanisms and sovereign standing of his global church.”<sup>26</sup> In the case of refugees, Byrnes cites examples of times when Pope Francis has spoken publicly about refugees in ways that have garnered attention. Examples include advocating against building walls, noting the personhood of migrants and refugees, as well as offering legal asylum at the Vatican to three Syrian families during his visit to Lesbos, Greece. He notes that by virtue of being monarch of a sovereign state, he was able to extend asylum to those refugee families.<sup>27</sup> However, Byrnes does not provide further analysis on the other ways the papacy has utilized its position and soft power to advocate on behalf of refugees.

Byrnes does cite a US Embassy report to Barack Obama that says the Pope is a leader who “wield[s] an unparalleled moral megaphone.”<sup>28</sup> He put popes and the HS within the definition of Nye’s soft power, noting their ability to affect preferences of others.<sup>29</sup> However, his work does not go beyond analyzing Pope Francis’s rhetoric, with the exception of the one incident of offering asylum to Syrian families. Byrnes pays no attention to the diplomatic actions the HS has undertaken at the UN to pursue its migrant and refugee goals, nor to the role of nuncios or bishops in pursuing the Pope’s refugee policy. However, as the case of Pope John Paul II in Poland indicates, the HS’s influence has been powerful in shaping the international sphere. This paper will attempt to further

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<sup>26</sup> Byrnes, “Sovereignty, Supranationalism, and Soft Power,” 14-15.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

identify and analyze methods of soft power used by the HS to address the modern Syrian migrant and refugee crisis.

### Data and Methodology

The methodology of this thesis is qualitative. It focuses on how the Holy See exercises soft power, investigating two avenues as identified by the literature and by preliminary research: international diplomacy and ground forces in the form of bishops. For simplicity, the scope of my thesis does not include Catholic NGOs or other organizations affiliated with the Church: the relevant player is the Church itself, through its manifestation as the Holy See down the hierarchy to the individual church. Rather than evaluate whether or not the HS and the Vatican have been successful in accomplishing their goals regarding the Syrian Refugee Crisis, this thesis explores the different ways the HS advocates its position through the context of the methods and techniques of soft power.

My analysis focuses on the role of the HS in utilizing soft power. First, I discuss the Holy See as a diplomatic player and the multiple avenues available that it uses to advocate its positions. Then, I use statements released by the Holy See's delegation to the UN as well as outside information about the Holy See's diplomatic efforts to determine how the Holy See works to address the Syrian Refugee Crisis. Further, I analyze documents provided by the Migrant and Refugee Section in Rome to identify how the Section interacts with advocacy internationally.

I then examine the role of bishops, bishops' councils, and local churches of Middle Eastern host-states for Syrian refugees to determine how they act as agents of the HS in addressing the crisis. I begin by using the Migrant and Refugee Section's pastoral

guidelines to note the policies that the HS transmits down to the local church. Then, I use bishops' statements and media sources that discuss the positions of bishops and the local efforts of churches, looking primarily at the Arabic-speaking countries that Pope Francis praised in their work to address the conflict through partnership with the Catholic Church and affiliated organizations: Jordan and Lebanon.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, I note the efforts of Catholic churches on the ground in Syria.

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<sup>30</sup> Pope Francis, "To the Members of the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See for the Traditional Exchange of New Year Greetings," (speech, Vatican City, January 8, 2018), *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **International Diplomacy, the UN, and the Holy See**

#### Introduction

The HS uses the UN as a fruitful path for lobbying its position to the globe. All the world's powers congregate in one body, and the HS has the power to command their attention to work toward its goals. Therefore, the HS maintains a well-developed and vocal delegation to the UN that frequently comments on issues being debated. As the HS participates in most actions of the UN (excluding voting), it must develop consistent policies that can be applied to the realm of international states. The HS delegation has been able to construct these policies, and it takes numerous opportunities it finds available to volunteer its positions. This chapter will outline both the ways the HS comments at the UN as well as common themes regarding its policies toward the Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis.

#### Avenues of Action

The Holy See's mission to the UN works along traditional diplomatic paths, but it contains privileges not afforded to other delegations by virtue of its role as the representative of a global religion, not a nation. The Holy See is able to distribute documents during meetings, speak at the General Assembly, and participate in debates, among other activities.<sup>31</sup> The HS uses all of these avenues to pursue its international

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<sup>31</sup> Yasmin Abdullah, "The Holy See at United Nations Conferences: State or Church?" *Columbia Law Review* 96, no. 7 (1996): 1837.

goals. However, as the delegation of the Catholic Church, the HS's delegation and diplomats perform duties that distinguish itself from other delegations. For example, the HS can use the UN as the stage to announce a variety of initiatives from the Catholic Church, such as papal encyclicals and other religious documents or activities. The following section will describe three examples of how the HS's delegation uses alternative paths to advocate its goals. The purpose is purely to focus on the *methods* of the HS's delegation, not on the content of its advocacy.

On September 4th, 2013, the Holy See's Mission to the UN released a statement detailing Pope Francis's announcement to designate September 7th, 2013 a day of fasting and prayer for the conflict in Syria. In addition to Pope Francis's plea for a political solution as assisted by the international community, the press announcement detailed Pope Francis's address the day prior to a crowd at St. Peter's Square in Vatican City, where he implored listeners and the global community to join in prayer and fasting. The statement read, in part, "Held in a spirit of penance, the prayer vigil will invoke God's gift of peace upon the nation of Syria and on all situations of conflict and violence around the world."<sup>32</sup> Further, the day of fasting was proposed to end in both a service in Rome conducted by the Pope as well as a mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City conducted by the Cardinal in residence with a homily by the HS's nuncio to the UN. This example demonstrates the HS's mission distinctly religious nature and the actions it can call for. While some nations can call for people across the world to advocate on behalf of certain causes through their UN delegations, the HS's mission can provide a microphone for a religious call to arms among the faithful. Whether or not these actions are widely

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<sup>32</sup> "Day of Fasting and Prayer for Syria," Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, September 4, 2013.

considered an effective strategy for pursuing political change outside the realm of Catholics and other religious peoples, they are still a means of action, considered legitimate by the HS and that the HS can pursue outside of traditional UN diplomacy.

