

**Explicit Use of The Term “Nonviolence”
In Speeches or Other Papal-Related Texts
By Pope Francis or Other Vatican Officials**

2013-2022

The purpose of this file is to document the times Pope Francis has addressed or made mention of the term “nonviolence.” This collection of texts and citations may offer us an understanding of the pope’s perspective on nonviolence and its relationship to the Gospel, peace, justice, and the challenges of our times.

To this end, this document provides:

- A list of key quotations
- A list of news articles reporting on Pope Francis with references to nonviolence
- Full documents where nonviolence is addressed by the pope or the Vatican

Two more notes.

First, Pope Francis has made virtually countless references to peace since 2013, including over 100 times in reference to the war in Ukraine. The Vatican News articles containing these quotations are not in this collection, since they do not mention “nonviolence” explicitly. Nevertheless, the spirit or dynamic of nonviolence is found throughout these texts, especially when Pope Francis has condemned “just war” and lamented the horrors of this war. A folder containing virtually all of the articles since the beginning of Russia’s attack on Ukraine is available on request.

Second, this spirit and dynamic of nonviolence is found in many other documents of Pope Francis, including the encyclicals *Laudato Si’* and *Fratelli Tutti*. These are not reproduced here.

This collection seeks to be a comprehensive gathering of papal and Vatican statements referencing nonviolence during Pope Francis’ papacy. If you know of quotations or documents that are missing, please send them to me and I will add them.

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December 18, 2022

A LIST OF KEY QUOTATIONS

“The proliferation of hotbeds of violence produces the most serious negative social consequences. The Holy Father sums up this situation in the expression: “A Third World War in Pieces.” Peace, by contrast, promotes social positive consequences and it allows the achievement of real progress. Therefore, we should act within what is possible, and negotiate ways of peace even where they seem tortuous and impractical. Thus, **non-violence** can acquire a more comprehensive and new meaning. It will not only consist of desire, of moral rejection of violence, barriers, destructive impulses, but also of a realistic political method that gives rise to hope.”

-- *The announcement of the 2017 WDP message theme (August 2016)*

The path of **nonviolence** in politics and society "is the path to pursue now and in the future," Pope Francis said. "This is the way of peace," he added. And "not a peace proclaimed by words but in fact denied by pursuing strategies of domination, backed up by scandalous outlays for arms, while so many people lack the very necessities of life." "...The choice of **nonviolence** as a style of life is increasingly demanded in the exercise of responsibility at every level, from family education, to social and civil commitment, to political activity and international relations."... "In every situation, this means rejecting violence as a method for resolving conflicts and dealing with them instead through dialogue and negotiation."... "This is not the same as weakness or passivity; rather it presupposes firmness, courage and the ability to face issues and conflicts with intellectual honesty, truly seeking the common good over and above all partisan interest, be it ideological, economic or political," Pope Francis said. Despite so many wars and "genocides of unheard-of proportions" the past century, he said, there have still been "outstanding examples of how **nonviolence**, embraced with conviction and practiced consistently, can yield significant results, also on the social and political plane."

-- *Pope Francis: Nonviolence is not weakness* ([Catholic News Service](#), December 15, 2016)

“Violence is not the cure for our broken world ... May charity and **nonviolence** govern how we treat each other as individuals, within society and in international life ... especially in situations of conflict, let us respect this, our ‘deepest dignity,’ and make **active nonviolence** our way of life. ... To be true followers of Jesus today also includes embracing His teaching about **nonviolence**. ... I pledge the assistance of the Church in every effort to build peace through **active and creative nonviolence**.”

—*Pope Francis, 2017 World Day of Peace Message*

“Faced with too much violence spreading throughout the world, we are called to a **greater nonviolence**, which does not mean passivity, but active promotion of the good. Indeed, if it is necessary to pull out the weeds of evil, it is even more vital to sow the seeds of goodness: to cultivate justice, to foster accord, to sustain integration, without growing weary; only in this way may we gather the fruits of peace.”

-- *Pope Francis at an Audience with the Delegation of the "Anti-Defamation League", 09.02.2017.*

“...the consistent practice of **nonviolence** has broken barriers, bound wounds, healed nations”

—*Pope Francis, letter to Cardinal Blase Cupich (2017)*

“I think of **nonviolence** as a perspective and way of understanding the world, to which theology must look as one of its constitutive elements. The writings and practices of Martin Luther King and Lanza del Vasto and other peacemakers help us here.”

-- *Pope Francis, “Theology of Veritatis Gaudium in the Mediterranean Context,” delivered at Pontifical Theological Faculty of Southern Italy (Naples, June 20-21, 2019), 06.21.2019*

“‘Put your sword back into its sheath.’ The words of Jesus resound clearly today ...In the Gospel of Luke’s version of the story, Jesus tells his disciples, ‘Stop, no more of this!’ Jesus’ sorrowful and strong, ‘No more,’ goes beyond the centuries and reaches us. It is a commandment we cannot avoid. ‘No more’ swords, weapons, violence, war.”

—Pope Francis, *Peace on Earth: Fraternity is Possible* (2021)

“Violence does not build, it destroys. ...We need the prophecy of **nonviolence**... We need the gentleness of **nonviolence**... Through the path of nonviolence, you reach sincerity and reject all hypocrisy.”

—Pope Francis, *Synodal Exchange with University Students* (2022)

Pope Francis anticipates the release of his new book “I Ask You in the Name of God. Ten Prayers for a Future of Hope,” and launches an impassioned plea for nations to set aside war and the threat of nuclear destruction. “...**there is no occasion in which a war can be considered just**. There is never a place for the barbarism of war, especially not when contention acquires one of its most unjust faces: that of so-called ‘preventive wars.’” The choice to follow the path of **non-violence** and continued existence, concluded Pope Francis, lies with us. -- Pope Francis, “[War must end or world risks nuclear catastrophe.](#)” October 16, 2022.

[Cardinal Pietro Parolin] called for "a new major European conference dedicated to peace," which should include the participation of experts and organizations dedicated to **nonviolence** and dialogue.

[“Disarmament is the only way to build peaceful future, cardinal says.”](#) -- December 13, 2022.

A LIST OF NEWS ARTICLES REPORTING ON POPE FRANCIS WITH REFERENCES TO NONVIOLENCE

Pope Francis: Nonviolence is not weakness (Carol Glatz, Carol Glatz - Catholic News Service, December 15, 2016)

<https://charterforcompassion.org/practicing-peace/pope-francis-nonviolence-is-not-weakness>

Francis' trip to Fatima to be taken as pilgrimage for peace (Joshua McElwee, National Catholic Reporter, May 9, 2017)

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/francis-trip-fatima-be-taken-pilgrimage-peace>

Pope Francis: 'The world is at war,' but good still remains (Catholic News Agency, May 6, 2017)

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-francis-the-world-is-at-war-but-good-still-remains-16602/>

Pope Francis preaches unity, tolerance and non-violence at Cairo mass (UPI, April 29, 2017)

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2017/04/29/Pope-Francis-preaches-unity-tolerance-and-non-violence-at-Cairo-mass/8791493476765/

Christians in Middle East call Pope Francis's visit to Egypt a blessing (Crux, May 2,

2017): <https://cruxnow.com/pope-francis-in-egypt/2017/05/02/christians-middle-east-call-pope-franciss-visit-egypt-blessing/>

Francis' Egyptian Endeavor: Mission Promotes Peace and Interreligious Dialogue (National Catholic Register, May 5, 2017):

<http://www.ncregister.com/dailynews/francis-egyptian-endeavor-mission-promotes-peace-and-interreligious-dialogue>

Francis 'rewriting Italian church history' with visit to priests' tombs in June (Joshua McElwee, National Catholic Reporter, April 26,

2017) <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/francis-rewriting-italian-church-history-visit-priests-tombs-june>

Mary G. McGlone, "Emulate Christ" (National Catholic Reporter, May 6, 2017)

<https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/spiritual-reflections/emulate-christ>

Chicago Experts Weigh in On Pope's Call to Dispose of Nuclear Weapons (Medill News Service, April 17, 2017):

<http://news.medill.northwestern.edu/chicago/chicago-experts-weigh-in-on-popes-call-to-dispose-of-nuclear-weapons/>

Leeds: Bishop Kevin Dowling to speak on "third world war in installments" (Independent Catholic News, April 12, 2017)

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/32325>

Leaders of microstate San Marino back Francis' message on nonviolence ((Joshua McElwee, National Catholic Reporter, January 3,

2017) <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/leaders-microstate-san-marino-back-francis-message-nonviolence>

Chicago Cardinal Cupich unveils church-led anti-violence initiative (NCR, April 4, 2017) <https://www.ncronline.org/news/parish/chicago-cardinal-cupich-unveils-church-led-anti-violence-initiative>

Vatican's message to Jains on the occasion of Mahavir Jayanti (Vatican Radio, March 29, 2017) http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2017/03/29/vaticans_message_to_jains_on_mahavir_jayanti/1302069

Vatican's message to Buddhists on Vesakh (Vatican Radio, April 22, 2017) http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2017/04/22/vaticans_message_to_buddhists_on_vesakh/1307347

Why it may take “a little violence” to fix Vatican communications (Crux, May 5, 2017): <https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2017/05/05/may-take-little-violence-fix-vatican-communications/>

Experts Explore, Promote and Defend Pope Francis' Peace Message
<https://holyseemission.org/contents/events/58c0435e725fa.php> (Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, 2017)

Reporter: ...there was talk about an encyclical on **non-violence**. Do you still plan such an encyclical on **non-violence**? ...Thank you, Holy Father. Pope: "Yes, the plan exists, but the next Pope will do it... There are other projects on the back burner. One of them is on peace. It's maturing. I feel I will do it when the time comes. ...I don't feel ready yet to write an encyclical on **non-violence**, I have to pray a lot and find the way.

– Pope Francis on [*flight*](#) back from Japan, November 26, 2019.

Pope Francis: Please Be Pacifists
<https://www.heraldmalaysia.com/news/pope-francis-please-be-pacifists/68997/9>

**FULL DOCUMENTS WHERE NONVIOLENCE IS ADDRESSED
BY THE POPE OR THE VATICAN**

2013

TELEGRAM OF CONDOLENCE FROM THE HOLY FATHER FOR THE DEATH OF NELSON MANDELA, 06.12.2013

TO HIS EXCELLENCY MR JACOB ZUMA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
PRETORIA

IT WAS WITH SADNESS THAT I LEARNED OF THE DEATH OF FORMER PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA, AND I SEND PRAYERFUL CONDOLENCES TO ALL THE MANDELA FAMILY, TO THE MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND TO ALL THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA. IN COMMENDING THE SOUL OF THE DECEASED TO THE INFINITE MERCY OF ALMIGHTY GOD, I ASK THE LORD TO CONSOLE AND STRENGTHEN ALL WHO MOURN HIS LOSS. PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE STEADFAST COMMITMENT SHOWN BY NELSON MANDELA IN PROMOTING THE HUMAN DIGNITY OF ALL THE NATION'S CITIZENS AND IN FORGING A NEW SOUTH AFRICA BUILT ON THE FIRM FOUNDATIONS OF **NON-VIOLENCE**, RECONCILIATION AND TRUTH, I PRAY THAT THE LATE PRESIDENT'S EXAMPLE WILL INSPIRE GENERATIONS OF SOUTH AFRICANS TO PUT JUSTICE AND THE COMMON GOOD AT THE FOREFRONT OF THEIR POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS. WITH THESE SENTIMENTS, I INVOKE UPON ALL THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA DIVINE GIFTS OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY.

FRANCISCUS PP.

[01830-02.01] [Original text: English]

2014

**Message of the Holy Father to the participants in the XIV World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates
(Rome, 12-14 December 2014), 12.12.2014**

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2014/12/12/0950/02056.html>

His Eminence Cardinal Peter Turkson

President

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace

His Holiness Pope Francis was pleased to be informed that the XIV World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates will take place in Rome from 12 to 14 December 2014, and he sends cordial greetings to all gathered for this occasion. "In the heart of every man and woman is the desire for a full life, including that irrepressible longing for fraternity which draws us to fellowship with others and enables us to see them not as enemies or rivals but as brothers and sisters to be accepted and embraced" (Message for the 2014 World Day of Peace. His Holiness is deeply grateful for the commitment of the Summit participants to promoting peace and fraternity among peoples, and for their efforts in finding solutions to the conflicts of our day. As this meeting honours the memory of Nelson Mandela, whose legacy of **non-violence** and reconciliation continues to inspire the world, Pope Francis prays that all present may be renewed and encouraged in their urgent work, and that their labours may bear an abundant harvest of peace for the world. With the assurance of his prayers for their deliberations, His Holiness willingly invokes divine blessings upon all gathered for the Summit meeting.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin

Secretary of State

[02056-02.01] [Original text: English]

[B0950-XX.01]

2015

Message of Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran to the participants of the Religions for Peace European Assembly on “Welcoming Each Other in Europe: from Fear to Trust” (Castel Gandolfo, 28 October – 1 November 2015), 29.10.2015

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2015/10/29/0837/01866.html>

[B0837]

Here below the Message of Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue to the participants of the Religions for Peace European Assembly on “Welcoming Each Other in Europe: from Fear to Trust” (Castel Gandolfo, 28 October-1 November 2015):

Message of Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran

Honourable President and Members of Religions for Peace, Respected Religious leaders, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

I extend my warm greetings and cordial best wishes to the brothers and sisters of different religious traditions and people of goodwill, gathered at Castel Gandolfo, on the occasion of the Religions for Peace European Assembly under the theme “Welcoming Each Other in Europe: from Fear to Trust”.

