



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Dear brothers and sisters of many different faiths,

In the whirlwind of violence throughout the planet, we cannot simply stand idly by. Instead, we feel called to unite the spiritual energies of all faiths. And we feel this all the more strongly because, once again, violence has struck a faith community. This happened in **Nigeria** earlier this month (June 5) when men opened fire on worshippers at St. Francis Xavier Church in the town of Owo, the State of Ondo, while they were celebrating the Feast of Pentecost. Local authorities have not been able to report the exact number of victims (perhaps 50), and so far, the investigations have not been able to disclose the profile and motive of the attackers. Our task is to raise our eyes, minds and souls to God with common feelings of peace.

We are certain that the most effective outcome of all this is to recognize that God, invoked in such different ways and in such diverse languages, always chooses to be on the side of peace and sees reality through the eyes of the victims. Let us beseech Him for the gift of consolation for the families of those who have been killed. Let us also beg Him to stir the murderers to repentance and ensure that no thirst for vengeance is kindled against them.

On June 27, the day of our union through prayer, may grace descend to every corner of the earth and may there be hearts open to accepting the gift of peace.

**May the Lord give you peace**

Assisi, June 2022

+ Domenico Sorrentino, Bishop