Further, the HS's delegation sponsors an annual prayer service to commemorate the opening of each session of the UN, traditionally attended by the Secretary-General of the United Nations with an invitation extended to all diplomats.<sup>33</sup> The "prayer service takes place at a Catholic church close to UN headquarters, and includes a homily by the nuncio to the UN. This homily is explicitly religious and tied to Catholicism by virtue of content, speakers, ceremony, and venue. At the prayer service honoring the opening of the 68th session of the UN in September of 2013, the nuncio at the time Archbishop Francis A. Chuillikat himself stated, "This annual event is a propitious opportunity for us to come together in a spirit of unity and prayer, to implore God's blessings and guidance so that we may work together more effectively and harmoniously in our task to build a more just, secure, stable, prosperous and peaceful world."<sup>34</sup> Not only can the Holy See's delegation address the UN through the traditional avenues of the organization, it also has the ability to demand an audience during each UN session in a Catholic space, used to promote the Holy See's goals, and ends with a quote from Pope Francis himself. In the prayer service for the 69th session in 2014, the newly appointed nuncio Bernardito Auza delivered the homily and read Pope Francis's message, which included, "[Pope Francis] hopes that solutions may be sought which promote peace among peoples and which confront poverty through the 'valuing of fraternal relationships in the heart of families

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<sup>33</sup> Maria R. Bastone, "Church Urges Peace to Quell Crisis in Syria," Catholic New York, September 18, 2013.

<sup>34</sup> "Prayer Service For The Opening Of The Sixty-Eighth Session Of The United Nations General Assembly," Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, September 16, 2013.

and communities, through the sharing of joys and sorrows, of hardships and triumphs that are part of human life.”<sup>35</sup> The HS’s delegation to the UN is able to use this event to establish its goals which it links explicitly to Catholicism, enhanced by the reality of a prayer service in a Catholic Church. This event is another example of an alternative means of UN diplomacy open to the HS.

Not only are quotes of Pope Francis’ read out, but also Pope Francis himself has addressed the UN. While that is not unique among heads of state, it is notable in this context due to the HS’s mission representing a religion, not a state, and therefore Pope Francis being present as the head of the Catholic Church, not as the ruler of Vatican City. In September of 2015, the Pope gave a speech in which he expressed a myriad of his opinions on international affairs, with topics ranging from addressing the behavior of global financial institutions to climate change to the narcotics trade.<sup>36</sup> He also addressed Syria and the Middle East, and he gave indicators on his overall approach to international conflict. While appearing in front of the UN is rare and has only happened once so far, the HS’s Secretary of State, a cardinal, addresses the assembly often.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, Pope Francis has sent in open letters to the General Assembly, which the HS’s mission reads aloud in session.<sup>38</sup>

The aforementioned examples are opportunities open to the HS as a delegation that deviate from the experience of other delegations. However, the HS predominantly behaves within the UN similar to other delegations. Most of its actions are through

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<sup>35</sup> “Prayer Service For The Opening Of The Sixty-Ninth Session Of The United Nations General Assembly,” Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, September 16, 2014.

<sup>36</sup> “Address Of His Holiness Pope Francis to the General Assembly of the United Nations,” Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, September 25, 2015.

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, Cardinal Pietro Parolin’s address to General Assembly on September 29, 2014.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, Pope Francis’s message to Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon, written on May 21, 2016.

statements on issues being discussed on the floor and participations in debates. The following section will discuss how the HS uses this avenue of diplomacy as well as the three explained above to advocate its positions focusing on the case of Syrian migrants and refugees.

### Themes

Joseph Nye wrote, “The soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority.)”<sup>39</sup> This description of soft power will form the method of textual analysis used in this section to evaluate the statements released by the HS’s mission to the UN regarding the Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis. The statements will be arranged by theme. The HS’s mission speaks about the Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis consistently, choosing to address certain aspects of the Crisis and put forth policy recommendations. This section will discuss these themes to answer both how the HS approaches the Crisis as well as how it uses the UN to address it.

### *Terrorism*

The HS delegation’s approach to the Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis includes a concern over terrorist organizations, particularly the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In 2014, at the Security Council Open Debate on the Middle East, the nuncio to the UN Archbishop Bernardito Auza said, “As regard to the grave violations and abuses committed by the so-called ‘Islamic State’ in Iraq and Syria, the competent organs of the United Nations must act to prevent possible new genocides and to assist the

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<sup>39</sup> Joseph S. Nye, “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (2008): 96.

increasing number of refugees... the Holy See insists on the respect of the right of [targeted] communities and all the displaced persons to return to their homes and to live in dignity and safety.”<sup>40</sup> At the same event a year later, Archbishop Auza reiterated:

In Syria as well as in Iraq, we continue to be gravely concerned about the terrorist acts perpetrated by the so-called “Islamic State.” This is a challenge not only for the region but for the entire international community, which is called upon to cooperate with unity of purpose in order to thwart this terrorist plague, which is expanding its activities into different countries. Having to take care of millions of refugees, Lebanon and Jordan also bear the brunt of the conflict in neighbouring Syria. They urgently need the solidarity of the whole international community.<sup>41</sup>

A large part of the HS’s approach to the Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis revolves around the displacement caused by ISIL. As such, they repeatedly implore the international community to step in and address the devastation wrought upon fleeing violence, such as advocating for aid to Lebanon and Jordan. The HS uses the UN as an avenue to advocate for policies they think are best for addressing a problem it identifies as particularly important.