As you may be aware of, from 26th to 28th October, 2015, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions. *Nostra Aetate* notes that “We cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat in a brotherly way any man, created as he is in the image of God. Man’s relation to God the Father and his relation to men his brothers are so linked together that Scripture says: “He who does not love does not know God” (I John 4:8). It further mentions that “No foundation therefore remains for any theory or practice that leads to discrimination between man and man or people and people, so far as their human dignity and the rights flowing from it are concerned” (NA n..5).

Accordingly, one cannot love God without loving one’s neighbor, nor one’s neighbor without loving God. But one cannot love God or one’s neighbor without knowing them, and one cannot know them without entering into communion with them. The lack of mutual trust comes from a lack of understanding. Pope Francis states that the future of Europe: depends on the recovery of the vital connection between two elements namely, the transcendent dimension of life and the “humanistic spirit”. He emphasizes that “A Europe which is no longer open to the transcendent dimension of life is a Europe which risks slowly losing its own soul and that “humanistic spirit” which it still loves and defends” (*Address to the European Parliament*, 25 November 2014).

In the concept paper of your Assembly, you have underlined the multiple challenges of today’s Europe: fear of losing one’s identity leading to radicalism and fundamentalism, tendency to withdrawal in oneself, xenophobia, rising intolerance towards different religions and minorities, increasing tides of forced migration due to wars, dictatorial regimes and ecological crisis.

How can we change fear into trust, discrimination into respect, enmity into amity, polarization into solidarity, selfish lifestyle into selfless one, throwaway culture into caring-for culture, and confrontation into encounter and dialogue? The true mission of religion is peace because religion and peace go together. No true religious leader can ignore the culture of dehumanization and violence or preach and support it. We all agree that peace or violence and trust or fear come from the human heart. Prayer, spiritual

practices, and actions for justice and peace can awaken our hearts to overcome the polarized vision of seeing our neighbor as another separate person. As religious leaders our urgent challenge today, is to transform distrust, suspicion, intolerance into a new culture based on respect, mutual understanding, **non-violence**, solidarity and peaceful conflict resolution. Since our spiritual patrimony is so great, let us work together to remedy these social and cultural ills through dialogue and cooperation.

Pope Francis, appeals to us to “intensify dialogue among various religions” “to build bridges connecting all people, in such a way that everyone can see in the other not an enemy, not a rival, but a brother or sister to be welcomed and embraced! (*Audience with the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See*, 22 March 2013).

With sentiments of esteem and respect, I convey to you the prayerful best wishes of His Holiness Pope Francis and his hope that the discussions and reflections of this Assembly may contribute to a new culture of encounter and friendship in Europe.

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran
President, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue
Vatican City
October 29, 2015
[01866-EN.01] [Original text: English]
[B0837-XX.01]

2016

Press Release: Meeting between the Jain Delegation and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (Vatican, 31 May 2016), 01.06.2016

A meeting between the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) and an International Jain delegation took place on 31 May 2016 in the offices of the same Council. His Eminence Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the PCID, and Mr. Nemu Chandaria, Chairman of the Institute of Jainology, led the respective delegations.

This was the third meeting between the PCID and Jain delegation, led by the Institute of Jainology, London, the last two being in 1995 and 2011. Moreover, there have been several contacts between the Jain community and the PCID since 1986. The PCID, in collaboration with the local churches and Jain organizations in India, the UK and the USA, organized Jain-Catholic Dialogue meetings in 2011, 2013 and 2015.

In the aforesaid meeting, held in an atmosphere of mutual respect and friendship, members of the delegations expressed satisfaction with the cordial relations and cooperation that exist between both the Christian and Jain communities in countries where they live in close proximity.

While expressing the desire to further deepen cooperation, the delegations agreed that it must be ever more strengthened at the local level to better contribute towards the common good of society. In particular, they stressed the importance of educating younger generations so that they may be aware of their own traditions, and come to know and better respect the traditions of others.

With an aim to identifying concrete areas of convergence as the basis of cooperation, they discussed the topic of '*Taking care of the Earth, the home of the human family*' whereby emphasis was given to the need for both Jains and Christians to work together, joining hands with all believers and people of good will to make the earth liveable and peaceable for all.

They reflected on the Jain principle of '**non-violence**' (**Ahimsa**) towards all forms of life and that of Christian 'compassion' and 'justice' for the poorest and most vulnerable people by calling for responsible stewardship of the natural world. They found common elements that can motivate and advance cooperation between Jains and Catholics.

They also recognized that these elements, on a practical level, call upon the followers of both religious traditions to promote respect for the environment, non-exploitation of natural resources, reduction of wastefulness, care for all forms of life, and concern for future generations.

[00921-EN.01] [Original text: English]

Theme of the 50th World Day of Peace (1st January 2017), 08.26.2016

« *Non-Violence: A Style of Politics for Peace* »

**Pope Francis announces the theme for the
50th World ^{Day} of Peace (1st ^{January} 2017)**

« ***Non-Violence: A Style of Politics for Peace*** ». This is the title of the Message for the 50th ^{World} *Day of Peace* , the fourth of Pope Francis.

Violence and Peace are at the origin of two opposite ways to building society.

The proliferation of hotbeds of violence produces the most serious negative social consequences. The Holy Father sums up this situation in the expression: “A Third World War in Pieces”. Peace, by contrast, promotes social positive consequences and it allows the achievement of real progress. Therefore, we should act within what is possible, and negotiate ways of peace even where they seem tortuous and impractical. Thus, ***non-violence*** can acquire a more comprehensive and new meaning. It will not only consist of desire, of moral rejection of violence, barriers, destructive impulses, but also of a realistic political method that gives rise to hope.

Such a political method is based on the primacy of law. If the rights and the equal dignity of every person are safeguarded without any discrimination and distinction, then ***non-violence*** , understood as a political method, can constitute a realistic way to overcome arm conflicts. In this perspective, it becomes important to increasingly recognize not the right of force but the force of right.

With this *Message* , Pope Francis wants to show a further step, a path of hope, appropriate to today's historical circumstances. In this way, the settlement of disputes may be reached through negotiation without then degenerating into armed conflict. Within such a perspective the culture and identity of Peoples are respected and the opinion that some are morally superior to others is overcome. At the same time, however, it does not mean that one Nation can remain indifferent to the tragedies of another. Rather it means a recognition of the primacy of diplomacy over the noise of arms. Arms trade is so widespread that it is generally underestimated. Illegal arms trafficking supports not a few world's conflicts. ***Non-violence*** as a political style can and must do much to stem this scourge.

The *World Peace Day* initiated by Paul VI is celebrated each year on the first day of January. The Holy Father's *Message* is sent to all Foreign Ministries of the world and it indicates the diplomatic concerns of the Holy See during the coming year.

[01345-EN.02] [Original text: Italian]

**[Pope Francis on Receiving]
The Credential Letters of the Ambassadors of Sweden, Fiji, Moldova, Mauritius, Tunisia and
Burundi to the Holy See, 12.15.2016**

Your Excellencies,

I am pleased to receive you for presentation of the Letters accrediting you as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Holy See on the part of your respective countries: Burundi, Fiji, Mauritius, Moldova, Sweden and Tunisia. I thank you for your presence, which attests to your desire to maintain and develop the relations of esteem and cooperation which you enjoy with the Holy See, and I ask you to convey to the Heads of State whom you represent my gratitude and the assurance of my prayers for them and for their nations.

You have come from distant and very different areas of the world. Here in Rome this is always a source of satisfaction, since the horizon of the Holy See is intrinsically universal. This is due to the vocation and mission entrusted by God to the Successor of the Apostle Peter, a mission that is essentially religious, yet in the course of history has also involved relations with states and those who govern them. The Catholic Church, whose centre of unity and direction is found, as it were, in the Holy See, is called to pass on and bear witness to those spiritual and moral values grounded in the very nature of human beings and society, and which, as such, can be shared by all those committed to the pursuit of the common good.

Preeminent among these values is that of peace, as seen in the fact that for fifty years now, the Popes have dedicated the first day of January to peace, addressing a special Message to the world's civil and religious authorities, and to all men and women of goodwill. The Message for the coming World Day of Peace, published just three days ago, has as its theme: ***Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace***. The happy occasion of our meeting today allows me to share with you some brief reflections on that theme.

Nonviolence is a typical example of a universal value that finds fulfilment in the Gospel of Christ but is also a part of other noble and ancient spiritual traditions. In a world like our own, sadly marked by wars and numerous conflicts, to say nothing of widespread violence evident in various ways in day-to-day life, the choice of **nonviolence** as a style of life is increasingly demanded in the exercise of responsibility at every level, from family education, to social and civil commitment, to political activity and international relations. In every situation, this means rejecting violence as a method for resolving conflicts and dealing with them instead through dialogue and negotiation.

In a particular way, those who hold public office on the national and international levels are called to cultivate a **nonviolent** style in their consciences and in the exercise of their duties. This is not the same as weakness or passivity; rather it presupposes firmness, courage and the ability to face issues and conflicts with intellectual honesty, truly seeking the common good over and above all partisan interest, be it ideological, economic or political. In the course of the past century, marred by wars and genocides of unheard-of proportions, we have nonetheless seen outstanding examples of how **nonviolence**, embraced with conviction and practised consistently, can yield significant results, also on the social and political plane. Some peoples, and indeed entire nations, thanks to the efforts of **nonviolent leaders**, peacefully achieved the goals of freedom and justice. This is the path to pursue now and in the future. This is the way of peace. Not a peace proclaimed by words but in fact denied by pursuing strategies of domination, backed up by scandalous outlays for arms, while so many people lack the very necessities of life.

Dear Ambassadors, it is my desire, and that of the Holy See, to advance, together with the governments of your countries, this process of promoting peace and those other values that contribute to the integral development of individuals and society. With this in mind, I now offer you my heartfelt best wishes for

the mission that you begin today, while assuring you of the ready cooperation of the Roman Curia. Upon you and your families, and upon your respective countries, I invoke an abundance of divine blessings.

[02012-EN.02] [Original text: Italian]

Notice to journalists, 10.12.2016

Accredited journalists are informed of the publication on Monday 12 December 2016 of the Holy Father Francesco's Message for the 50th World Day of Peace, to be held on 1 January 2017 on the theme: *Nonviolence: A style of politics for peace*.

For the occasion, at 11.30 a.m., His Eminence Cardinal Peter Appiah Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, and His Excellency Archbishop Silvano Maria Tomasi, member of the same Dicastery, will be present in the Holy See Press Office in Via della Conciliazione 54, to answer questions from journalists.

Cardinal Turkson and Archbishop Tomasi will subsequently be available for individual interviews by radio-television networks and journalists who have submitted a request at the Accreditations Office of the Holy See Press Office.

The Holy Father's Message is to be considered under embargo until 12 noon on Monday 12 December. The text of the Message – in Italian, French, English, German, Spanish, Portuguese and Polish – will be available to accredited journalists from 9.30 a.m. on Monday 12 December.

[01961-EN.01]

Audience with representatives of various religions, 03.11.2016

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2016/11/03/0792/01769.html>

Dear Friends,

I offer you a warm welcome. I am pleased to meet you and I thank you for accepting this invitation to reflect together on the theme of mercy.

As you are well aware, we are approaching the end of the Holy Year, in which the Catholic Church has pondered the heart of the Christian message from the viewpoint of mercy. For us, mercy reveals the name of God; it is “the very foundation of the Church’s life” (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 10). It is also the key to understanding the mystery of man, of that humanity which, today too, is in great need of forgiveness and peace.

Yet the mystery of mercy is not to be celebrated in words alone, but above all by deeds, by a truly merciful way of life marked by *disinterested love*, *fraternal service* and *sincere sharing*. The Church increasingly desires to adopt this way of life, also as part of her “duty to foster unity and charity” among all men and women (*Nostra Aetate*, 1). The religions are likewise called to this way of life, in order to be, particularly in our own day, messengers of peace and builders of communion, and to proclaim, in opposition to all those who sow conflict, division and intolerance, that ours is *a time of fraternity*. That is why it is important for us to seek occasions of encounter, an encounter which, while avoiding a superficial syncretism, “makes us more open to dialogue, the better to know and understand one another; eliminates every form of closed-mindedness and disrespect; and drives out every form of violence and discrimination” (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 23). This is pleasing to God and constitutes an urgent task, responding not only to today’s needs but above all to the summons to love which is the soul of all authentic religion.

The theme of mercy is familiar to many religious and cultural traditions, where compassion and **nonviolence** are essential elements pointing to the way of life; in the words of an ancient proverb: “death is hard and stiff; life is soft and supple” (*Tao-Te-Ching*, 76). To bow down with compassionate love before the weak and needy is part of the authentic spirit of religion, which rejects the temptation to resort to force, refuses to barter human lives and sees others as brothers and sisters, and never mere statistics. To draw near to all those living in situations that call for our concern, such as sickness, disability, poverty, injustice and the aftermath of conflicts and migrations: this is a summons rising from the heart of every genuine religious tradition. It is the echo of the divine voice heard in the conscience of every person, calling him or her to reject selfishness and to be open. Open to the Other above us, who knocks on the door of our heart, and open to the other at our side, who knocks at the door of our home, asking for attention and assistance.

