



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,
Dear brothers and sisters of different faiths,

this month 34 years ago St. John Paul II convoked the great prayer of religions for peace in Assisi. No longer indifferent to each other, much less against each other, but all together to raise our voices to the one God entrusting to Him our desire for peace. Today that thirst for peace has become even more urgent because armed conflicts continue to generate destruction and death throughout the world; forms of injustice persist first hand towards the most defenseless; terrorism continues to strike; huge sums of money are invested to produce and acquire new arms of death and violence manifests itself in many forms. At the same time, however, awareness has also grown that peace is a precious gift that flows from the heart of God and we must welcome it, care for it and spread it. The gestures of friendship and encounter that generate a new world multiply, most of the time without any fuss. These are not just signatures on agreements, appeals, declarations and good intentions, but rather are gestures and signs that develop fraternity, encouraging solidarity and friendship. This was also manifested by the recent meeting organized in Rome by the Sant'Egidio Community, precisely in the footsteps of the "Spirit of Assisi". We believe that this too is the fruit of prayer.

Therefore, this month I want to invite you to pray for peace by joining the initiatives that we will promote from Assisi and which will be disseminated via internet. Let us not neglect to turn our thoughts to the victims of violence in every part of the world and to those who have lost their lives due to the ongoing pandemic. Let us also pray for the conversion of the hearts of those who support arms and consciously choose violence. We will do so having in our hearts the words of the encyclical "Fratelli tutti" that Pope Francis chose to sign right here in Assisi, reminding us that "the commandment of peace is inscribed in the depths of the religious traditions" (284). Let us make his prayer our own: "May the Lord help us to walk together on the path of fraternity, to be credible witnesses of the living God".

May the Lord give you peace

Domenico Sorrentino, Bishop

Assisi, October 2020