In addition to releasing statements like the one above that implore action from the international community, the HS delegation also attempts to rally religious leaders to address ISIL’s claims. The HS itself attempts to discredit the ideology behind ISIL and other radical groups by capitalizing off its own moral authority as a representation of one of the world’s largest religious sects- behind only Sunni Islam.

In 2015, the Holy See’s delegation co-sponsored an event entitled “The Future of Religious and Ethnic Minorities Victimized by Daesh.” Archbishop Auza was the keynote speaker, and he stated, “[...] religious leaders have a grave and specific duty to

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<sup>40</sup> “The Situation In The Middle East, Including The Palestinian Question,” Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, October 21, 2014.

<sup>41</sup> “The Situation In The Middle East, Including The Palestinian Question,” Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, July 23, 2015.

confront and condemn the abuse of religious belief and sentiment to justify violence and terrorism against believers of other religions; they must constantly and unequivocally affirm that no one can justly kill the innocent in God's name and say a clear and adamant 'no' to every form of violence, vengeance and hatred carried out supposedly in the name of God or religion."<sup>42</sup> There are numerous examples of this rhetoric coming from the Holy See delegation. In 2014, the Secretary of State of the Holy See Cardinal Pietro Parolin stated in a speech to the general assembly of the 69th session of the UN:

Unfortunately, as the Holy Father recently said, even today there are those who would presume to wield power by coercing consciences and taking lives, persecuting and murdering in the name of God. [...] It must be remembered that such violence is born out of a disregard for God and falsifies "religion itself, since religion aims instead at reconciling men and women with God, at illuminating and purifying consciences, and at making it clear that each human being is the image of the Creator."<sup>43</sup>

Examples like the two above, combined with numerous other examples brought up in other HS statements, show that the HS's delegation works to discredit the ideology of terrorist organizations. When applying Nye's definition of soft power to the HS's statements, it is clear that the HS pursues its foreign policy by appealing to its own moral authority. The Holy See has the power to speak on issues of religion, as emphasized by the fact that the nuncio and other speakers on behalf of the HS delegation are members of the clergy, and the mission of the Holy See's delegation is to represent the global Catholic Church. With the Syrian Migrant and Refugee case, the Holy See acknowledges that terrorism and terrorist organizations pose a threat to Syrian (and other) people, which causes mass displacement and migration. Part of its effort to address this concern, as

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<sup>42</sup> "The Future Of Religious And Ethnic Minorities Victimized By Daesh," Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, November 2, 2017.

<sup>43</sup> "Address Of His Eminence Pietro Cardinal Parolin, Secretary Of State Of His Holiness Pope Francis, To The 69th Session Of The United Nations General Assembly," Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, September 29, 2014.

evidenced by the presence of this rhetoric in a multitude of statements, is to assert that terrorist organizations have twisted the idea of religion and God, and therefore discredit extremist ideology using its authority on religion. While the mission cannot address the particulars of Islamic theology, it instead targets the unifying concept of the monotheistic, Abrahamic God and similarly the relationship between God and believers. Therefore, the delegation is able to use its moral authority to generate soft power regarding its foreign policy goals.

Another way the HS's delegation attempts to address terrorism is through imploring a variety of religious actors across the globe to actively work to combat extremist ideology. As noted previously, Archbishop Auza mentioned that religious leaders have a duty to refute violence in the name of God and condemn any sort of terrorist activity. Similarly, he has stated that the conflict in Syria requires engagement and track II diplomacy through civil society organizations and faith-based informal diplomacy, particularly in situations where religion and identity can inflame conflict. In a statement in 2016, he said, "My delegation believes that the more religion is manipulated to justify acts of terror and violence, the more religious leaders must be engaged in the overall effort to defeat the violence that attempts to hijack it for purposes antithetical to its nature."<sup>44</sup> This is a further example of the Holy See's efforts to exert its moral authority to push for a policy. As the delegation representing Pope Francis, who in effect is working through his delegation to condemn violence, the HS is able to use its position to attempt to influence other religious actors to involve themselves in mitigating the

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<sup>44</sup> "Statement On The Situation In The Middle East, Including the Palestinian Question," Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, July 12, 2016.

violence. They are working to use their own authority and legitimacy to make their goals attractive to other groups- or to use soft power.

*Persecution of Christian Minorities*

The HS takes a particular interest in the status of the minority Christian population in Syria and preserving its ancient presence in the Middle East. In a letter to Christians in the Middle East at Christmas, Pope Francis wrote, “Your very presence is precious for the Middle East. You are a small flock, but one with a great responsibility in the land where Christianity was born and first spread.”<sup>45</sup> He further expressed that the global Catholic Church supported these communities and pledged to assist them through prayers and “every other means at our disposal.”<sup>46</sup> One of those means is by consistently mentioning the Christian communities in Syria at the UN, focusing on the risks they face both due to martyrdom by terrorist organizations and due to mass exodus to flee persecution.

Four months after he became pope in 2013, Pope Francis’s nuncio to the UN Archbishop Francis Chullikatt attended the Security Council’s Open Debate on the Middle East. He made a strong appeal on behalf of Syrian Christians targeted by both ISIL and the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War. He mentioned a priest who had been killed as a martyr as well as the destruction of 60 churches and other Christian buildings in his plea for attention to Christians in Syria. He described the HS’s focus on Christians not as exclusive, saying that the HS stands with all Syrians, but that:

[Syrian Christians] are a fitting expression of the solicitude of the Holy See for the whole Christian family, and of what should be the serious apprehension of the entire world about the overlooked fate of so many thousands of victims, including

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<sup>45</sup> “Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Christians in the Middle East,” *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*, December 24, 2014.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

Christians as well as other ethnic and religious minorities, who find themselves ruthlessly targeted in that conflict for no fault of their own, and now, caught in the cross-fire, are struggling for their very survival.<sup>47</sup>

Further, Archbishop Chullikatt highlighted the HS's view that maintaining a Christian community in Syria is very important due to the community's ancient roots and artifacts.<sup>48</sup> The rhetoric of the HS stresses the historical presence of Middle Eastern Christian communities and acknowledges that recent events have led to many Christians dying as well as many Christians fleeing to resettle elsewhere. In this way, it is an appeal that fits into the HS's political values as defined by Nye, who says soft power is generated by a country living up to its political values both domestically and internationally.<sup>49</sup> The HS concerns itself with a myriad of issues at the UN, but at its core the HS represents the Catholic Church, which is made of a community of the faithful. Its work defending Christians in conflict zones is part of the HS living up to its value of being the global representative of Catholics.