The very word “mercy” is a summons to an open and compassionate heart. It comes from the Latin word *misericordia*, which evokes a heart – *cor* – sensitive to suffering, but especially to those who suffer, a heart that overcomes indifference because it shares in the sufferings of others. In the Semitic languages, like Arabic and Hebrew, the root RHM, which also expresses God’s mercy, has to do with a mother’s womb, the deepest source of human love, the feelings of a mother for the child to whom she will give birth.

In this regard, the prophet Isaiah conveys a magnificent message, which, on God’s part, is both a promise of love and a challenge: “Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even though she may forget, yet I will never forget you” (*Is* 49:15). All too often, sad to say, we forget, our hearts grow heedless and indifferent. We distance ourselves from God, our neighbour and

even our historical memory, and we end up repeating, in even more cruel forms, the tragic errors of other times.

This is the drama of evil, of the grim depths to which our freedom can plunge when tempted by evil, ever-present, waiting to strike and bring us down. Yet precisely here, before the great riddle of evil that tests every religious experience, we find the most amazing aspect of merciful love. That love does not leave us prey to evil or to our own frailty; *it does not “forget”, but “remembers”*, and draws near to every human misery in order to relieve it. Like a mother. Whatever the evil done by her child, a mother always sees past the sin to recognize the face she bore in her womb.

In today’s ever more hectic and forgetful world, which leaves so many men and women behind as it races on, breathlessly and aimlessly, we need the oxygen of this gratuitous and life-giving love. We thirst for mercy and no technology can quench that thirst. We seek a love that endures beyond momentary pleasures, a safe harbour where we can end our restless wanderings, an infinite embrace that forgives and reconciles.

How important this is, when we consider today’s widespread fear that it is impossible to be forgiven, rehabilitated and redeemed from our weaknesses. For us Catholics, among the most meaningful rites of the Holy Year is that of walking with humility and trust through the door – the Holy Door – to find ourselves fully reconciled by the mercy of God, who forgives our trespasses. But this demands that we too forgive those who trespass against us (cf. *Mt 6:12*), the brothers and sisters who have offended us. We receive God’s forgiveness in order to share it with others. Forgiveness is surely the greatest gift we can give to others, because it is the most costly. Yet at the same time, it is what makes us most like God. Mercy extends also to the world around us, to our common home, which we are called to protect and preserve from unbridled and rapacious consumption. Our commitment is needed for an education to sobriety and to respect, to a more simple and orderly way of life, in which the resources of creation are used with wisdom and moderation, with concern for humanity as a whole and coming generations, not simply the interests of our particular group and the benefits of the present moment. Today in particular, “the gravity of the ecological crisis demands that we all look to the common good, embarking on a path of dialogue which requires patience, self-discipline and generosity” (*Laudato Si’*, 201).

May this be the path we take. May we reject the aimless paths of disagreement and closed-mindedness. May it never happen again that the religions, because of the conduct of some of their followers, convey a distorted message, out of tune with that of mercy. Sadly, not a day passes that we do not hear of acts of violence, conflict, kidnapping, terrorist attacks, killings and destruction. It is horrible that at times, to justify such barbarism, the name of a religion or the name of God himself is invoked. May there be clear condemnation of these iniquitous attitudes that profane the name of God and sully the religious quest of mankind. May there instead be fostered everywhere the peaceful encounter of believers and genuine religious freedom. Here, our responsibility before God, humanity and the future is great; it calls for unrelenting effort, without dissimulation. It is a call that challenges us, a path to be taken together, for the good of all, and with hope. May the religions be *wombs of life*, bearing the merciful love of God to a wounded and needy humanity; may they be *doors of hope* helping to penetrate the walls erected by pride and fear. Thank you.

[01769-EN.02] [Original text: Italian]

**Message of the Holy Father to Cardinal Peter KA Turkson on the occasion of the Conference
"Nonviolence and Just Peace: Contributing to the Catholic Understanding of and Commitment to
Nonviolence" (Rome, 11-13 April 2016), 11.04.2016**

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2016/04/11/0254/00569.html#en>

Your Eminence,

I am delighted to convey my most cordial greetings to you and to all the participants in the Conference on *Nonviolence and Just Peace: Contributing to the Catholic Understanding of and Commitment to Nonviolence*, which will take place in Rome from the 11th to 13th of April 2016.

This encounter, jointly organized by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Pax Christi International, takes on a very special character and value during the Jubilee Year of Mercy. In effect, mercy is “a source of joy, serenity and peace”,¹ a peace which is essentially interior and flows from reconciliation with the Lord.² Nevertheless, the participants' reflections must also take into account the current circumstances in the world at large and the historical moment in which the Conference is taking place, and of course these factors also heighten expectations for the Conference.

In order to seek solutions to the unique and terrible 'world war in installations' which, directly or indirectly, a large part of humankind is presently undergoing, it helps us to think back in time. Let us rediscover the reasons that led the sons and daughters of a still largely Christian civilization in the last century to create the Pax Christi Movement and the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. From their example we learn that to bring about true peace, it is necessary to bring people together concretely so as to reconcile peoples and groups with opposing ideological positions. It is also necessary to work together for what persons, families, peoples and nations feel is their right, namely, to participate on a social, political and economic level in the goods of the modern world.³ Further, the “unceasing effort on the part of that higher creative imagination which we call diplomacy”⁴ must be continuously nourished; and justice in a globalized world, which is “order in freedom and conscious duty”,⁵ must constantly be promoted. In a word, humanity needs to refurbish all the best available tools to help the men and women of today to fulfill their aspirations for justice and peace.

Accordingly, your thoughts on revitalizing the tools of **non-violence**, and of **active non-violence** in particular, will be a needed and positive contribution. This is what as participants in the Rome Conference you propose to do. In this message I would like to remind you of some further points which are especially of concern to me.

The basic premise is that the ultimate and most deeply worthy goal of human beings and of the human community is the abolition of war.⁶ In this vein, we recall that the only explicit condemnation issued by the Second Vatican Council was against war,⁷ although the Council recognized that, since war has not been eradicated from the human condition, “governments cannot be denied the right to legitimate defense once every means of peaceful settlement has been exhausted.”⁸

Another cornerstone is to recognize that “conflict cannot be ignored or concealed. It has to be faced.”⁹ Of course, the purpose is not to remain trapped within a framework of conflict, thus losing our overall perspective and our sense of the profound unity of reality.¹⁰ Rather, we must accept and tackle conflict so as to resolve it and transform it into a link in that new process which “peacemakers” initiate.¹¹ As Christians, we also know that it is only by considering our peers as brothers and sisters that we will overcome wars and conflicts. The Church tirelessly repeats that this is true not merely at an individual level but also at the level of peoples and nations, for it truly regards the International Community as the “Family of Nations”. That is why, in this year's Message for the World Day of Peace, I made an appeal to

States' leaders to renew “their relations with other peoples and to enable their real participation and inclusion in the life of the international community, in order to ensure fraternity within the family of nations as well.”¹²

Furthermore, we know as Christians that, in order to make this happen, the greatest obstacle to be removed is the wall of indifference. Recent history justifies using the word 'wall' not in a figurative sense alone, for unhappily it is an all too tangible reality. This phenomenon of indifference touches not only our fellow human beings but also the natural environment, with often disastrous consequences in terms of security and social peace.¹³

Nevertheless, we can succeed in overcoming indifference –but only if, in imitation of the Father, we are able to show mercy. Such mercy is so to speak 'political' because it is expressed in solidarity, which is the moral and social attitude that responds best to the awareness of the scourges of our time and of the inter-dependence of life at its different levels – the connections between an individual life, the family, and the local and global community.¹⁴

In our complex and violent world, it is truly a formidable undertaking to work for peace by living the practice of **non-violence**! Equally daunting is the aim of achieving full disarmament “by reaching people's very souls”,¹⁵ building bridges, fighting fear and pursuing open and sincere dialogue. The practice of dialogue is in fact difficult. We must be prepared to forgive and take. We must not assume that the others are wrong. Instead, accepting our differences and remaining true to our positions, we must seek the good of all; and, after having finally found agreement, we must firmly maintain it.¹⁶

We can joyfully anticipate an abundance of cultural differences and varied life experiences among the participants in the Rome Conference, and these will only enhance the exchanges and contribute to there new al of the active witness of **non-violence** as a “weapon” to achieve peace.

Finally, I would like to invite all those present to support two requests I addressed to governmental authorities in this Jubilee Year: to abolish the death penalty where it is still in force, and to consider the possibility of an amnesty; and to forgive or manage in a sustainable way the international debt of the poorer nations.¹⁷

I warmly wish Your Eminence and all the participants fruitful and successful labours, and I extend to you all my Apostolic Blessing.

FRANCISCUS

¹ *Misericordiae vultus* , n. 2.

² *Ibid* ., no. 17.

³ *Gaudium et spes* , n. 9.

⁴ Pope Paul VI, Message for the celebration of the day of peace 1976, *The real weapons of peace* .

⁵ *Ibid* .

⁶ Address to the Fourth Course for the Formation of Military Chaplains on International Humanitarian Law, 26.10.2015.

⁷ Cf. *Gaudium et spes* , nos. 77-82.

⁸ *Gaudium et spes* , n.79.

⁹ *Evangelii Gaudium* , no. 226.

¹⁰ *Ibid* .

¹¹ *Ibid* ., no. 227.

¹² Message for the World Day of Peace 2016, *Overcome Indifference and Win Peace* , n. 8.

¹³ See *ibid* , n. 4.

¹⁴ See *ibid* , n. 5.

¹⁵ John XXIII, *Pacem in terris* , no. 113 (English), no. 61 (Italian).

¹⁶ *Address* to Representatives of Civil Society, Asunción, 11.07.2015.

¹⁷ *Message* for the World Day of Peace 2016, n. 8.

[00569-EN.01] [Original text: English]

[B0254-XX.01]

2017

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE

FRANCIS

FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE

FIFTIETH WORLD DAY OF PEACE

1 JANUARY 2017

Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace

At the beginning of this New Year, I offer heartfelt wishes of peace to the world's peoples and nations, to heads of state and government, and to religious, civic and community leaders. I wish peace to every man, woman and child, and I pray that the image and likeness of God in each person will enable us to acknowledge one another as sacred gifts endowed with immense dignity. Especially in situations of conflict, let us respect this, our "deepest dignity", [1] and make active nonviolence our way of life.

This is the fiftieth Message for the World Day of Peace. In the first, Blessed Pope Paul VI addressed all peoples, not simply Catholics, with utter clarity. "Peace is the only true direction of human progress – and not the tensions caused by ambitious nationalisms, nor conquests by violence, nor repressions which serve as mainstay for a false civil order". He warned of "the danger of believing that international controversies cannot be resolved by the ways of reason, that is, by negotiations founded on law, justice, and equity, but only by means of deterrent and murderous forces." Instead, citing the encyclical *Pacem in Terris* of his predecessor Saint John XXIII, he extolled "the sense and love of peace founded upon truth, justice, freedom and love". [2] In the intervening fifty years, these words have lost none of their significance or urgency.

On this occasion, I would like to reflect on nonviolence as a style of politics for peace. I ask God to help all of us to cultivate nonviolence in our most personal thoughts and values. May charity and nonviolence govern how we treat each other as individuals, within society and in international life. When victims of violence are able to resist the temptation to retaliate, they become the most credible promoters of nonviolent peacemaking. In the most local and ordinary situations and in the international order, may nonviolence become the hallmark of our decisions, our relationships and our actions, and indeed of political life in all its forms.

A broken world

While the last century knew the devastation of two deadly World Wars, the threat of nuclear war and a great number of other conflicts, today, sadly, we find ourselves engaged in a horrifying world war fought piecemeal. It is not easy to know if our world is presently more or less violent than in the past, or to know whether modern means of communications and greater mobility have made us more aware of violence, or, on the other hand, increasingly inured to it.

In any case, we know that this "piecemeal" violence, of different kinds and levels, causes great suffering: wars in different countries and continents; terrorism, organized crime and unforeseen acts of violence; the abuses suffered by migrants and victims of human trafficking; and the devastation of the environment.

Where does this lead? Can violence achieve any goal of lasting value? Or does it merely lead to retaliation and a cycle of deadly conflicts that benefit only a few “warlords”?

Violence is not the cure for our broken world. Countering violence with violence leads at best to forced migrations and enormous suffering, because vast amounts of resources are diverted to military ends and away from the everyday needs of young people, families experiencing hardship, the elderly, the infirm and the great majority of people in our world. At worst, it can lead to the death, physical and spiritual, of many people, if not of all.

