Regarding the Apostolic Nuncio, Mgr. Diego Causero

He arrived in Damascus on 31/3/1999.

I visited him on 21/9/1999. Responding to his wish, I spoke to him about Soufanieh. He listened very attentively. This lasted nearly 30 minutes, at the end of which I offered him my two books in French, which he gladly accepted.

Around mid-March 2003, he invited me to the Nunciature and asked me for a short note on Soufanieh.

The note is dated 28/3/2003 and comprises 3 pages. I brought it to him myself.

During the Anniversary Mass, celebrated on Wednesday, 26/11/2003, at the Church of the Franciscan Fathers in Damascus (Bab-Touma), he surprised us by attending and sitting near the altar. At the end of this Mass, Myrna was scheduled, for the first time in Damascus, to present her testimony. The Nuncio asked me to translate Myrna's speech for him. To conclude, she began singing a hymn during which oil flowed from both of Myrna's hands. I asked her to show her hands to the Nuncio. She complied with humility. It was then that the Nuncio asked me to make a complete French translation of Myrna's "speech" for him.

Shortly afterward, I brought him the translation. He then expressed to me his astonishment at Myrna's simplicity and humility. A few days later, I received an undated, handwritten card from the Nuncio in which he told me verbatim:

> *"Father, I have duly received your letter – an account of the events linked to Soufanieh – and I wish to thank you warmly for it.*
> *Fraternally in Christ.*
> *[Signature]"*

I find it necessary to reproduce here the complete translation, made by myself, of Myrna's speech:

Testimony of Myrna during the Mass celebrated on the 21st Anniversary of Our Lady of Soufanieh, Wednesday 26.11.2003, at St. Paul's Church in Bab-Touma, Damascus:

> "God was looking for an opening through which to breathe His Holy Spirit, and He awaited the 'yes' to create a new future. Mary then said her 'yes.' God opened the door wide, and behold, a ray of light awakened the shadow from its deep sleep...
>
> With these words, I express my anticipation and my feelings for the arrival of the month of November, and especially for the dates of November 26–27, which hold so much meaning

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for me and for the entire Soufanieh family around the world. These days of November 26–27 are a new 'yes,' a door wide open for the Virgin and the Lord Jesus… The light was the continuity of the oil, and more important than the continuity of the oil is the continuity of prayer…

Apparitions… stigmata…

Then came the voice:
"You are my Church, and your heart belongs to me…"

It was life: "I am with you…"

But one day this light—which is the oil, the apparitions, the stigmata—will be extinguished. This light will be extinguished in Soufanieh, and the voice will no longer be heard. Yet the Word will remain, the word that is life. That is why what is more important than the apparitions, the stigmata, the ecstasies, or the oil, are the messages.

Therefore, I invite you today to meditate in a moment of prayer with Jesus—to meditate, to go deeper, and to see what Our Lord asks of us today. Twenty-one years, and Our Lord is still waiting and will always wait for us. Do not think that He asks of us more than we can give Him, and He does not want us to give Him more than we can bear… All that He asks of us: "Do not say, 'What am I doing?' for it is my work. You must fast and pray…"

We can offer nothing except our prayer. Yet we must have faith and trust in our prayer, believing that it can accomplish something.

I do not know why Our Lord chose me. I do not know why He chose Soufanieh. I do not know why He chose Damascus.

In the beginning, I understood nothing. Up to now, I understand nothing, and I wish to understand nothing. For the day I understand something, I will begin to rely on myself.

From the very first drop of oil, I said: "Lord, take my will, so that Your will may work within mine."

I compare myself to a postman. Our Lord has entrusted me with a message. In order to deliver it to you faithfully, I need your prayers more than you need them. Do not think that this concerns Myrna alone. The Lord could have chosen any one of you. We could have asked the same question: "Why?" In the end, we cannot understand the plan that the Lord has drawn up…

It all began with a drop of oil… That drop grew and stained the whole world to express the desire of God, of Jesus, and of the Virgin, which is the Unity of the Church…

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All of us think that the Unity of the Church means the suppression of my community. There are many whom I have asked: 'What are you?' And they answer me: 'I am Christian'... because they are influenced by the message of Soufanieh... Do not be ashamed to say which Community you belong to, for the Community is a family. Every person respects their Community, commits to their Community... For the Community is a family... Yet I must not be proud of my Community. I draw my pride from Christ... I am Catholic, I am Orthodox, I am Maronite, I am Syriac, I am Latin... This is an aid to evangelization... I must not be ashamed of it. The Lord has simply called us to love one another, to avoid all division. For the faith is one, the dogma is one, the baptism is one. Where, then, does the problem lie?

The problem lies in Charity... As much as charity diminishes, so much does division grow... Today the Lord calls us to love one another as He has loved us...

All of us think that we love, but unfortunately we love as we want to love... We do not love as God has loved.

Soufanieh is a call to Unity. Unity of each person with God, unity of each person with their brother, unity of the family...

That is why Our Lord chose a family...

In the beginning, many were surprised that Myrna was married. Many intervened to tell me that I should not stay with my husband, that I should withdraw into a convent... Because people could not imagine that the Virgin could choose a young married woman. People think that the Virgin chooses a young person who will consecrate themselves to religious life.

But the Lord overturned the rules, and He wants a family... He chose Myrna, and He chose Nicolas... The most beautiful words the Virgin said to me after four and a half years of marriage:
"I will give you a gift for your labors..."

This gift was Myriam, and then John Emmanuel.