In trying to attract attention to the cause, the HS is able to refer to the aforementioned historical presence of Christian communities of the Middle East. The HS further emphasizes the importance of protecting Christians by presenting the community as an at-risk religious minority surrounded by members of a different faith. The HS frequently lists Christians with other religious minorities when describing how they can be particularly targeted by ISIL or other forms of sectarian violence, effectively placing Christians inside popular narratives spread about which communities are targeted by sectarian violence in the Middle East. In 2015 at an event aptly titled "The Persecution of

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<sup>47</sup> "Open Debate on the Middle East," Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, July 23, 2013.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Joseph S. Nye, "Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics," *Public Affairs*, 2004.

Christians Globally: A Threat to International Peace and Security” Archbishop Auza cited a recent speech by an Iraqi woman who spoke about the trials her fellow Yazidis faced. Immediately after, he made an impassioned appeal on behalf of Christians targeted by violence saying, “As a 2014 Pew Research Center report on religious hostilities across the world documented, brutal attacks on people of faith happen to Christians more than to any other religious group. [...] This points to a collective failure of this international organization, whose primary objective is to spare peoples and nations from the scourge of violence and unjust aggressions.”<sup>50</sup> He then focused the rest of his speech on the Middle East, highlighting both Iraq and Syria as epicenters of this violence against Christians, who he labelled as a religious minority in the region. His argument for protecting Christians immediately followed his citation of a Yazidi woman’s appeal for her religious community in the Middle East, linking the situation of the two groups. He further made his point by consistently referring to Christians by grouping them with the term “other religious minorities.” This is another method of the HS advocating for the global Christian community within the structure of the UN.

#### *Root Causes & Policy Recommendations*

When discussing the causes of the Syrian Migrant and Refugee crisis, the HS begins with the basics: war caused mass displacement and therefore the Migrant and Refugee Crisis. In a 2016 statement at an event to address what creates refugees in general, the HS identified war as the primary cause of modern refugees. The HS elaborated by agreeing with a UN document that identifies a pattern between poverty,

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<sup>50</sup> “Persecution of Christians,” Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, April 17, 2015.

weak states, and the availability of low-technology weaponry in spurring conflict.<sup>51</sup> The HS's policy recommendation for addressing crisis is the same solution they apply to the Syrian conflict specifically: a call for dialogue among combatants and limiting the global arms trade.<sup>52</sup> The HS does not distinguish between the legal and illegal arms trade, but instead advocates for limits in the general manufacture and sale of weapons, as the presence of weapons "aggravates situations of conflict and results in huge human and material costs," creating waves of migrants and refugees.<sup>53</sup>

In another 2016 statement, the HS again explicitly condemned the arms trade in exacerbating conflict in Syria. Archbishop Auza made a particularly pointed remark to weapon-exporting countries, saying, "One cannot but lament the duplicity of simultaneously talking peace while supplying arms to those who kill, on every side of the conflict."<sup>54</sup> Archbishop Auza then called on nations that produce weapons to limit the trade to their "client states" and non-state actors, as civilians are harmed in states that contain a surplus of weaponry.<sup>55</sup> At the general debate of the General Assembly in 2016, the HS continued along the same path. Cardinal Parolin, the Pope's Secretary of State argued against the "uproar" of arms sales in hopes of distributing humanitarian aid. He reiterated the HS's call for dialogue, arguing that the parties to the Syrian Civil War have the will to halt the fighting and must negotiate.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> "Statement On Roundtable #1: Addressing The Root Causes Of Large Movements Of Refugees And Migrants," Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, September 19, 2016.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> "Statement On The Situation In The Middle East, Including The Palestinian Question," Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, July 12, 2016.

<sup>55</sup> "Statement On The Situation In The Middle East," Mission of the Holy See, July 12, 2016.

<sup>56</sup> "Cardinal Parolin Address At The General Debate Of The 71st Session Of The GA," Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, September 22, 2016.

The HS's call for dialogue among parties often is complemented by their call for religious actors to be involved in dialogue. At another event in 2016 focusing on refugees, Cardinal Parolin stated that the issue of migrants and refugees can be solved through collaboration between nations and non-governmental organizations. He goes on to say that partnering with "religious organizations and faith communities is particularly helpful, for they are interested and skilled parties who are often first-responders to refugee and migrant movements across borders and to those internally displaced."<sup>57</sup> At another event the same year, Archbishop Auza mentioned the need for track-II diplomatic efforts from religious leaders in assisting multilateral efforts for peace by creating dialogue for conflicts in the Middle East, as informal diplomacy by religious actors would be beneficial in a region where the three monotheistic faiths were born.<sup>58</sup> The HS's view on the root causes of the migration conflict as well as its advocacy for creating peace demonstrate the reach of the HS's position at the UN. It is able to advocate its own policy preferences and even censure other nations, as shown when Archbishop Auza condemned states providing weapons to their clients as well as states who speak about a devotion to peace but go on to manufacture and sell arms.

### Conclusion

The Holy See's advocates for causes at the international level, and it makes use of its privilege at the UN in addressing the Syrian Refugee Crisis and the Syrian Civil War. Not only does the delegation raise awareness about issues it finds pertinent, such as rising terrorist threats or persecution against Christians, but it also makes policy

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<sup>57</sup> "Intervention from the Summit for Refugees and Migrants," Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, September 19, 2016.

