



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

The new year began with the alarming figures of the pandemic, which is still putting a strain on all parts of the world. However, it has also brought us concrete signs of hope, with medical treatments that should help us cope with it, at least regarding the health aspect. Let us ask the Lord to help us overcome this terrible crisis, in a universal solidarity that leaves no one behind. Against this already sad background, we have seen aggression and violence explode in various countries, which distress and worry us, and encourage us to raise our prayer to the Lord. We were all shocked by the images of the assault on the United States Congress Building, a sign of the social and political tension that the United States is experiencing and which is likely to trigger further unrest and violent protests. We know well how much the state of that democracy influences the fate of many other nations. So, we want to place the American people and their governmental leaders in the hands of God so that they can walk the path of justice and peace. At the same time, since the beginning of the year, some African countries have been experiencing tensions due to internal social situations, terrorist attacks, and political elections with bitter confrontation. Let us think particularly of the Central African Republic, Nigeria, Uganda, and Niger and ask God to accompany, in his mercy, the unstable and difficult path of those peoples towards a just peace, converting the hearts of the violent and guiding the rulers to work for the good of their people. As every month, we will meet with our own community and pray according to own religious traditions, but we will be spiritually united, as we have learned to do since October 27, 1986, the first meeting of the "spirit of Assisi". May God touch our hearts and open them to brotherhood and boundless love.

May the Lord give you peace

+ Domenico Sorrentino, Bishop

Assisi, January 2021