Our Lord chose a family to say that the Church is a family, and that the family must be a domestic church, and that the unity of the Church must take its starting point from the home:
"...You will teach the generations the word of Unity, Love, and Faith..." "...Found a Church..." "...I did not say build a church..." "...I ask you for Unity..." "...How beautiful is the family whose motto is: Unity, Love, and Faith..."

If this family is built on Love, built on Peace, built on Unity, it becomes a witness to the One Church of Jesus, and we will thus have greatly hastened the Unity of the Church.

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I cannot proclaim Unity if I do not live it in my family. I cannot speak of Love if my family lacks love. How can I speak of something I do not know?

Today, unfortunately, we live in a world that loves Jesus crucified much more than Jesus risen. Perhaps because the difficulties of this life lead people to love Jesus crucified more than Jesus risen.

Yet we forget that after this cross comes the resurrection; we forget that after this suffering comes joy. Now, the sign of our entire faith rests upon the resurrection.

If you are looking for signs... the oil is not a sign, the apparitions are not a sign, the ecstasies are not a sign. The greatest sign is the resurrection... Why do we not live a single Resurrection?

If you are looking for a miracle, the oil is not a miracle. The miracle is the transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus... We can experience this miracle every day, for God is present with us through the Eucharist...

The most beautiful words the Virgin said are these:
"...Remember me in your joy..."

Unfortunately, we think of Our Lord only when we need Him. Our Lord calls us and He suffers, because He loves us and loves to share in our joy, just as we share in His suffering... Why is it that when we suffer, we call upon Him?... Why is it that when we are in joy, we do not need Him?... Why is it that when we fall ill, we say it comes from God?... And why is it that when we are well, we do not say it comes from God?

"...Remember me in your joy!..."
Just as you call upon me when you suffer, call upon me so that I may be with you in your joys, for I am a God of Joy, I am a God of Love, I am a God of Peace, and I love for my children to be in joy.

How wonderful it is when we ask, and Our Lord gives to us!... How we rejoice when we ask, and Our Lord gives to us!... Yet how deep is the joy when Our Lord gives to us without our asking?... It is only when we are close to God that we will know it is God who is giving to us and that it is a grace from Him. But when we are cut off from God, we will not know that Our Lord is giving to us without our asking Him for anything...

He gave us existence without our asking. He granted me the grace of His Presence in Soufanieh without my asking. He granted me to see His Light without my asking Him. He granted me to hear His Voice without my asking. He granted me to see His Mother without my asking.

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God exists and He gives to us without our asking Him. Yet He wants—He truly wants—us to ask Him, and He will give to us, even if He delays in doing so…

Many have grown weary of prayer because it seems to them that nothing is happening regarding Unity… that the Church is doing nothing… that the priests are doing nothing…

It is Our Lord who wishes to act through our prayer… Priests and laity, we are all called to build the One Body of Jesus. Priests and laity, He will give to us at the time He deems right. As for us, we must pray without growing weary and without losing our trust in God, for it is He who said:
"…Do not be discouraged if you fail…" "…Do not be afraid if you fail…"

This means that Unity will come, but at the moment willed by Our Lord. We must pray without becoming discouraged… Our Lord takes His time… Perhaps because our prayer is insufficient. Perhaps because we do not appreciate the value of what is granted to us quickly… Yet He will give to us…

My story is small. It has become a cause; it is called the Cause of Unity. And my cause is your cause. And God's cause is placed today in the hands of God, who is faithful.

We need only pray so that Our Lord may work through us.

I leave you with this final word:
The greatest danger consists in building our faith upon a phenomenon, whether it be Soufanieh or other phenomena that occur.

Our Lord intervenes when He observes lukewarmness in faith, a lack of trust, and weakness in Love.

Yet the Gospel in our hands is the greatest proof, and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the greatest sign, and the bread and wine transformed into the body and blood of Jesus are the greatest miracle.

Consequently, we have no need of phenomena. Nevertheless, Our Lord sometimes gives us a few signs to support our faith, not to serve as the foundation of our faith.

I cannot believe that there exists a single person devoid of all faith… I cannot believe it. Every person, from the day they were baptized, has a seed of faith… yet this seed needs to burst forth… Provided that this seed of faith does not burst forth in a moment of weakness, or illness, or death, or despair…

May it burst forth in a moment of joy—it is then that we will have felt the existence of God all the more.

All of us are preparing at this moment for Christmas. Christmas holds many meanings.

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Where do we stand in relation to Jesus, merciful and loving? Where do we stand in relation to Jesus, who was born in a cave? Where do we stand in relation to Jesus, who weeps nailed to the Cross? Where do we stand in relation to Jesus the Teacher, who teaches without Pharisaism? Where do we stand in relation to Jesus, who carries the lost lamb? Where do we stand in relation to You, Lamb of God?

Before thinking about how we want to decorate our homes, the nativity scene, and the tree, let us reflect on how to adorn our hearts to prepare for the coming of Christmas—which is the birth of Hope in our hearts, of reconciliation among our families, and of Peace for our Land.

Christmas is the story of Jesus, the Son of Man.

Yet stronger than Christmas is Baptism, which is the story of Jesus, Son of God.

Do we pray enough to Him with whose seal we, the baptized, have been marked?

Pray very much for me, that Our Lord may grant me the grace of perseverance, the grace of humility.

Pray for my family.

Pray for this house that Our Lord has chosen so that it may remain open to prayer freely, to all who come, without asking anyone who they are, what their community is, or what their religion is.

In turn, I carry your intentions and your prayers before the Virgin Mary.

I thank you.

I thank you for allowing me, after 21 years, to speak to you.

Thank you."

Mgr. Diego CAUSERO left Damascus on 10/01/2004.

— Father Elias Zahlaoui

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