<sup>58</sup> "Statement On The Situation In The Middle East," Mission of the Holy See, July 12, 2016.

recommendations and condemns the action of state governments. Its positions are advanced by the multitude of privileges afforded to the HS, such as attendance in a prayer service to open each of the UN's sessions as well as regular visits from the Pope's Secretary of State and even a visit by Pope Francis himself. Indeed, the HS is aware of the power of its advocacy efforts at the UN. Its Migrants and Refugees Section has two separate global strategies for pursuing its goals, and advocacy at the UN is one of the two. By offering the HS space, the HS uses all the tools at its disposal to pursue the goals not of the Vatican City State, but of the Catholic Church. Consistent religious language and appeals enhance the HS's delegation's moral authority, as the HS is the representative of the global Catholic Church. By focusing on the plight of Christians in Syria, the HS is living up to its political values: the protection of fellow Christians. The HS uses its position at the UN as well as its language to strategically pursue the goals of the Catholic Church as applied to political situations in the modern day. However, international advocacy is just one part of the response of the HS to the Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis. The HS is a component of the Catholic Church, which interacts with the laity on a daily basis. In order to form a complete analysis of the HS's response, it is necessary to investigate the role of local churches in addressing the Crisis- often, by interacting directly with displaced persons.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Agents in Action: The Local Church

#### Introduction

While the Holy See makes use of the diplomatic tools at its disposal at the United Nations, the Catholic Church also has the benefit of centuries of organizing in localities across the globe. When a conflict strikes in a particular region, the Catholic Church has agents on the ground ready to respond and eventually bring the set policy of the Church to fruition, should the Catholic Church find it necessary to mount a wide-scale response. As such, the local church is an actor in the global Catholic Church's response to the Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis. The local church can be defined as the many churches, dioceses, and archdioceses that work directly with their communities. Whereas the HS encompasses the bureaucracy of the Catholic Church, the local church acts purely to administer the sacraments, ensure regular mass, and assist parishioners and other people in their communities. However, the local church also responds to the Church's hierarchy and therefore works to implement the Church's policies when requested. Therefore when assessing the role of the Catholic Church to the Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis, it is necessary to take into account the actions of the local church.

Fittingly, the Migrants and Refugees Section of the HS published a guiding document for local churches entitled *Responding the Refugees and Migrants: Twenty Pastoral Action Points*. The document describes how the Catholic Church responds to

reality of the presence of migrants and refugees at the “grassroots level.”<sup>59</sup> It includes guidelines such as the necessity for welcoming and hosting the needy, reintegrating them into society, allowing them to find dignified work, and assisting them in having their basic needs met. These guidelines direct the response of the local church when it finds itself surrounded by migrants and refugees and at a loss for the best way to respond.

The local church throughout the world is responding to a myriad of migrants and refugees across regions and countries. However, when Pope Francis discusses the Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis, he has highlighted the efforts of the local church in Jordan and Lebanon.<sup>60</sup> Pope Francis said, “The commitment and efforts made by these countries in this difficult situation deserve the appreciation and support of the entire international community.”<sup>61</sup> Since Pope Francis singled out their efforts, this section will delve into the response of the local church in Jordan and Lebanon to the Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis. Additionally, this section will investigate the role of the local church in Syria itself.

### Jordan

Jordan’s Christians make up only about 3 percent of the country’s population, and Catholics are a portion of the demographic together with Greek Orthodox and a variety of smaller sects. Fittingly, the Catholic community in Jordan answers to the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, who is the patriarch of Roman Catholics in Israel, the West Bank, Gaza, Cyprus, and Jordan. The role of patriarch is identical to that of an archbishop, and the title differs only due to centuries of Church politics. There are numerous Catholic

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<sup>59</sup> “Responding the Refugees and Migrants: Twenty Pastoral Action Points,” Migrants and Refugees Section, Integral Human Development, 2017.

<sup>60</sup> Pope Francis, “To the Members of the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See for the Traditional Exchange of New Year Greetings,” (speech, Vatican City, January 8, 2018), Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

parishes in Jordan that serve the 1.9 percent of Jordan's Catholic population, and they have acted proactively in responding to the Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis. As the HS directed, many parishes in areas that attract large numbers of refugees- such as Amman and Northern Jordan- have worked to be as welcoming as possible to all refugees and migrants, regardless of religion. In their midst is St. Mary's Church in Markka led by Father Khalil al-Jarr as well as the Our Lady of Peace Center outside of Amman.

Father Khalil Jarr attracted international attention for his efforts to provide for refugees at his church, St. Mary's in Markka. Initially, Fr. Jarr was commended for his efforts to respond to a wave of Iraqi migrants, particularly Christians, who have continued to flee Iraq since the 2003 invasion due to an increase of violence and persecution.<sup>62</sup> Fr. Jarr transformed his church into living quarters to accept refugees. In common areas traditionally reserved for Sunday school and other community activities, Fr. Jarr raised curtains to create makeshift living quarters for dozens of families. While refugees cannot work without visas, Fr. Jarr assigns them tasks around the parish and pays them modestly for it. While he admits it is not enough to make a living and resettle outside the church walls, he says the process helps restore dignity. When Pope Francis visited Jordan in 2014, Fr. Jarr organized a meeting between the Pope and 200 refugees, 40 of whom had come to his church.<sup>63</sup> Fr. Jarr is quoted as saying, "It is important that the refugees experience the Pope's solidarity. This will give them hope and the feeling that they have not been forgotten."<sup>64</sup> In a different interview, Fr. Jarr says, "Pope Francis is very concerned about our situation. As Christians, this is our moment to be witnesses

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<sup>62</sup> "Pope Francis to Meet Refugees in Jordan," Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, May 09, 2014.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

for love, respect and to accept each other.”<sup>65</sup> Fr. Jarr’s two quotes demonstrate the importance of Pope Francis’s policy toward refugees in the actions of Fr. Jarr. As Pope Francis and the Migrant and Refugee Section have stated numerous times, the duty for church leaders is to welcome, protect, promote, and integrate refugees.<sup>66</sup>

