



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

There are many situations around the world that ask for and deserve to be brought to the attention of our consciences. These are defenceless populations that are subjected to violence of all kinds on a daily basis. This month we want to respond to the cry coming from **Mozambique** and that becomes a plea and prayer. From the direct testimonies that have come to us from the innermost villages and above all from the districts of the North-Eastern province, different factions (jihadist groups, the army, private military companies) are protagonists of crimes and atrocious violence. In recent days, testimonies have been obtained about the beheading of helpless children. This situation, which began around 2017, has resulted in a large number of victims, but also a multitude of internally displaced people wandering about in search of some form of assistance. To this unstable and insecure political situation were added the very serious damage caused by the cyclone Kenneth which struck the country in 2019 and by the floods at the beginning of last year. For this reason our prayer, which is addressed to the merciful God, also asks for the reawakening of international solidarity and of the political community so that effective action can take place in support of the helpless.

In this way we want to follow the intuition of St. John Paul II, which took place in the prayerful meeting for peace in the presence of many representatives of different religions in 1986 here in Assisi, thus inaugurating the "spirit of Assisi". May the one God hear the voice, which, in so many different languages and from so many places in the world, invokes the gift of peace and the conversion of hearts.

May the Lord give you peace

Assisi, March 2021

+ Domenico Sorrentino, Bishop