The Good News

Jesus himself lived in violent times. Yet he taught that the true battlefield, where violence and peace meet, is the human heart: for “it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come” (Mk 7:21). But Christ’s message in this regard offers a radically positive approach. He unfailingly preached God’s unconditional love, which welcomes and forgives. He taught his disciples to love their enemies (cf. Mt 5:44) and to turn the other cheek (cf. Mt 5:39). When he stopped her accusers from stoning the woman caught in adultery (cf. Jn 8:1-11), and when, on the night before he died, he told Peter to put away his sword (cf. Mt 26:52), Jesus marked out the path of nonviolence. He walked that path to the very end, to the cross, whereby he became our peace and put an end to hostility (cf. Eph 2:14-16). Whoever accepts the Good News of Jesus is able to acknowledge the violence within and be healed by God’s mercy, becoming in turn an instrument of reconciliation. In the words of Saint Francis of Assisi: “As you announce peace with your mouth, make sure that you have greater peace in your hearts”.[3]

To be true followers of Jesus today also includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence. As my predecessor Benedict XVI observed, that teaching “is realistic because it takes into account that in the world there is too much violence, too much injustice, and therefore that this situation cannot be overcome except by countering it with more love, with more goodness. This ‘more’ comes from God”.[4] He went on to stress that: “For Christians, nonviolence is not merely tactical behaviour but a person’s way of being, the attitude of one who is so convinced of God’s love and power that he or she is not afraid to tackle evil with the weapons of love and truth alone. Love of one’s enemy constitutes the nucleus of the ‘Christian revolution’”.[5] The Gospel command to love your enemies (cf. Lk 6:27) “is rightly considered the magna carta of Christian nonviolence. It does not consist in succumbing to evil. . . , but in responding to evil with good (cf. Rom 12:17-21), and thereby breaking the chain of injustice”.[6]

More powerful than violence

4. Nonviolence is sometimes taken to mean surrender, lack of involvement and passivity, but this is not the case. When Mother Teresa received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, she clearly stated her own message of active nonviolence: “We in our family don’t need bombs and guns, to destroy to bring peace – just get together, love one another. . . . And we will be able to overcome all the evil that is in the world”.[7] For the force of arms is deceptive. “While weapons traffickers do their work, there are poor peacemakers who give their lives to help one person, then another and another and another”; for such peacemakers, Mother Teresa is “a symbol, an icon of our times”.[8] Last September, I had the great joy of proclaiming her a Saint. I praised her readiness to make herself available for everyone “through her welcome and defence of human life, those unborn and those abandoned and discarded. . . . She bowed down before those who were spent, left to die on the side of the road, seeing in them their God-given dignity; she made her voice heard before the powers of this world, so that they might recognize their guilt for the crimes – the crimes! – of poverty they created”.[9] In response, her mission – and she stands for thousands, even millions of persons – was to reach out to the suffering, with generous dedication, touching and binding up every wounded body, healing every broken life.

The decisive and consistent practice of nonviolence has produced impressive results. The achievements of Mahatma Gandhi and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan in the liberation of India, and of Dr Martin Luther King Jr in combating racial discrimination will never be forgotten. Women in particular are often leaders of nonviolence, as for example, was Leymah Gbowee and the thousands of Liberian women, who organized pray-ins and nonviolent protest that resulted in high-level peace talks to end the second civil war in Liberia.

Nor can we forget the eventful decade that ended with the fall of Communist regimes in Europe. The Christian communities made their own contribution by their insistent prayer and courageous action. Particularly influential were the ministry and teaching of Saint John Paul II. Reflecting on the events of 1989 in his 1991 Encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, my predecessor highlighted the fact that momentous change in the lives of people, nations and states had come about “by means of peaceful protest, using only the weapons of truth and justice”.^[10] This peaceful political transition was made possible in part “by the non-violent commitment of people who, while always refusing to yield to the force of power, succeeded time after time in finding effective ways of bearing witness to the truth”. Pope John Paul went on to say: “May people learn to fight for justice without violence, renouncing class struggle in their internal disputes and war in international ones”.^[11]

The Church has been involved in nonviolent peacebuilding strategies in many countries, engaging even the most violent parties in efforts to build a just and lasting peace.

Such efforts on behalf of the victims of injustice and violence are not the legacy of the Catholic Church alone, but are typical of many religious traditions, for which “compassion and nonviolence are essential elements pointing to the way of life”.^[12] I emphatically reaffirm that “no religion is terrorist”.^[13]

Violence profanes the name of God.^[14] Let us never tire of repeating: “The name of God cannot be used to justify violence. Peace alone is holy. Peace alone is holy, not war!”^[15]

The domestic roots of a politics of nonviolence

5. If violence has its source in the human heart, then it is fundamental that nonviolence be practised before all else within families. This is part of that joy of love which I described last March in my Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, in the wake of two years of reflection by the Church on marriage and the family. The family is the indispensable crucible in which spouses, parents and children, brothers and sisters, learn to communicate and to show generous concern for one another, and in which frictions and even conflicts have to be resolved not by force but by dialogue, respect, concern for the good of the other, mercy and forgiveness.^[16] From within families, the joy of love spills out into the world and radiates to the whole of society.^[17] An ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence between individuals and among peoples cannot be based on the logic of fear, violence and closed-mindedness, but on responsibility, respect and sincere dialogue. Hence, I plead for disarmament and for the prohibition and abolition of nuclear weapons: nuclear deterrence and the threat of mutual assured destruction are incapable of grounding such an ethics.^[18] I plead with equal urgency for an end to domestic violence and to the abuse of women and children.

The Jubilee of Mercy that ended in November encouraged each one of us to look deeply within and to allow God’s mercy to enter there. The Jubilee taught us to realize how many and diverse are the individuals and social groups treated with indifference and subjected to injustice and violence. They too are part of our “family”; they too are our brothers and sisters. The politics of nonviolence have to begin in the home and then spread to the entire human family. “Saint Therese of Lisieux invites us to practise the little way of love, not to miss out on a kind word, a smile or any small gesture which sows peace and

friendship. An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures that break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness”.[19]

My invitation

Peacebuilding through active nonviolence is the natural and necessary complement to the Church’s continuing efforts to limit the use of force by the application of moral norms; she does so by her participation in the work of international institutions and through the competent contribution made by so many Christians to the drafting of legislation at all levels. Jesus himself offers a “manual” for this strategy of peacemaking in the Sermon on the Mount. The eight Beatitudes (cf. Mt 5:3-10) provide a portrait of the person we could describe as blessed, good and authentic. Blessed are the meek, Jesus tells us, the merciful and the peacemakers, those who are pure in heart, and those who hunger and thirst for justice.

This is also a programme and a challenge for political and religious leaders, the heads of international institutions, and business and media executives: to apply the Beatitudes in the exercise of their respective responsibilities. It is a challenge to build up society, communities and businesses by acting as peacemakers. It is to show mercy by refusing to discard people, harm the environment, or seek to win at any cost. To do so requires “the willingness to face conflict head on, to resolve it and to make it a link in the chain of a new process”.[20] To act in this way means to choose solidarity as a way of making history and building friendship in society. Active nonviolence is a way of showing that unity is truly more powerful and more fruitful than conflict. Everything in the world is inter-connected.[21] Certainly differences can cause frictions. But let us face them constructively and non-violently, so that “tensions and oppositions can achieve a diversified and life-giving unity,” preserving “what is valid and useful on both sides”.[22]

I pledge the assistance of the Church in every effort to build peace through active and creative nonviolence. On 1 January 2017, the new Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development will begin its work. It will help the Church to promote in an ever more effective way “the inestimable goods of justice, peace, and the care of creation” and concern for “migrants, those in need, the sick, the excluded and marginalized, the imprisoned and the unemployed, as well as victims of armed conflict, natural disasters, and all forms of slavery and torture”.[23] Every such response, however modest, helps to build a world free of violence, the first step towards justice and peace.

In conclusion

7. As is traditional, I am signing this Message on 8 December, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary is the Queen of Peace. At the birth of her Son, the angels gave glory to God and wished peace on earth to men and women of good will (cf. Luke 2:14). Let us pray for her guidance.

“All of us want peace. Many people build it day by day through small gestures and acts; many of them are suffering, yet patiently persevere in their efforts to be peacemakers”.[24] In 2017, may we dedicate ourselves prayerfully and actively to banishing violence from our hearts, words and deeds, and to becoming nonviolent people and to building nonviolent communities that care for our common home. “Nothing is impossible if we turn to God in prayer. Everyone can be an artisan of peace”.[25]

From the Vatican, 8 December 2016

Franciscus

[1] Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 228.

- [2] PAUL VI, Message for the First World Day of Peace, 1 January 1968.
- [3] “The Legend of the Three Companions”, *Fonti Francescane*, No. 1469.
- [4] BENEDICT XVI, Angelus, 18 February 2007.
- [5] Ibid.
- [6] Ibid.
- [7] MOTHER TERESA, Nobel Lecture, 11 December 1979.
- [8] Meditation, “The Road of Peace”, Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, 19 November 2015.
- [9] Homily for the Canonization of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, 4 September 2016.
- [10] No. 23.
- [11] Ibid.
- [12] Address to Representatives of Different Religions, 3 November 2016.
- [13] Address to the Third World Meeting of Popular Movements, 5 November 2016.
- [14] Cf. Address at the Interreligious Meeting with the Sheikh of the Muslims of the Caucasus and Representatives of Different Religious Communities, Baku, 2 October 2016.
- [15] Address in Assisi, 20 October 2016.
- [16] Cf. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, 90-130.
- [17] Cf. *ibid.*, 133, 194, 234.
- [18] Cf. Message for the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, 7 December 2014.
- [19] Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, 230.
- [20] Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 227.
- [21] Cf. Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, 16, 117, 138.
- [22] Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 228.
- [23] Apostolic Letter issued *Motu Proprio* instituting the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, 17 August 2016.
- [24] Regina Coeli, Bethlehem, 25 May 2014.
- [25] Appeal, Assisi, 20 September 2016.

Message of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue on the occasion of the Buddhist feast of Vesakh/Hanamatsuri 2017, 22.04.2017

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2017/04/22/0255/00587.html#fr>

Christians and Buddhists: walking the path of non-violence together

Dear Buddhist Friends,

1. In the name of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, we send you our warm greetings and assure you of our prayers on the occasion of *Vesakh*. May this feast bring joy and peace to your families, your communities and your nations.
2. We wish to reflect this year on the urgent need to promote a culture of peace and **non-violence**. Religion is increasingly at the center of concerns in today's world, but sometimes in contradictory ways. While many religious believers pledge to promote peace, others exploit religion to justify their acts of violence and hatred. While healing and reconciliation are offered to victims of violence, some also try to erase all traces and memories of "the other"; the emergence of global religious cooperation is emerging, along with the politicization of religion. And if there is an awareness of endemic poverty and hunger in the world, the deplorable arms race, alas, keep on going. This situation requires a call for **non-violence**, a rejection of violence in all its forms.
3. Jesus Christ and the Buddha were promoters of **nonviolence** as well as peacemakers. As Pope Francis writes, "Jesus also lived in times of violence. He taught that the real battlefield, on which violence and peace clash, is the heart of man: 'From within, from the heart of man, come perverse thoughts' (*Mk* 7, 21)" (*Message of Pope Francis for the celebration of the 50th^{World} Day of Peace*, January 1 · 2017: "**Non-violence: style of a policy for peace**", no. 3). He further emphasizes that "Jesus traced the path of **non-violence**, that he walked it to the end, to the cross, by which he achieved peace and destroyed enmity (cf. *Eph* 2, 14-16). Accordingly, "to be true disciples of Jesus today also means adhering to his proposal of **nonviolence**" (*ibid.*).
4. Dear friends, your founder, the Buddha, also announced a message of **non-violence** and peace. He encouraged all men to "tame anger with non-anger; tame evil with good; tame greed by giving; tame falsehood with truth" (*Dhammapada*, XVII, 3). He further taught that "victory breeds hatred, the vanquished lives in suffering. The peaceful lives happily, abandoning victory and defeat" (*ibid.*, XV, 5). The conquest of self is therefore greater than the conquest of others: "Should he conquer a thousand times a thousand men on the field of battle, verily the noblest conqueror is he who conquers himself" (*ibid.*, VIII, 4).
5. Despite these noble teachings, many of our societies face the impact of the wounds, past and present, caused by violence and conflict. This phenomenon includes domestic violence, economic, social, cultural and psychological violence, as well as violence against the environment, our common home. Unfortunately, violence engenders other social ills, and "the choice of **non-violence** as a way of life becomes more and more a requirement of responsibility at all levels [...]" (*Address of Pope Francis on the occasion Presentation of Letters of Credence*, December 15, 2016).
6. While we recognize the uniqueness of our two religions to which we each remain committed, we agree that violence comes from the human heart and that personal evils lead to structural evils. We are therefore called to a common enterprise: to study the causes of violence, to teach those who respectively follow us to fight the evil in their hearts; liberate victims and perpetrators of violence from harm; expose evil and challenge those who foment violence; form the hearts and minds of all, especially those of children; to

love and live in peace with everyone and with the environment, to teach that there is no peace without justice, that there is no true justice without forgiveness. All invited to work together to prevent conflict and rebuild broken societies, we must urge the media to avoid and counter hate speech and biased and provocative reporting; encourage educational reforms to avoid distortion and misinterpretation of history and scriptural texts; pray for world peace while walking the path of **non-violence** together.

7. Dear friends, may we devote ourselves actively to promoting within our families and social, political, civil and religious institutions a new way of life where violence is rejected and the human person is respected. It is in this spirit that we once again wish you a peaceful and joyful *Vesakh* holiday !

Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran

President

+ *Bishop Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, MCCJ*

Secretary

[00587-FR.01] [Original text: English]

Apostolic Journey of the Holy Father Francis to Egypt (April 28-29, 2017) – Courtesy visit to the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar and Address to participants in the International Peace Conference at the Al-Azhar Conference Center, 04.28.2017

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2017/04/28/0276/00631.html>

As-salamu alaykum!
[Peace be with you!]