Fr. Jarr does not limit his and St. Mary’s aid to Christian refugees. During Ramadan in 2017, Fr. Jarr and St. Mary’s organized iftar for fasting Syrian Muslim refugees.<sup>67</sup> In another interview, Fr. Jarr said, “Of course I help Muslim families. They are also God’s children. I therefore can’t differentiate between the Muslim and the Christian needy. My faith does not permit me to do that.”<sup>68</sup> This coincides with directives from the HS’s pastoral guidelines, which demand that the Catholic faithful and clergy recognize the human dignity of all migrants and refugees, regardless of faith or any other qualifier.<sup>69</sup>

Fr. Jarr’s actions generated a great amount of international attention. CNN named him one of their 20 heroes of 2017 for his support of migrants and refugees, specifically Iraqi refugees. CNN quotes him as saying, “My church, my school, my heart is open for every single one who comes to ask for help.”<sup>70</sup> Fr. Jarr’s actions have garnered attention that has enhanced the Church’s image as a responder to the Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis. He is seen as an agent of the Catholic Church by virtue of his status as priest who consistently cites the Pope and his faith as reasoning for his actions. His behavior,

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<sup>65</sup> “Priest in Jordan Ministering to Refugees Believes He’s Living with Saints,” Catholic Philly, June 11, 2015.

<sup>66</sup> “Towards the Global Compacts on Migrants and on Refugees 2018,” Migrants and Refugees Section, Integral Human Development, 2018, 6.

<sup>67</sup> Issam Smeir, Twitter Post, June 14, 2017, 6:42 pm.  
<https://twitter.com/issamsmeir/status/876223515023880192>

<sup>68</sup> “Pope Francis to Meet Refugees in Jordan,” Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, May 09, 2014.

<sup>69</sup> Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, “Welcoming Christ in Refugees and Forcibly Displaced Persons: Pastoral Guidelines,” Vatican Press, 2013. 5.

<sup>70</sup> Jomana Karadsheh, “Iraqi Christians Find Refuge at Jordan Church,” CNN, October 05, 2014.

therefore, works as a form of soft power in making the policies of the Church more attractive. In line with Nye's definition of soft power, Fr. Jarr effectively demonstrates values that are attractive to others (as evidenced by the praise from CNN), that are lived out in practice (as evidenced by the application of policies that request the pastoral hierarchy to aid refugees), and that contain legitimate moral authority (by Fr. Jarr's references to the demands of God and the Catholic Church on his beliefs and actions.) Furthermore, Fr. Jarr speaks about a reoccurring theme that appears in the statements of many clergy members working with Syrian refugees. By emphasizing that the Catholic Church directs its members to accept *all* those who are in need, not just Christians, Fr. Jarr is participating in an act that generates soft power by appealing to the values of the majority. Catholics are in the minority in the Middle East, so by indicating the Church's acceptance to take in Muslim refugees, Fr. Jarr is again demonstrating values that are attractive to those in the region and that are lived out in practice. By living out the directives of the Church, Fr. Jarr thereby advocates for them, making them appear attractive and commendable.

Our Lady of Peace Center (OLOPC) is also located in Jordan. A former bishop of Amman established the center for the purpose of aiding children in Jordan with developmental disorders and physical disabilities. OLOPC has been visited by both Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, and operates with support from the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.<sup>71</sup> Since its establishment, the OLOPC broadened its scope of activities and goals. Responding to the needs of the residents of Jordan, OLOPC began to host Syrian refugee families. In 2013, the Personal Representative of Pope Francis to the Oriental Churches Cardinal Sandri went to the Center to visit with the Syrian refugee

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<sup>71</sup> "Our Story," Our Lady of Peace Center, Markka, Jordan.

families there. Accompanied by the nuncios of Jordan and Jerusalem, the three men prayed with each of the families at the OLOPC, asking for stability in Syria.<sup>72</sup> OLOPC provides special care for those with a variety of disabilities, but also provides training for fitting prosthetic limbs. Some Syrian refugees who have stayed at OLOPC have enrolled in the training, with hopes to take their skills with them to rebuild Syria once it is safe enough to do so.<sup>73</sup> This establishment is yet another example of how the Catholic Church uses local establishments to live out its policies. By supporting Syrian refugees and training them to work when they return to Syria, the local church in the form of the funders and administrators of the OLOPC follow the directives of the HS at the local level. By performing these activities, the Catholic Church as a whole continues to gain moral authority by implementing its directives.

### Lebanon

Lebanon is religiously diverse, with Christians estimated in 2012 at 46 percent, Muslims 52 percent, and Druze 2 percent of the population. The Muslim population is about equally split between Shia and Sunni, while Maronites dominate the Christian population. Maronites are an ancient Eastern tradition that maintains full communion with the Pope in Rome. Like the Catholics of Jordan, Maronites answer to a Patriarch—the Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and all the East. Some other Catholics in communion with Rome exist in Lebanon, but they are far outnumbered by the Maronites. However, many Christian sects who are in communion with the Pope have worked together in Lebanon to implement the goals of the HS.

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<sup>72</sup> "Cardinal Sandri Visits Syrian Refugees at Our Lady of Peace Center," Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, June 05, 2013.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

One such example of Catholics working together occurred in November of 2018. Multiple Catholic leaders joined to make a statement pleading for the international community to work in generating peace in their region to ease human suffering. The leaders then went on to reiterate a previous statement of Pope Francis about the importance of returning Christians to and keeping Christians in their ancestral homelands in hopes of preserving centuries of tradition.<sup>74</sup> While this example of the local church does not constitute an action plan or program, it shows an essential function of the local church: to propagate the statements and beliefs of the Pope and the larger Catholic Church by bringing them to a local context. The local church, by having its leaders band together, endorsed the policy of the global Catholic Church through their meeting and press announcement. In this way, the local church is acting as an agent of the HS, working to take policies and publicize them down the pastoral hierarchy.

