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NUN WHO CALLS FOR RECONCILIATION IN SYRIA STARTS NORTH AMERICA TOUR

Mother Agnes-Mariam is a Melkite Catholic nun who ordinarily lives in a monastery in Qara, Syria. Just days ago she successfully negotiated with rebel and government forces to arrange a ceasefire which allowed thousands of civilians to depart the besieged city of Moadamiya. (See links at bottom for NY Times and BBC reports of the event.)

The nun is now coming to North America to tell what she has seen and experienced over the past two years, to question foreign support of violent rebels and to push for reconciliation and peace. The tour of Mother Agnes is being publicly opposed by the Syrian American Council which supports increased US intervention in Syria.

The tour began on Nov 1 in Tucson Arizona, where Mother Agnes received a standing ovation after addressing the Tear Down the Walls Conference, despite disruption caused by Syrian American Council members. The tour continues with events in the San Francisco Bay Area Nov 3 - 8

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Mairead Maguire says,

"A voice of truth and pro-peace, calling for an end to all violence and for Peace and Reconciliation, is that of Mother Agnes Mariam..... We can only make good decisions when we have the truth and Mother Agnes Mariam brings the truth from the heart of Syria."

Historian Jeremy Salt, author of the groundbreaking book "The Unmaking of the Middle East" (UC Press, 2009) has written,

"Escaping threats of assassination in Syria by armed gangs, Mother Agnes has a story to tell that people should not miss the opportunity to hear"

Ann Wright, US Army Col (ret) and former official in the US State Dept

"It is important to listen to the voices of people who have lived in Syria for decades. Mother Agnes is one of these people. She has extraordinary contacts with the government and in the opposition groups. We need to hear what she has to say About the tragic situation and in Syria"

NY Times and BBC references:

<http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/10/29/syrians-flee>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-24730536#TWEET938773>