I consider it a great gift to be able to begin my Visit to Egypt here, and to address you in the context of this International Peace Conference. I thank my brother, the Grand Imam, for having planned and organized this Conference, and for kindly inviting me to take part. I would like to offer you a few thoughts, drawing on the glorious history of this land, which over the ages has appeared to the world as a *land of civilizations* and a *land of covenants*.

A land of civilizations - From ancient times, the culture that arose along the banks of the Nile was synonymous with civilization. Egypt lifted the lamp of knowledge, giving birth to an inestimable cultural heritage, made up of wisdom and ingenuity, mathematical and astronomical discoveries, and remarkable forms of architecture and figurative art. The quest for knowledge and the value placed on education were the result of conscious decisions on the part of the ancient inhabitants of this land, and were to bear much fruit for the future. Similar decisions are needed for our own future, decisions of peace and for peace, for there will be no peace without the proper education of coming generations. Nor can young people today be properly educated unless the training they receive corresponds to the nature of man as an open and relational being.

Education indeed becomes wisdom for life if it is capable of “drawing out” of men and women the very best of themselves, in contact with the One who transcends them and with the world around them, fostering a sense of identity that is open and not self-enclosed. Wisdom seeks the other, overcoming temptations to rigidity and closed-mindedness; it is open and in motion, at once humble and inquisitive; it is able to value the past and set it in dialogue with the present, while employing a suitable hermeneutics. Wisdom prepares a future in which people do not attempt to push their own agenda but rather to include others as an integral part of themselves. Wisdom tirelessly seeks, even now, to identify opportunities for encounter and sharing; from the past, it learns that evil only gives rise to more evil, and violence to more violence, in a spiral that ends by imprisoning everyone. Wisdom, in rejecting the dishonesty and the abuse of power, is centred on human dignity, a dignity which is precious in God’s eyes, and on an ethics worthy of man, one that is unafraid of others and fearlessly employs those means of knowledge bestowed on us by the Creator.[1]

Precisely in the field of dialogue, particularly interreligious dialogue, we are constantly called to walk together, in the conviction that the future also depends on the encounter of religions and cultures. In this regard, the work of the *Mixed Committee for Dialogue between the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Committee of Al-Azhar for Dialogue* offers us a concrete and encouraging example. Three basic areas, if properly linked to one another, can assist in this dialogue: *the duty to respect one’s own identity and that of others, the courage to accept differences, and sincerity of intentions*.

The duty to respect one’s own identity and that of others, because true dialogue cannot be built on ambiguity or a willingness to sacrifice some good for the sake of pleasing others. *The courage to accept differences*, because those who are different, either culturally or religiously, should not be seen or treated as enemies, but rather welcomed as fellow-travellers, in the genuine conviction that the good of each resides in the good of all. *Sincerity of intentions*, because dialogue, as an authentic expression of our

humanity, is not a strategy for achieving specific goals, but rather a path to truth, one that deserves to be undertaken patiently, in order to transform competition into cooperation.

An education in respectful openness and sincere dialogue with others, recognizing their rights and basic freedoms, particularly religious freedom, represents the best way to build the future *together*, to be *builders of civility*. For the only alternative to the *civility of encounter* is the *incivility of conflict*; there is no other way. To counter effectively the barbarity of those who foment hatred and violence, we need to accompany young people, helping them on the path to maturity and teaching them to respond to the incendiary logic of evil by patiently working for the growth of goodness. In this way, young people, like well-planted trees, can be firmly rooted in the soil of history, and, growing heavenward in one another's company, can daily turn the polluted air of hatred into the oxygen of fraternity.

In facing this great cultural challenge, one that is both urgent and exciting, we, Christians, Muslims and all believers, are called to offer our specific contribution: "We live under the sun of the one merciful God... Thus, in a true sense, we can call one another brothers and sisters... since without God the life of man would be like the heavens without the sun".[2] May the sun of a renewed fraternity in the name of God rise in this sun-drenched land, to be the dawn of a *civilization of peace and encounter*. May Saint Francis of Assisi, who eight centuries ago came to Egypt and met Sultan Malik al Kamil, intercede for this intention.

A land of covenants - In Egypt, not only did the sun of wisdom rise, but also the variegated light of the religions shone in this land. Here, down the centuries, differences of religion constituted "a form of mutual enrichment in the service of the one national community".[3] Different faiths met and a variety of cultures blended without being confused, while acknowledging the importance of *working together for the common good*. Such "covenants" are urgently needed today. Here I would take as a symbol the "Mount of the Covenant" which rises up in this land. Sinai reminds us above all that authentic covenants on earth cannot ignore heaven, that human beings cannot attempt to encounter one another in peace by eliminating God from the horizon, nor can they climb the mountain to appropriate God for themselves (cf. *Ex* 19:12).

This is a timely reminder in the face of a dangerous paradox of the present moment. On the one hand, religion tends to be relegated to the private sphere, as if it were not an essential dimension of the human person and society. At the same time, the religious and political spheres are confused and not properly distinguished. Religion risks being absorbed into the administration of temporal affairs and tempted by the allure of worldly powers that in fact exploit it. Our world has seen the globalization of many useful technical instruments, but also a globalization of indifference and negligence, and it moves at a frenetic pace that is difficult to sustain. As a result, there is renewed interest in the great questions about the meaning of life. These are the questions that the religions bring to the fore, reminding us of our origins and ultimate calling. We are not meant to spend all our energies on the uncertain and shifting affairs of this world, but to journey towards the Absolute that is our goal. For all these reasons, especially today, religion is not a problem but a part of the solution: against the temptation to settle into a banal and uninspired life, where everything begins and ends here below, religion reminds us of the need to lift our hearts to the Most High in order to learn how to build the city of man.

To return to the image of Mount Sinai, I would like to mention the commandments that were promulgated there, even before they were sculpted on tablets of stone.[4] At the centre of this "decatalogue", there resounds, addressed to each individual and to people of all ages, the commandment: "Thou shalt not kill" (*Ex* 20:13). God, the lover of life, never ceases to love man, and so he exhorts us to reject the way of violence as the necessary condition for every earthly "covenant". Above all and especially in our day, the religions are called to respect this imperative, since, for all our need of the

Absolute, it is essential that we reject any “absolutizing” that would justify violence. For violence is the negation of every authentic religious expression.

As religious leaders, we are called, therefore, to unmask the violence that masquerades as purported sanctity and is based more on the “absolutizing” of selfishness than on authentic openness to the Absolute. We have an obligation to denounce violations of human dignity and human rights, to expose attempts to justify every form of hatred in the name of religion, and to condemn these attempts as idolatrous caricatures of God: Holy is his name, he is the God of peace, God *salaam*. [5] Peace alone, therefore, is holy and no act of violence can be perpetrated in the name of God, for it would profane his Name.

Together, in the land where heaven and earth meet, this land of covenants between peoples and believers, let us say once more a firm and clear “No!” to every form of violence, vengeance and hatred carried out in the name of religion or in the name of God. Together let us affirm the incompatibility of violence and faith, belief and hatred. Together let us declare the sacredness of every human life against every form of violence, whether physical, social, educational or psychological. Unless it is born of a sincere heart and authentic love towards the Merciful God, faith is no more than a conventional or social construct that does not liberate man, but crushes him. Let us say together: the more we grow in the love of God, the more we grow in the love of our neighbour.

Religion, however, is not meant only to unmask evil; it has an intrinsic vocation to promote peace, today perhaps more than ever. [6] Without giving in to forms of facile syncretism, [7] our task is that of praying for one another, imploring from God the gift of peace, encountering one another, engaging in dialogue and promoting harmony in the spirit of cooperation and friendship. For our part, as Christians – and I am a Christian – “we cannot truly pray to God the Father of all if we treat any people as other than brothers and sisters, for all are created in God’s image”. [8] All are brothers and sisters. Moreover, we know that, engaged in a constant battle against the evil that threatens a world which is no longer “a place of genuine fraternity”, God assures all those who trust in his love that “the way of love lies open to men and that the effort to establish universal brotherhood is not vain”. [9] Rather, that effort is essential: it is of little or no use to raise our voices and run about to find weapons for our protection: what is needed today are peacemakers, not makers of arms; what is needed are peacemakers, and not fomenters of conflict; firefighters and not arsonists; preachers of reconciliation and not instigators of destruction.

It is disconcerting to note that, as the concrete realities of people’s lives are increasingly ignored in favour of obscure machinations, demagogic forms of populism are on the rise. These certainly do not help to consolidate peace and stability: no incitement to violence will guarantee peace, and every unilateral action that does not promote constructive and shared processes is in reality a gift to the proponents of radicalism and violence.

In order to prevent conflicts and build peace, it is essential that we spare no effort in eliminating situations of poverty and exploitation where extremism more easily takes root, and in blocking the flow of money and weapons destined to those who provoke violence. Even more radically, an end must be put to the proliferation of arms; if they are produced and sold, sooner or later they will be used. Only by bringing into the light of day the murky manoeuvrings that feed the cancer of war can its real causes be prevented. National leaders, institutions and the media are obliged to undertake this urgent and grave task. So too are all of us who play a leading role in culture; each in his or her own area, we are charged by God, by history and by the future to initiate processes of peace, seeking to lay a solid basis for agreements between peoples and states. It is my hope that this noble and beloved land of Egypt, with God’s help, may continue to respond to the calling it has received to be a land of civilization and covenant, and thus to contribute to the development of processes of peace for its beloved people and for the entire region of the Middle East.

[1] “An ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence between individuals and among peoples cannot be based on the logic of fear, violence and closed-mindedness, but on responsibility, respect and sincere dialogue”: **Nonviolence: a Style of Politics for Peace**, Message for the 2017 World Day of Peace, 5.

[2] JOHN PAUL II, *Address to Muslim Religious Leaders*, Kaduna (Nigeria), 14 February 1982.

[3] John Paul II, *Address at the Arrival Ceremony*, Cairo, 24 February 2000.

[4] “They were written on the human heart as the universal moral law, valid in every time and place. Today as always, the Ten Words of the Law provide the only true basis for the lives of individuals, societies and nations. [...] They are the only future of the human family. They save man from the destructive force of egoism, hatred and falsehood. They point out all the false gods that draw him into slavery: the love of self to the exclusion of God, the greed for power and pleasure that overturns the order of justice and degrades our human dignity and that of our neighbour” (John Paul II, *Homily during the Celebration of the Word at Mount Sinai*, Saint Catherine’s Monastery, 26 February 2000).

[5] *Address at the Central Mosque of Koudoukou*, Bangui (Central African Republic), 30 November 2015.

[6] “More perhaps than ever before in history, the intrinsic link between an authentic religious attitude and the great good of peace has become evident to all” (JOHN PAUL II, *Address to Representatives of the Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities and of the World Religions*, Assisi, 27 October 1986: *Insegnamenti* IX, 2 (1986), 1268.

[7] Cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 251.

[8] SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, 5.

[9] ID., Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 38.

[00618-EN.02] [Original text: Italian]

Audience with the Delegation of the "Anti-Defamation League", 09.02.2017

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2017/02/09/0087/00213.html>
[B0087]

Speech of the Holy Father

Dear Friends,

I offer you a warm welcome, and I thank you for your kind words. My predecessors, Saint John Paul II and Benedict XVI, also received delegations from your organization, which has maintained relations with the Holy See since the Second Vatican Council. I am grateful that these contacts have intensified: as you noted, our meeting here is a further testimony, beyond that of our shared commitment, to the valuable power of reconciliation, which heals and transforms relationships. For this we give thanks to God, who surely rejoices in the sincere friendship and fraternal sentiments which today inspire Jews and Catholics.

Thus, with the Psalmist we too can say: “Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life for evermore” (*Ps* 133: 1, 3b).

Whereas the culture of encounter and reconciliation engenders life and gives rise to hope, the “non-culture” of hate sows death and reaps despair. Last year I visited the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. There are no adequate words or thoughts in the face of such horrors of cruelty and sin; there is prayer, that God may have mercy and that such tragedies may never happen again. To this end let us continue to help one another, as Pope John Paul II so desired, “to enable memory to play its necessary part in the process of shaping a future in which the unspeakable iniquity of the Shoah will never again be possible” (*Letter on the Occasion of the Publication of the Document “We Remember: a Reflection on the Shoah”*, 12 March 1998): a future of genuine respect for the life and dignity of every people and every human being.

Sadly, anti-Semitism, which I again denounce in all its forms as completely contrary to Christian principles and every vision worthy of the human person, is still widespread today. I reaffirm that “the Catholic Church feels particularly obliged to do all that is possible with our Jewish friends to repel anti-Semitic tendencies” (Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, *The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable*, 47).

Today more than ever, the fight against anti-Semitism can benefit from effective instruments, such as information and formation. In this regard, I thank you for your work and for combining efforts to counter defamation with education, promotion of respect for all, and protection of the weakest. Caring for the sacred gift of all human life and safeguarding its dignity, from conception to death, is the best way of preventing every type of violence. **Faced with too much violence spreading throughout the world, we are called to a greater nonviolence, which does not mean passivity, but active promotion of the good. Indeed, if it is necessary to pull out the weeds of evil, it is even more vital to sow the seeds of goodness: to cultivate justice, to foster accord, to sustain integration, without growing weary; only in this way may we gather the fruits of peace.** I encourage you in this work, in the conviction that the best remedies against the rise of hatred consist in making available the means necessary for a dignified life, in promoting culture and favoring religious freedom everywhere, as well as in protecting believers and religions from every form of violence and exploitation.

