



Lebanon, 20 July 2013

### Presentation of miraculous medals of Syria

Dear friends in the Lord

I I can't find the words to describe the difficulties and effort it took to see these medals become a reality.

These medals not only have a symbolic value but they also have a moral value as they represent the pain and suffering of the Syrian people who have been subjected to hate, terror and death.

When we read Projects 152 (May 2012) we wished to be involved and we had a great desire to share in the joy of the jubilee. The National Team decided to issue a medal (proposed by Tommy of CLC Aleppo) as a sign of our deep commitment and intention to celebrate the Ignatian lay communities' 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

We joyfully received the approval of Sophia, and Christ's, and we launched our project in Aleppo. We carefully planned the various stages and examined the draft contracts with the manufacturers and the designer, formalized the contracts, chose which metal to use. And we also agreed the dates and manner of delivery.

FEBRUARY: The terrible situation in Aleppo TOOK A TURN FOR THE WORSE. The troubles caused power cuts, bombings and terrifying explosions. This situation paralysed us, making our task very difficult, if not impossible.

- Difficulties for the manufacturer
- Absence of means of communication
- Reduction in working hours due to power cuts
- Absolute refusal by the manufacturer to continue the work

In the face of these difficulties our only option was to arm ourselves with prayer.

We had reached an impasse. With the co-operation of some refugees in the Lebanese mountains who had fled Aleppo for reasons of safety, we decided to restart production, fully conscious of the difference in quality when compared to the previous process.

Thank God the work progressed, however the power cuts meant that even though our new associate worked day and night the completion date was still put back 40 days.

During the stage of finishing and polishing of the medals, two violent explosions occurred close to where they were being kept. Also it was announced in the media that the combatants had occupied the neighbourhood which was supposed to be one of the safer areas.

Because of the absence of all communications I spent two anxious sleepless nights and I could not escape my sadness. I felt guilty and responsible and sought refuge in prayer.

I implored the Lord to protect what we had already done. The Lebanese National Team were really supportive and prayed with us. Finally on the third day the medals were finished - resurrection!



**CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITY  
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It was only when I received the samples that I realised that there was a mistake in the writing and marks on the medals.

I asked Sophia what we should do to rectify these mistakes.

The decision was made to leave the medals as they were especially in light of the worsening situation in Aleppo's Christian quarters.

Our new challenge was how to deliver the medals to Lebanon, knowing it had to be done by air. Because of bombing the airport had been closed. Roads between Aleppo and Homs were occupied by the terrorists and the transport companies wouldn't risk it.

Nabil a member of our Aleppo Team, who is a refugee in Beirut, proposed we first take them to Damascus and from there to Beirut. CLC Aleppo took charge of getting the medals to Damascus.

On the road to Beirut we were stopped by the terrorists but after some discussion they let us through as we had been assured we would be by Fr Zygmunt.

I carry Syria and the medals in my daily prayer and often during the Eucharist I ask for a happy resolution.

Today the medals dedicated to Our Lady of the Mount are safe and sound and are waiting for us to celebrate together.

I thank you for your support and your prayer

Antoine Taoutel

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