



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Dear brothers and sisters of many different faiths,

The usual invitation to pray for peace takes on special significance this month as October 27 marks the **fortieth anniversary** of the historic meeting in Assisi that brought together men and women from many religious traditions. We recognize that day as a gift from God: a call to place the prayer and daily commitment of our communities at the service of peace. On this anniversary, many leaders and members of various faiths will once again gather in Assisi.

That gift entrusts us with a responsibility. To abandon the solemn promise we made back then would mean turning our backs on a call that rings out even more urgently today. With Franciscan humility, I ask each and every one of you to listen to and respond to humanity, which is crying out for peace.

Like Francis of Assisi, we are called to strip ourselves of all desire for power, of every privilege that separates us from others, and of any acceptance of the use of force. We are called to embrace non-violence, woven from dialogue and understanding amongst peoples, from listening to the cry of the poor, and from tending to the wounds opened by too many wars. Our faith asks us to draw near to those wounds, to recognize every victim as a sister or brother, and to take on the hard work of reconciliation.

The fate of nations does not lie entirely in the hands of those who govern them and of the powerful of this world. We, too, can play our part. We have a specific responsibility: to strip violence completely of



any 'sacred' justification, to prevent God's name from being misused to bless weapons, and not to fuel hatred or legitimize oppression.

So, let us pray. Let us continue the prayer that began forty years ago, allowing it to become part of our lives and to make it a commitment. Let us educate our communities about peace; let us help the people amongst whom we live not to harbor feelings of revenge; let us safeguard the possibility of reconciliation even where pain seems to have erased it. Prayer brings us closer to those who suffer and calls on us to become instruments of the peace we invoke.

At this historic time, when the clamor of arms and the false justifications for war seem to be drowning out the voices of peace, I invite you to join me in prayer on October 27, each according to your own religious tradition. Let us turn to God – invoked by different names and words – to ask, with renewed faith, for the gift of peace and the strength to work for it.

May the journey that began in Assisi continue through us. May each of our communities become a place where we learn to come together, to uphold the dignity of every person and to care for one another.

May the Lord give you peace

Assisi, October 2026

+ Felice Accrocca, Bishop