I am grateful to you also for the dialogue which, at various levels, you maintain with the Catholic Church. Upon our shared commitment and our journey of friendship and fraternal trust, I invoke the Almighty’s blessings: in his munificence may he accompany us and help us to bring forth the fruits of goodness. *Shalom alechem!*

[00213-EN.01] [Original text: Italian]

[B0087-XX.02]

Message of the Holy Father Francis to the participants in the international interreligious meeting "Pathways to Peace" (Münster and Osnabrück, Germany, 10-12 September 2017), 10.09.2017

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2017/09/10/0580/01286.html>

Distinguished and dear Representatives of the Churches
and Christian Communities, and of the World's Religions

To all of you I offer cordial greetings and the assurance of my closeness in prayer.

I thank the Dioceses of Münster and Osnabrück, and the Community of Sant'Egidio for bringing you together once more for this international meeting, whose theme is *Paths of Peace*. Last year we celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of this process of peace and dialogue initiated by Saint John Paul II in Assisi in 1986. It remains timely and necessary, as conflicts, violence, terrorism and war increasingly threaten millions of persons, violate the sacredness of human life, and make us all more uncertain and vulnerable.

This year's theme is an invitation to forge new paths of peace. How greatly this is needed, especially where conflicts seem intractable, where the will to undertake processes of reconciliation is lacking, where trust is placed in arms and not in dialogue, thus leaving entire peoples plunged into a dark night of violence, without hope for a dawn of peace. Yet countless of our brothers and sisters continue to "thirst for peace", as we affirmed last year in Assisi. Alongside political and civil leaders, who are responsible for promoting peace everywhere, today and in the future, the religions are called, by prayer and by humble, concrete and constructive efforts, to respond to this thirst, to identify and, together with all men and women of good will, to pave tirelessly new paths of peace.

Our *path to peace* is not that of those who profane God's name by spreading hatred; it has nothing to do with the bane of war, the folly of terrorism or the illusory force of arms. Ours must be a *path of peace*, uniting "many religious traditions for which compassion and **nonviolence** are essential elements pointing to the way of life" (cf. *Message for the World Day of Peace*, 1 January 2017, 4). Making space for peace calls for humility and courage, tenacity and perseverance; more than anything else, it demands prayer, since – as I firmly believe – prayer is the taproot of peace. As religious leaders, particularly at this present moment of history, we also have a special responsibility to be and to live as people of peace, bearing insistent witness that God detests war, that war is never holy, and that violence can never be perpetrated or justified in the name of God. We are likewise called to trouble consciences, to spread hope, to encourage and support peacemakers everywhere.

What we may not and must not do is remain indifferent, allowing tragedies of hatred to pass unnoticed, and men and women to be cast aside for the sake of power and profit. Your meeting in these days, and your desire to blaze new paths of peace and for peace, can be seen as a response to the call to overcome indifference in the face of human suffering. I thank you for this, and for the fact that you have gathered, despite your differences, to seek processes of liberation from the evils of war and hatred. For this to happen, the first step is to feel the pain of others, to make it our own, neither overlooking it or becoming inured to it. We must never grow accustomed or indifferent to evil.

Yet the question remains: What can be done to respond to such growing evil? Is it not too strong? Is every effort useless? In the face of such questions, there is the risk of paralysis and resignation. You, however, have embarked upon a journey, and today you gather to offer an answer. Indeed, your very gathering represents a response of peace: no longer are some against others; now all stand beside one another. The religions cannot desire anything less than peace, as they pray and serve, ever ready to help those hurt by life and oppressed by history, ever concerned to combat indifference and to promote paths of communion.

It is significant that your meeting takes place in the heart of Europe, in this year that marks the sixtieth anniversary of the signing in Rome of the founding treaties of the Union. Peace has been at the heart of Europe's reconstruction following the devastation caused by two disastrous world wars and the terrible tragedy of the Shoah. May your presence in Germany be a sign and a summons for Europe to cultivate peace through a commitment to paving new paths to a solid unity within and a greater openness without.

May we never forget that peace is not only the fruit of our human efforts, but of openness to God. Together let us continue to forge new paths of peace, lighting candles of peace amid the darkness of hatred. May all men and women long "to break through the barriers which divide them, to strengthen the bonds of mutual love, to learn to understand one another, and to pardon those who have done them wrong... May all peoples accept one another as brothers and sisters, and may the peace for which they yearn ever flourish and reign among them" (JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, AAS 55[1963]. 304).

From the Vatican, 28 August 2017

FRANCISCUS PP.

[01286-EN.01] [Original text: Italian]

[B0580-XX.01]

Apostolic Journey of the Holy Father Francis to Colombia (6-11 September 2017) - Holy Mass at the "Enrique Olaya Herrera" Airport in Medellín, 09.09.2017

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2017/09/09/0575/01289.html>

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

During the Mass on Thursday in Bogotá, we heard Jesus calling his first disciples; the part of Luke's Gospel which opens with this passage, concludes with the call of the Twelve. What are the evangelists reminding us of between these two events? That this journey of following Jesus involved a great work of purification in his first followers. Some of the precepts, prohibitions and mandates made them feel secure; fulfilling certain practices and rites dispensed them from the uncomfortable question: "What would God like us to do?" The Lord Jesus tells them that their fulfilment involves following him, and that this journey will make them encounter lepers, paralytics and sinners. These realities demand much more than a formula, an established norm. The disciples learned that following Jesus presupposes other priorities, other considerations in order to serve God. For the Lord, as also for the first community, it is of the greatest importance that we who call ourselves disciples not cling to a certain style or to particular practices that cause us to be more like some Pharisees than like Jesus. Jesus' freedom contrasts with the lack of freedom seen in the doctors of the law of that time, who were paralyzed by a rigorous interpretation and practice of that law. Jesus does not live according to a superficially "correct" observance; he brings the law to its fullness. This is what he wants for us, to follow him in such a way as to go to what is essential, to be renewed, and to get involved. These are three attitudes that must form our lives as disciples.

Firstly, going to what is essential. This does not mean "breaking with everything", breaking with that which does not suit us, because Jesus did not come "to abolish the law, but to fulfil it" (*Mt* 5:17). Going to what is essential means to go deep, to what matters and has value for life. Jesus teaches that being in relationship with God cannot be a cold attachment to norms and laws, nor the observance of some outward actions that do not lead to a real change of life. Neither can our discipleship simply be motivated by custom because we have a baptismal certificate. Discipleship must begin with a living experience of God and his love. It is not something static, but a continuous moving forwards towards Christ; it is not simply the fidelity to making a doctrine explicit, but rather the experience of the Lord's living, kindly and active presence, an ongoing formation by listening to his word. And this word, we have heard, makes itself known to us in the concrete needs of our brothers and sisters: the hunger of those nearest to us in the text just proclaimed, or illness as Luke narrates afterwards.

Secondly, being renewed. As Jesus "shook" the doctors of the law to break them free of their rigidity, now also the Church is "shaken" by the Spirit in order to lay aside comforts and attachments. We should not be afraid of renewal. The Church always needs renewal – *Ecclesia semper renovanda*. She does not renew herself on her own whim, but rather does so "firm in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel" (*Col* 1:23). Renewal entails sacrifice and courage, not so that we can consider ourselves superior or flawless, but rather to respond better to the Lord's call. The Lord of the Sabbath, the reason for our commandments and prescriptions, invites us to reflect on regulations when our following him is at stake; when his open wounds and his cries of hunger and thirst for justice call out to us and demand new responses. In Colombia there are many situations where disciples must embrace Jesus' way of life, particularly love transformed into acts of **non-violence**, reconciliation and peace.

Thirdly, getting involved. Even if it may seem that you are getting yourself dirty or stained, get involved. Like David and those with him who entered the Temple because they were hungry and the disciples of Jesus who ate ears of grain in the field, so also today we are called upon to be brave, to have that evangelical courage which springs from knowing that there are many who are hungry, who hunger for

God - how many there are who hunger for God – who hunger for dignity, because they have been deprived. I ask myself if the hunger of God in so many might arise because we have deprived them through our attitudes. As Christians, help them to be satiated by God; do not impede them or prevent such an encounter. Brothers and Sisters, the Church is not a border station; she needs open doors, because the heart of her God is not only open, but also pierced by the love which has embodied pain. We cannot be Christians who continually put up “do not enter” signs, nor can we consider that this space is mine or yours alone, or that we can claim ownership of something that is absolutely not ours. The Church is not ours, brothers and sisters, she is God’s; he is the owner of the temple and the field; everyone has a place, everyone is invited to find here, and among us, his or her nourishment. Everyone. He who has prepared the nuptial feast for his Son, utters the command to invite everyone: the healthy and the sick, the good and the bad, everyone. We are simple servants (cf. *Col* 1:23) and we cannot prevent this encounter. On the contrary, Jesus tells us, as he told his disciples: “You give them something to eat” (*Mt* 14:16); this is our service. To eat the bread of God, to eat the love of God, to eat the bread which helps us to stay alive. Saint Peter Claver understood this well, he whom we celebrate today in the liturgy and whom I will venerate tomorrow in Cartagena. “Slave of the blacks forever” was the motto of his life, because he understood, as a disciple of Jesus, that he could not remain indifferent to the suffering of the most helpless and mistreated of his time, and that he had to do something to alleviate their suffering.

Brothers and sisters, the Church in Colombia is called to commit itself, with greater boldness, to forming missionary disciples, as the Bishops stated when they were gathered in Aparecida. Disciples who know how to see, judge and act, as stated in that Latin-American document born precisely here (cf. *Medellin*, 1968). Missionary disciples that know how to see, without hereditary short-sightedness; looking at reality with the eyes and heart of Jesus, and only then judging. Disciples who risk, who act, and who commit themselves.

I have come here precisely to confirm you in the faith and hope of the Gospel. Remain steadfast and free in Christ, steadfast and free in him, because all steadfastness in Christ grants us freedom, in such a way that you manifest him in everything you do; take up the path of Jesus with all your strength, know him, allow yourselves to be called and taught by him, seek him in prayer and allow yourselves to be sought by him in prayer, and proclaim him with the greatest joy possible.

Let us pray through the intercession of Our Mother, Our Lady of Candelaria, that she may accompany us on our path of discipleship, so that, giving our lives to Christ, we may always be missionaries who bring the light and joy of the Gospel to all people.

[01233-EN.02] [Original text: Spanish]

Final Declaration of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue at the end of the VI Buddhist-Christian Congress (Taiwan, 13-16 November 2017), 17.11.2017

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2017/11/17/0797/01727.html>

[B0797]

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue of the Holy See, in cooperation with the Chinese Regional Bishops Conference (CRBC), and Ling Jiou Mountain Buddhist Society, organized the Sixth Buddhist-Christian Colloquium from 13-15 November 2017 at Ling Jiou Buddhist Monastery, and, on the following day, the Closing Ceremony at the Museum of World Religions, Taipei. The general theme was **Buddhists and Christians Walking Together on the Path of Nonviolence**. The Tzu Chi Foundation, Fo Guang Shan and the Buddhist Association of New Taipei City were also actively involved in organizing this Colloquium.

More than eighty men and women, Buddhist and Christian, representing eighteen countries, attended the Colloquium, among them both academics and practitioners of inter-religious engagement. Participants also included members from the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC), the World Council of Churches (WCC), and Monastic Interreligious Dialogue.

The participants noted that in the course of the years, Christian-Buddhist dialogue has made a valuable contribution to improving mutual understanding and mutual knowledge, as well as strengthening relationships and cooperation aimed at promoting a culture of peace and **nonviolence** on the basis of shared values. The participants also acknowledged that the 21st century has been marked by conflicts that also involve ethnic, cultural, and religious affiliations and identifications. In many regions of the world, cultural diversity has become a social and political issue. Many people have been deprived of equal protection and rights, and are treated as second-class citizens within their own countries.

While acknowledging and appreciating various initiatives at the local, national, regional, and international levels aimed at promoting a culture of encounter and respect, the participants emphasized that much remains to be done to build together a culture of peace with justice for all human beings and to preserve and enhance the welfare of the environment, our common home. The participants stressed that they met at a critical time, when violence has already wreaked havoc in many of their countries, leaving people in desperate need of healing, justice, forgiveness, and reconciliation. They also observed that violence and conflicts today cross borders, and thus local problems become national, regional, and at times, even global ones.

The participants were unanimously agreed that there is no time to lose, since the situation is so serious. Consequently, they noted that on the basis of their respective religious convictions they need to bring new hope to a shattered world by speaking of the love of Jesus and the compassion of the Buddha. This task includes speaking out in defense of the powerless and voiceless, standing up for justice, mending broken hearts and polarized societies, distancing themselves from sectarianism, and halting the building of walls that separate religions and cultures. At this crucial moment, encouraged by the positive outcome of the Colloquium, the participants, as followers of Buddha and believers in Jesus, were agreed on:

1. Recognizing that the Sixth Buddhist-Christian Colloquium has been an important milestone in fostering a culture of peace and **nonviolence** in a culture of indifference.
2. Stressing the importance of hearing the cry of the victims of violence in its multiple forms self-directed, interpersonal, and collective and also decrying and curbing the threats of unbridled nationalism, sexism, racism, casteism, ethnicism, and religious and secular fundamentalism.

