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

The days we spent celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Spirit of Assisi entrust us with a responsibility that goes beyond the celebration itself. Pope Leo XIV reminded us: «There is no such thing as a holy war: only peace is holy!»

In this spirit, I invite you to offer your prayers on November 27 for the people of **South Kivu**, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who are suffering from a forgotten war that continues to claim lives and force entire families to flee their homes, fields, and loved ones.

The Fides News Agency reports that the fighting on November 5 and 6 in Katogota triggered a new wave of people fleeing to nearby villages and Uvira. Many displaced persons and refugees, who have already been away from their homes for over a year, are living in dire poverty and are unable to return. Between December and January of last year, Human Rights Watch documented killings of civilians, sexual violence, and abductions in Uvira during the occupation by the M23 and Rwandan forces. Amnesty International has reported torture, arbitrary detentions, and forced labor in the mining areas investigated, including Lomera in South Kivu.

Behind these documented stories are people, children, and families. Our silence risks adding more neglect to the violence.

Let us pray for the victims, for those who have survived torture and abuse, for those searching for a missing person, and for all those who are providing aid and care. Let us petition for protection for civilians, a welcoming home for those fleeing, justice, and sincere negotiations.

Let us join together, each in our own place and according to our own religious tradition. Let us accompany our prayers with acts of solidarity and a commitment to raising awareness of this suffering. The journey of Assisi continues when no one is forgotten.

May the Lord give you peace

Assisi, November 2026

+ Felice Accrocca, Bishop

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