



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Dear brothers and sisters of many different faiths,

This July marks the 70th anniversary of the armistice signed to end the Korean War. The agreement that ended the armed conflict was signed in the village of Panmunjom on July 27, 1953. Unfortunately, that conflict left a wound as large as a border, the 38th parallel, which still divides the two Koreas, two economic, political and social models. It is a broken or unfulfilled fraternity which, no less than in other situations of tensions and wars, also looms threateningly against the rest of the world, arousing fears of the disastrous outcomes of military escalations even to the extent of the use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, in our regular monthly prayer meeting we want to resonate with the Korean Catholic community itself: "The conflict between the North and the South is not new because the war never really ended, but these days we are again facing a serious crisis. The prevailing view is that 'peace' can only be maintained by force. North Korea's missile tests continue, and in response, military exercises involving South Korea and the United States have been massive. Dialogue to find a peaceful solution has long ceased, and the vicious cycle of armed demonstrations continues. Moreover, communications between the North and the South have been severed, and the possibility of an incident turning into an unintentional armed conflict is of great concern". Therefore, on July 27, we ask each and every one to present their concern about this situation to God, so that prayer will untie the knot of hostility and lead to dialogue and peace.

**May the Lord give you peace**

Assisi, July 2023

+ Domenico Sorrentino, Bishop