3. Eradicating poverty, injustice, inequality, exploitation, and discrimination, which are often the underlying causes of violence and conflicts.
4. Recognizing the positive influence of the media in encouraging **nonviolent actions** for global peace and warning the public of the negative impact of fake news, which can provoke estrangement, division, prejudice and violence between people of different cultures and religions.
5. Encouraging concrete actions at the national, regional, and global levels aimed at restoring polarized societies through justice, reconciliation, and forgiveness, as well as advancing the equality and dignity of women in order to prevent violence and discrimination against them, especially the scourge of domestic violence.
6. Developing safe, stable, nurturing and caring relationships between children and their parents, relatives, teachers, elders, orphans and others, in order to form wholesome individuals and inclusive societies, and reaffirming the importance of education, especially by creating academic institutions focused on training new generations of young women and men to love peace in various settings.
7. Promoting hospitality by recognizing that we and the other share a common humanity, regardless of ethnic, religious, cultural, or socioeconomic differences, so as to avert and minimize verbal, physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.
8. Recognizing that the eco-crisis is an ego-crisis and promoting eco-spirituality for safeguarding the environment, our common home, and emphasizing the interconnectedness and interdependence of all life forms as central to living communities.
9. Promoting prayer, silence, and meditation to cultivate inner freedom, purity of heart, compassion, forgiveness, healing and the gift of self as essential conditions for the inner peace of the individual as well as for social peace.
10. Acknowledging the important role that faith-based organizations, people of goodwill, civil society, governmental organizations, and centres of education can play in fostering interfaith and intercultural dialogue.

The participants express their gratitude to the Conference Committee for creating a pleasant atmosphere and for the warm hospitality that characterized this Colloquium. They also thank the Authorities of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and local Christian and Buddhist followers for their generous support in making the Sixth Buddhist-Christian dialogue a success.

[01727-EN.01] [Original text: English]

2018

Speech by the Secretary for Relations with States at the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the "Nelson Mandela Peace Summit", 26.09.2018
<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2018/09/26/0698/01490.html>

[B0698]

We publish below the speech that H.E. Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States, Head of Delegation of the Holy See, spoke on Monday 24 September in New York, at the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the high-level plenary meeting: Nelson Mandela Peace Summit:

Speech by H.E. Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher:

Madam President,

This high-level plenary meeting provides an auspicious opportunity to honor the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela and to reflect on his legacy.

Mandela's legacy has become synonymous with the promotion of peace and **non-violence**, reconciliation and healing, non-discrimination and the promotion of human rights. In a telegram to express his condolences for the death of Nelson Mandela, Pope Francis paid tribute to his "steadfast commitment [...] in promoting the human dignity of all the nations' citizens and in forging a new South Africa built on the firm foundations of **non-violence**, reconciliation and truth."^[1]

The centenary of Mandela's birth reminds us of another centenary: that of the end of the First World War, a conflict that violently disfigured the face of Europe. Reflecting on the Great War and the life of Nelson Mandela, two great lessons emerge that could serve as golden rules to foster peace.

The first lesson is that victory never means humiliating a defeated foe. Peace is not built by vaunting the power of the victor over the vanquished. The haughty glory of the victor sows the seed of rancor that would translate itself into vengeance on the first opportunity, while humility in victory is a promise of reconciliation. After twenty-seven years of imprisonment, Mandela's sacrifices were vindicated with the end of apartheid and his becoming the President of South Africa. He was gracious and generous in victory and, before the cheers of the world, remained humble. His wisdom led him to reject recrimination in favor of reconciliation and to extend a hand of friendship to those who had made him suffer, convinced that the future demanded moving beyond the past.

The second lesson is that peace is consolidated when nations can discuss matters on equal terms. There is a reason why the League of Nations was born after the Great War and the United Nations in the dying embers of the Second World War: Effective multilateralism is a concrete expression of the "family of nations." As Pope John Paul II affirmed in his Address to the General Assembly on 5 October 1995, "The United Nations Organization needs to rise more and more above the cold status of an administrative institution and to become a moral center where all the nations of the world feel at home and develop a shared awareness of being, as it were, a 'family of nations.' The idea of 'family' immediately evokes something more than simple functional relations or a mere convergence of interests. The family is by nature a community based on mutual trust, mutual support and sincere respect. In an authentic family the strong do not dominate; instead, the weaker members, because of their very weakness, are all the more welcomed and served."

In Nelson Mandela's legacy, we find this idea in the very rich concept of Ubuntu, according to which "people are made people through other people," that we are one humanity so bound to one another that we flourish only if we help people around us flourish.

Madam President,

The Political Declaration, adopted at the beginning of this Peace Summit, acknowledges that we must "seek the conversion of heart and mind that can make a difference." A conversion of hearts is indeed needed; we have to recognize in the other a brother or sister to care for and to work with in building a fulfilling life for all. This is the spirit that inspires many initiatives of civil society, including religious organizations, in promoting peace.

Each New Year's Day, the Catholic Church celebrates the "World Day of Peace" in order to draw attention to the immense, universal good of peace. Today's Summit is also a kind of "World Day of Peace," in which we proclaim that peace is a gift from God entrusted to us all. It is our task to care for it. The Holy See joins Member States in every effort to work strenuously for true peace and expresses hope that "the daily commitment of all will continue to bear fruit and that there will be an effective application in international law of the right to peace, as a fundamental human right and a necessary prerequisite for every other right."^[2]

This would be the type of conversion of mind and heart, to flourish through helping others flourish in peace and freedom, that we celebrate in the magnanimous life of Nelson Mandela. As Mandela counsels in his autobiography *"Long Walk to Freedom"*: "If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner." May Mandela's inspiring perseverance in seeking justice, freedom and peace, be for this "family of nations" a motivation to redouble our efforts and dedication in the quest for a more just and thus peaceful world.

Thank you, Madam President.

^[1] Pope Francis, Message to the President of the Republic of South Africa, 6 December 2013.

^[2] Pope Francis, Message for the celebration of the World Day of Peace, 1 January 2014.

[01490-EN.01] [Original text: English]

Press release of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, 10.24.2018

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2018/10/24/0781/01696.html>

[B0781]

**The First International Buddhist-Christian Dialogue for Nuns
Fo Guang Shan, Kaohsiung, Taiwan
14-18 October 2018**

Final Statement

1. The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID), in collaboration with Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Monastery, the Association of the Major Superiors of Religious Women in Taiwan and *Dialogue Interreligieux Monastique*/Monastic Interreligious Dialogue (DIM·MID), organized the First International Buddhist-Christian Dialogue for Nuns at Fo Guang Shan, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, from 14-18 October 2018. The theme of the conference was “*Contemplative Action and Active Contemplation: Buddhist and Christian Nuns in Dialogue*.”

Seventy nuns from Taiwan, Korea, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Cambodia, the Philippines, Brazil, Italy, Germany, Norway, and the United States participated in the conference. There was also a representative from the World Council of Churches.

2. The Most Venerable Hsin Bao, Head Abbot of Fo Guang Shan monastery, gave the welcome address. Several other representatives also offered their greetings, and then H. Ex. Msgr. Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, Secretary of the PCID, delivered the keynote address.

3. The agenda of the conference focused on various items related to the main theme of the dialogue, such as: the origin, evolution and present-day situation of monastic religious life for women in Buddhism and Christianity; Buddhist meditation and Christian contemplation; the service to humanity; religious women promoting the ‘Feminine Genius’.

Ample time was devoted to plenary and small group discussions, one-on-one interaction, as well as attendance at Buddhist chanting and Catholic liturgy. The programme also included visits to the Fo Guang Shan Tsung Lin College, the Buddha Museum, and the Wanchin Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.

4. Encouraged by the fruitful outcome of the conference, the participants agreed on the following:

- we acknowledge that the First International Buddhist-Christian Dialogue for Nuns was a landmark to foster mutual understanding and friendship among us as religious women so that we may be able to build bridges connecting our different spiritual paths.
- we recognise that while remaining steadfast in our respective deepest convictions, we can learn from one another how to enrich ourselves spiritually, culturally and socially, and thereby become humble and credible witnesses for our brothers and sisters.
- we believe that our witness to a way of life that can be meaningful and joyful through detachment from consumerism, materialism, and individualism may encourage others to walk on the path of goodness.
- we stress the importance of being contemplatives in the midst of action who work together to show tenderness to those who are in need and bring hope and healing to their lives.
- we believe that interreligious dialogue is a journey that men and women must undertake together. Therefore, we encourage more and more religious women to contribute their “feminine genius” to the realization of new and creative ways of interreligious dialogue and for openness in our communities for this contribution to be received.

- we see the need of supporting students, teachers and parents and other walks of life to be ambassadors of peace and harmony and of empowering them to be a voice in the world inviting humanity to walk on the path of ecological healing and **nonviolence**.
- we acknowledge that “love is our common language” and that it invites us to go beyond ourselves and embrace the “other” in spite of the differences between us.
- we feel closer to one another when we join hearts and minds as we walk along our respective spiritual paths, and therefore we see the need of continuing this common journey for mutual enrichment and for the betterment of the world.

The participants express their gratitude to the organisers for creating a pleasant atmosphere and for the warm hospitality and friendship that marked this dialogue. They also thank the Civil Authorities, Fo Guang Shan Buddhist monastery, the local Catholic Church and Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages for their generous support in making the First International Buddhist-Christian Dialogue for Nuns a success.

[01696-EN.01] [Original text: English]

2019

Speech of the Holy Father Francesco at the Meeting on the theme: “Theology of Veritatis Gaudium in the Mediterranean Contest”, promenade of the Pontifical Theological Faculty of Southern Italy (Naples, June 20-21, 2019), 06.21.2019

[B0532]

Dear Students and Professors
Dear Brother Bishops and Priests,

Your Eminences,

I am pleased to meet with you today and to take part in this Congress. I most heartily reciprocate the greeting of my dear Brother Patriarch Bartholomew, for many years a great precursor of *Laudato Si'*, who wished to contribute to the reflection with a personal message. I thank you Bartholomew, my beloved brother.

The Mediterranean has always been a place of transit, of exchanges, and sometimes even of conflicts. We are all too familiar with many of them. This place today raises a number of questions, often dramatic ones. They can be expressed in some of the questions that we asked ourselves at the inter-religious meeting in Abu Dhabi: how can we take care of each other within the one human family? How can we foster a tolerant and peaceful coexistence that translates into authentic fraternity? How can we make it so that the welcoming of the other person and of those who are different from us because they belong to a different religious and cultural tradition prevails in our communities? How can religions be paths of brotherhood instead of walls of separation? These and other issues need to be discussed at various levels, and require a generous commitment to listening, studying and dialogue in order to promote processes of liberation, peace, brotherhood and justice. We must be convinced: it is about starting processes, not of defining or occupying spaces. Starting processes.

A theology of welcoming and dialogue

In this Congress, you have first analyzed contradictions and difficulties found in the Mediterranean, and then you have asked yourselves about what the best solutions might be. In this regard, you are wondering which theology is appropriate to the context in which you live and work. I would say that theology, particularly in this context, is called to be a welcoming theology and to develop a sincere dialogue with social and civil institutions, with universities and research centers, with religious leaders and with all women and men of good will, for the construction in peace of an inclusive and fraternal society, and also for the care of creation.

When in the Foreword of *Veritatis Gaudium* the contemplation and presentation of the heart of the *kerygma* is mentioned together with dialogue as criteria for renewing studies, it means that they are at the service of the path of a Church that increasingly puts evangelization at the center. Not apologetics, not manuals, as we heard, but evangelizing. At the center is evangelizing, which is not the same thing as proselytizing. In dialogue with cultures and religions, the Church announces the Good News of Jesus and the practice of evangelical love which He preached as a synthesis of the whole teaching of the Law, the message of the Prophets and the will of the Father. Dialogue is above all a method of discernment and proclamation of the Word of love which is addressed to each person and which wants to take up residence in the heart of each person. *kerygma*. Dialogue, understood in this way, is a form of welcoming.

I would like to reiterate that “spiritual discernment does not exclude existential, psychological, sociological or moral insights drawn from the human sciences. At the same time, it transcends them. Nor

are the Church's sound norms sufficient. We should always remember that discernment is a grace, a gift. Ultimately, discernment leads to the wellspring of undying life: “to know the Father, the only true God, and the one whom he has sent, Jesus Christ (cf. Jn 17 :3)” (Ap. Exhort. *Gaudete et Exsultate* , 170). The renewal of schools of theology comes about through the practice of discernment and through *a dialogical way of proceeding* capable of creating a corresponding spiritual environment and intellectual practice. It is a dialogue both in the understanding of the problems and in the search for ways to solve them. A dialogue capable of integrating the living criteria of Jesus' Paschal Mystery with that of analogy, which discovers connections, signs, and theological references in reality, in creation and in history. This involves the hermeneutical integration of the mystery of the path of Jesus which led him to the cross and to the resurrection and gift of the Spirit. Integrating this Jesuit and Paschal logic is indispensable for understanding how historical and created reality is challenged by the revelation of the mystery of God's love.