In addition to statements by higher-level clergy, other members of the clergy are implementing programs and giving concrete aid for the benefit of refugees throughout Lebanon. One particular order of Franciscans, monks who aim to follow the path of St. Francis of Assisi, play a large role in aiding refugees. Called the Custody of the Holy Land, or *Custodia Terræ Sanctæ*, the order provides numerous services to the Lebanese. Recently, included in these services are a number of schools throughout Lebanon that are open for to refugee children. While the schools teach practical subjects, they also attempt to provide a sense of belonging. As stated by one priest, “They need to be loved, [and] this is the thing to know if you work with them. They need someone near them who

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<sup>74</sup> "Lebanon's Catholic Leaders Appeal for Middle East Peace," Crux, November 19, 2018.

shares their anxieties and hopes.”<sup>75</sup> One priest cited Pope Francis as the inspiration for the work the order does across Lebanon. He says, “As Franciscans, we must be the first to embrace this Pope’s message: we must open the doors to go out and then welcome the people.”<sup>76</sup> While the order has historically been devoted to social work, this statement is an example of how directives from the top of the hierarchy trickle down to influence Catholics at the grassroots level as agents of the Pope and the HS.

### Syria

Before the start of the Syrian Civil War, the Christian community in Syria was estimated to be about 10 percent of the population, with the Catholic community making up about 1 percent. Within that 1 percent, Melkite Catholic and Maronite Catholic are the most common sects. Aleppo is the city in Syria with the largest number of Christian inhabitants, and it is the seat of the Catholic Church’s representative to Syria, who is given the title of apostolic vicar and answers directly to the Pope. Since the outbreak of the war, the number of Christians in Syria has dwindled. However, many Church leaders remain, and they are working to implement policies to support internally displaced persons.

Monsignor Abu Khazen, Bishop of Aleppo and Franciscan member of the Custody of the Holy Land, has led efforts to implement aid in his region. Msr. Abu Kazen directed his parishioners to receive and host displaced Syrians in their homes, many of whom are Muslim. Of hosting Muslims, he says, “We have developed new ways of meeting in this conflict. It was certainly not easy but I keep saying that it is very important that we welcome the displaced people. We must not give an excuse for

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<sup>75</sup> Beatrice Guarrera, "The Custody of the Holy Land in Lebanon in a Sign of Welcome." *Custodia Terræ Sanctæ*, July 19, 2017.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

exclusion or communalism.”<sup>77</sup> Msr. Abu Khazen further justifies his policy by quoting Pope Francis, saying, “... we need to convert to Humans (sic) no matter who he is and what he believes.”<sup>78</sup> Msr. Abu Khazen also describes other charitable works open to all in Aleppo, regardless of religious affiliation such as allowing families to live in the parish hall and keeping a generator running for students who need electricity to do school work. Msr. Abu Khazen speaks similarly to Fr. Jarr in Jordan by highlighting his efforts to make services for refugees available despite religious affiliation. Again, this demonstrates soft power by making the values of the Catholic community appear attractive to the surrounding community. Finding other examples of Catholic aid in Syria is difficult out of deference to both the dwindling Christian population and the difficulty for many to operate within Syria. However, Abu Khazen shows that even at the epicenter of conflict, the words of Pope Francis and the policies of the global church diffuse down to his parish.

### Conclusion

The local church plays an essential role as the grassroots agents the HS can use to achieve its goals. The local church implements policies set out by the HS, such as hosting refugees and educating children that have no other schooling options and so on. However, the local church also plays an important role in persuading lay Catholics as well as other people, no matter religious affiliation or immigration status, to lend a hand in its efforts. As such, the local church makes statements referencing the words of the Pope and Catholic theology to appeal to others. A large part of this effort comes from the

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<sup>77</sup> Emilie Rey, "According to Monsignor Abu Khazen from Aleppo, Confidence Must Be Restored," *Custodia Terræ Sanctæ*, February 25, 2015.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

consistent messaging regarding local churches' desires to reach out to refugees of all religious affiliations, not just Christians. The local church works not only to implement HS policy, but also to inform and persuade locals of the policies of the higher church and the Pope. Additionally, by noting its efforts to work with Muslim refugees, the local church plays an essential role in enhancing the soft power of the global Catholic Church by making the Church's values appear to coincide with the values of the local, predominantly Muslim population. Therefore, the role of the local church in the Catholic Church's response to the Crisis cannot be understated. The Church would not be able to accomplish its goals without a number of committed clergymen and lay people who participate at the local level and are determined to see the Church's goals come to fruition.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Conclusion

In 1971, Pope Paul VI addressed members of the HS's diplomatic corps. In his speech, he focuses on the Catholic Church's ideal role in international affairs. He quotes from a church document published in the 1960s entitled "Gaudium et spes" (Joy and Hope) or alternately the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," saying,

Peace results from the harmony built into human society by its divine Founder, and actualised by men as they thirst for more perfect justice... Earthly peace, which arises from love of our fellow-men, and is a type and a result of the peace of Christ issuing from God the Father.<sup>79</sup>

Pope Paul VI asks, "Could the Pope be truly uninterested in such a task, one that emanates from the very heart of God? ... It is clear that the activity of the Church in the world is at the service of peace."<sup>80</sup> Pope Paul VI then addresses the members of the diplomatic corps directly by saying that they, as representatives of the HS, as well as local churches help to create external peace and human progress around the globe. Cardinale dubs this speech an "apologia," or formal defense, of church diplomacy. These ideas form the background of the Catholic Church's approach to modern international relations. Undoubtedly, the HS differs from other members of the UN, as their mission is to represent a religion, and their policies are guided by eschatological goals. However, as

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<sup>79</sup> Cardinale, *The Holy See and the International Order*, xix.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* xx.

Pope Paul VI expresses in his speech, secular diplomacy is essential in assisting the Catholic Church with achieving its goals, especially when the Church's goals often coincide with the goals of other nations.

The Church's decision to join the world of secular diplomacy was made with the support of the member states of the UN, as a majority of nations' support is necessary to reach non-member state observer status. Following the acceptance of the HS's mission to the UN, the Catholic Church gained a global platform unprecedented in Church history by its scale and reach. By virtue of the HS's mission representing a religion, not a country, the Catholic Church has gained a level of international influence not granted to other religions. The HS is given numerous opportunities to comment on resolutions and formal debates, a privilege not granted to other religious bodies. Its active participation in the realm of secular international politics, a participation that exceeds that of other religions, demands that the efforts of the HS in pursuing its goals be analyzed.

Further contributing to its influence is the web of HS agents that are located throughout the world. Byrnes writes about Pope Francis's involvement in negotiations between President Obama and the Castros to end the Cuban embargo. He mentions that two American Catholic bishops and one Cuban bishop worked together to help influence the end of the embargo and sway the leaders of their respective nations. Byrnes makes the point that although the three bishops were of two differing nationalities, they were co-workers with strong personal relationships and respect for one another by virtue of their years of interaction through the Catholic Church. HS officials including the Pope worked as mediators between the Cubans and Americans as well, often in clandestine meetings in

Rome.<sup>81</sup> Byrnes mentions this anecdote to make the point that the Catholic Church is a transnational organization with hundreds, if not thousands, of devoted “employees” who often share similar goals. When the HS wishes to mobilize its “employees” toward a certain goal (like strengthening Cuban-American relations or addressing the Syrian Refugee Crisis), it can issue a directive that is distributed through the hierarchy and demands complete obedience. This ability gives the HS and the Catholic Church considerable advantage to realize its goals.

One of the final tools at the HS’s disposal for influencing the globe is contained in the actions of the Pope himself. This thesis does not elaborate much on this topic, focusing instead on the Pope’s actions at the UN and his interactions with local churches. However, due to his global celebrity and international support from a billion Catholics, Pope Francis, like other popes before him, can spur change directly. For example, Pope Francis was the first pope to visit the United Arab Emirates during a recent trip to Dubai. While there, he publically celebrated mass for the first time in the country, and Emirati officials announced the construction of a cathedral that will honor St. Francis of Assisi, who was Pope Francis’s inspiration when he chose his papal title.<sup>82</sup> Pope Francis visited the country presumably in hopes of advocating for the freedom of Catholics to worship to the Arab Gulf. Through his celebrity, Pope Francis’s trip garnered the UAE a fair amount of good press. Once again, the Catholic Church uses its influence to advocate for its goals, such as enhancing freedom of religion in the UAE.

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<sup>81</sup> Byrnes, “Sovereignty, Supranationalism, and Soft Power,” 14-15.

<sup>82</sup> Nicole Winfield and Aya Batrawy, “Pope Caps Visit to Arabian Peninsula with Historic Mass,” The Associated Press, February 5, 2019.

As stated by David Ryall, the Catholic Church is the longest operating institution in the Western world.<sup>83</sup> The Church and its agents have been at the forefront of history for centuries. Discussions of international relations have often overlooked the role the Catholic Church has played in recent historical events. However, scholarship has looked at the ability of popes in recent years to affect the course of political events internationally, such as Pope John Paul II's role in assisting with the fall of communism in Poland. Analyzing the role of the Catholic Church in responding to the Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis is pertinent for two reasons. One, it allows for a look on how the Catholic Church responds to international political upheaval that spurs violence and other threats to human dignity in the modern day. Second, it provides more information on global policy and the international response to the Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis by studying one non-state actor in depth.

The Catholic Church and the HS have little hard power today. They control no traditional military forces that they can deploy at will, but they still work to see their goals implemented on the global scale. During an interview with the Middle East Coordinator of the Migrants and Refugees Section Pascale Debbané, she stated that the role of the Section is to direct parishes and bishops to follow the policies set by the Church. The Migrants and Refugees Section acknowledged that it had two avenues to pursue action available, as evidenced by both its publications identifying the two paths and by Ms. Debbané's own admission. While the HS directly manages the first avenue, the UN, the second avenue requires devolvement of power: response of the local church. The Migrants and Refugees Section, which is a department of the HS tasked primarily with developing Migrant and Refugee policy, sets guidelines for the local church. It

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<sup>83</sup> Ryall, "How Many Divisions?", 22.

consults with its undersecretaries and Pope Francis himself, and then creates policies and messaging that coincide with his views and the theological views of the Catholic Church. The HS directly advocates these views at the UN and puts suggestions for bishops, archbishops, and patriarchs across the world into formal guidelines. According to Ms. Debbané, she and her office have travelled to a number of influential bishops and patriarchs across the Middle East who are working to manage the Syrian Migrant and Refugee Crisis, and they have explained their guidelines and the ideal role of the local church.

When pivoting to Nye's explanation of soft power, the HS's policies and actions can be understood in the context of persuasion to get actors to adopt the goals of the Catholic Church when approaching the Crisis. Through the UN and the diplomatic track, the HS makes consistent statements that rely on tactics of soft power, such as using its influence as a moral authority and working to live up to pro-refugee values across the world. The same can be said about its efforts through the local church: numerous members of the clergy not only cite the Pope's own statements to appeal to a moral authority of the Church, they also publicize their own activities and make moral statements about the right response to the crisis, relevant to engaging the locals around them to hope as well. The local church is the global church's agent, diffused throughout the world to help bring about the global church's plans. Together, diplomacy at the UN and actions through the local church form the foundation of the Catholic Church's response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis. The Catholic Church behaves like a state in its use of both a UN delegation as well as local agents, who work in ways similar to

ambassadors and other consulate employees by trying to implement their state's goals abroad.

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