Both movements are necessary and complementary: a *bottom-up* movement that can dialogue, with an attitude of listening and discernment, with every human and historical instance, taking into account the breadth of what it means to be human; and a *top-down* movement—where “the top” is that of Jesus lifted up on the cross—that allows, at the same time, to discern the signs of the Kingdom of God in history and to prophetically understand the signs of the anti -Kingdom that disfigures the soul and human history. It is a method that allows us—in a dynamic that is ongoing—to confront ourselves with every human condition and to grasp what Christian light can illuminate the folds of reality and what efforts the Spirit of the Risen Crucified One is arousing, from time to time, here and now.

The dialogical way of proceeding is the path to arrive where paradigms, ways of feeling, symbols, and representations of individuals and of peoples are formed. To arrive there—as “spiritual ethnographers”, so to speak, of the souls of peoples—to be able to dialogue in depth and, if possible, to contribute to their development with the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, the fruit of which is the maturation of a fraternity that is ever more expanded and inclusive. Dialogue and proclamation of the Gospel that can take place in the ways outlined by Francis of Assisi in the *Regula non bullata*, just the day after his trip to the Mediterranean East. For Francis there is a first way in which, simply, one lives as a Christian: “One way is that they do not make quarrels or disputes, but are subject to every human creature for the love of God and confess to being Christians” (XVI: FF 43). Then there is a second way in which, always docile to the signs and actions of the Risen Lord and his Spirit of peace, the Christian faith is proclaimed as a manifestation in Jesus of God's love for all men. I am very struck by the advice given by Francis to his friars from him: “Preach the Gospel: if necessary, also with words”. That is witness!

This docility to the Spirit implies a style of life and proclamation that is without a spirit of conquest, without a desire to proselytize – which is baneful! – and without an aggressive attempt to disprove the other. An approach that enters into dialogue with others “from within”, with their cultures, their histories, their different religious traditions; an approach that, in keeping with the Gospel, also includes witnessing to the point of sacrificing one's own life, as shown by the luminous examples of Charles de Foucauld, the monks of Tibhirine, the bishop of Oran Pierre Claverie and so many brothers and sisters who, with the grace of Christ, have been faithful with meekness and humility and have died with the name of Jesus on their lips and mercy in their hearts. **And here I think of nonviolence as a perspective and way of understanding the world, to which theology must look as one of its constitutive elements. The writings and practices of Martin Luther King and Lanza del Vasto and other peacemakers help us here.** The memory of Blessed Justin Russolillo, who was a student of this Faculty, and of Fr Peppino Diana, who also studied here and was a young parish priest killed by the Camorra, help and encourage us. Here I would mention a dangerous syndrome: the “Babel syndrome”. We think that the “Babel syndrome” is the confusion that arises when we don't know what the other person is saying. That is the first stage. But the real “Babel syndrome” is when I do not listen to what the other person is saying and think that I know what the other is thinking and is about to say. That is the bane!

Examples of dialogue for a theology of welcoming

While “dialogue” is not a magic formula, theology is certainly helped in its renewal when it takes it seriously, when it is encouraged and favored among teachers and students, as well as with other forms of knowledge and with other religions, especially Judaism and Islam. Students of theology should be educated in dialogue with Judaism and Islam to understand the common roots and differences of our religious identities, and thus contribute more effectively to the building of a society that values diversity and fosters respect, brotherhood and peaceful coexistence.

To educate students in this. I studied in the period of decadent theology, decadent scholasticism, the age of the manuals. We used to joke that all the theses in theology could be proved by the following syllogism. First, things appear this way. Second, Catholicism is always right. Third, Ergo... In other words, a defensive, apologetic theology shut in a manual. We used to joke about it, but that was what we were presented with in that period of decadent scholasticism.

To seek a peaceful and dialogical coexistence. We are called to dialogue with Muslims to build the future of our societies and cities; we are called upon to see them as partners in the building of a peaceful coexistence, even when there are disturbing episodes by fanatical groups who are enemies of dialogue, such as the tragedy of last Easter in Sri Lanka. Yesterday, the Cardinal Archbishop of Colombo told me: “After doing everything I could do, I realized that a group of people, Christians, wanted to go to the Muslim quarter and kill them. I asked the Imam to come with me in the car, and together we went there to convince Christians that we are friends, that those people were extremists, that they are not 'ours'”. This is an attitude of closeness and dialogue. Forming students to dialogue with Jews means educating them to understand their culture, their way of thinking, their language, in order to better understand and live our relationship on the religious level.

I would like to give two concrete examples of how the dialogue that characterizes a theology of welcoming can be applied to ecclesiastical studies. First of all, dialogue can be *a method of study*, as well as of teaching. When we read a text, we dialogue with it and with the “world” of which it is an expression; and this also applies to sacred texts, such as the Bible, the Talmud and the Koran. Often, then, we interpret a particular text in dialogue with others from the same period or from different eras. The texts of the great monotheistic traditions are in some cases the result of a dialogue. There are cases of texts that are written to offer answers to some of life's deeper questions posed by texts that preceded them. This is also a form of dialogue.

The second example is that dialogue can be lived as a theological hermeneutic in *a specific time and place*. In our case: the Mediterranean at the beginning of the third millennium. It is not possible to realistically read this space except in dialogue and as a bridge—historical, geographical, human—between Europe, Africa and Asia. This is a place where the absence of peace has led to multiple regional and global imbalances, and whose pacification, through the practice of dialogue, could instead greatly contribute to initiating processes of reconciliation and peace. Giorgio La Pira would tell us that, for theology, it is a matter of contributing to the construction of a “large tent of peace” throughout the Mediterranean basin, where the different sons of the common father Abraham can live together in mutual respect. Do not forget our common father.

A theology of welcoming is a theology of listening

Dialogue as a theological hermeneutic presupposes and involves *conscious listening*. This also means listening to the history and experience of the peoples who inhabit the Mediterranean region to be able to decipher the events that connect the past to the present and to be able to understand the wounds along

with the potential that exists. In particular, it is a question of understanding the way in which Christian communities and individual prophetic lives have been able—even recently—to incarnate the Christian faith in sometimes contexts of conflict, minority and coexistence with a plurality of other religious traditions.

This listening must be deeply connected with cultures and peoples for another reason as well. The Mediterranean is precisely a sea that is also a crossroads. If we fail to understand that crossroads, we will never understand the Mediterranean. It is a sea geographically closed to the oceans, but culturally always open to encounter, dialogue and mutual enculturation. None the less, there is a need for renewed and shared narratives which—based on listening to the past and to the present—speak to the hearts of people, narratives in which it is possible to see oneself in a constructive, peaceful and hope-generating way. The multicultural and multi-religious reality of the new Mediterranean is formed by these narratives, in the dialogue that arises from listening to people and texts of the great monotheistic religions, and especially from listening to young people. I am thinking of the students of our faculties of theology, of those from “secular” universities or from other religious inspirations. “When the Church—and, we can add, theology—abandons the rigid schemes and opens itself to an open and attentive listening of young people, this empathy enriches it, because it allows young people to make their own contribution to the community, helping it to appreciate new sensitivities and to consider new questions” (Ap. Exhort. *Christus Vivit*, 65). To appreciate new sensitivities: this is the challenge.

Entering more deeply into the *kerygma* comes from the experience of dialogue that arises from listening and that generates communion. Jesus himself announced the kingdom of God in dialogue with all kinds and categories of people of the Judaism of his time: with the scribes, the Pharisees, the doctors of the law, the publicans, the learned, the simple, sinners. To a Samaritan woman he revealed, in listening and dialogue, the gift of God and her de ella's own identity: he opened to her the mystery of his communion de ella with the Father and of the superabundant fullness that flows from this communion. His divine listening of her to her human heart of her opened that heart to accept in turn the fullness of Love and the joy of life. We lose nothing by engaging in dialogue. We always gain something. In a monologue, we all lose, all of us.

An interdisciplinary theology

A theology of welcoming which, as a method of interpreting reality, adopts discernment and sincere dialogue requires *theologians who know how to work together and in an interdisciplinary way*, overcoming individualism in intellectual work. We need theologians—men and women, priests, lay people and religious—who, in a historical and ecclesial rootedness and, at the same time, open to the inexhaustible novelties of the Spirit, know how to escape the self-referential, competitive and, in fact, blinding logics that often exist even in our own academic institutions and concealed, many times, among our theological schools.

In this continuous journey of going out of oneself and meeting others, it is important that theologians be men and women of compassion – I emphasize this: that they be men and women of compassion – inwardly touched by the oppressed life many live, by the forms of slavery present today, by the social wounds, the violence, the wars and the enormous injustices suffered by so many poor people who live on the shores of this “common sea”. Without communion and without compassion constantly nourished by prayer – this is important: theology can only be done “on one's knees” – theology not only loses its soul, but also its intelligence and ability to interpret reality in a Christian way. Without compassion, drawn from the Heart of Christ, Theologians risk being swallowed up in the condition of privilege of those who prudently place themselves outside the world and share nothing risky with the majority of humanity. A laboratory theology, a pure theology, “distilled” like water, which understands nothing.

I would like to give an example of how the *interdisciplinarity* that interprets history can involve an entering more deeply into the *kerygma* and, if animated by mercy, can be open to *trans-disciplinarity*. I am referring in particular to all the aggressive and warlike attitudes that have marked the way in which Mediterranean peoples who called themselves Christians have lived. This includes both the colonial attitudes and practices that have shaped the imagination and policies of these peoples so much, and the justifications for all sorts of wars, as well as all the persecutions carried out in the name of a religion or alleged racial or doctrinal purity. We too carried out these persecutions. I remember, in the *Song of Roland*, that after the battle was won, all the Muslims were lined up in front of the baptismal font. There was someone with a sword. And they were given a choice: either be baptized or be killed, sent to the next world. Baptism or death. We did this. With respect to this complex and painful history, the method of dialogue and listening, guided by the evangelical criteria of mercy, can greatly enrich interdisciplinary knowledge and rereading, also bringing out, by contrast, the prophecies of peace that the Spirit has never failed to arouse.

Interdisciplinarity as a criterion for the renewal of theology and ecclesiastical studies involves the commitment to *continually revisit and reconsider tradition*. Reconsider tradition! And keep asking questions. In fact, for Christian theologians, listening does not happen in a vacuum, but is done from a theological heritage that—precisely within the Mediterranean space—has its roots in the communities of the New Testament, in the rich reflection of the Fathers and in many generations of thinkers and witnesses. It is that living tradition that has come down to us that can help to enlighten and decipher many contemporary issues. Provided, however, that it is reread with a sincere will to purify memory, that is, discerning that which was in accordance with God's original intention, revealed in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and that which was unfaithful to this merciful and saving intention. Let us not forget that tradition is a root that gives life: it transmits life so that we can grow, flourish and bear fruit. So often we think of tradition as a kind of museum. Nope! Last week or the week before, I read a quote by Gustav Mahler, who said: “Tradition is the guarantee of the future, not the guardian of ashes!” Nice! We live tradition like a tree that lives and grows. In the fifth century Vincent of Lérins understood this well. I have described the growth of faith, the tradition, using these three criteria: *annis consolidatetur, dilatetur tempore, sublimetur aetate*. That is tradition! Without tradition you cannot grow! Tradition serves growth, as the root serves the tree.

networked theology

Theology after *Veritatis Gaudium* is a *networked* theology and, in the context of the Mediterranean, *in solidarity with all the “shipwrecked” of history*. In the theological task ahead, we recall St. Paul and the journey of early Christianity that connects the East with the West. Here, very close to where Paul landed, one cannot help but remember that the Apostle's journeys were marked by evident problems, such as the shipwreck in the middle of the Mediterranean (Acts 27:9ff). A shipwreck that makes one think of Jonah's. But Paul does not flee and may even think that Rome is his Nineveh of him. He could be seeking to correct Jonah's defeatist attitude and to redeem his attempted escape from him. Now that Western Christianity has learned from many mistakes and critical moments of the past, it can return to its sources hoping to be able to bear witness to the Good News to the peoples of the East and West, North and South. Theology—keeping its mind and heart fixed on the “gracious and merciful God” (cf. Jon 4:2)—can help the Church and civil society to set out again in the company of so many shipwrecked people, encouraging the people of the Mediterranean to reject any temptation toward request or toward an identity that is closed in on itself. Both arise, are nurtured and grow from fear. Theology cannot be done in a setting of fear.

The work of theological faculties and ecclesiastical universities contributes to the building of a just and fraternal society, in which the care of creation and the building of peace are the result of collaboration between civil, ecclesial and interreligious institutions. It is first of all a work within the “evangelical network”, that is, in communion with the Spirit of Jesus who is the Spirit of peace, the Spirit of love at

work in creation and in the hearts of men and women of good will of every race, culture and religion. In an analogous way to the language used by Jesus to speak of the Kingdom of God, interdisciplinarity and networking are intended to encourage the discernment of the presence of the Spirit of the Risen One in reality. By understanding the Word of God in its original Mediterranean context.

Theology after “Veritatis Gaudium” in the context of the Mediterranean

I have spoken a great deal about *Veritatis Gaudium*. I would like to thank publicly, since he is here, Archbishop Zani, who helped craft this document. Thank you! What, then, is the *task of theology* after *Veritatis Gaudium* in the context of the Mediterranean? To go straight to the point, what is its task? It must be in tune with the Spirit of the Risen Jesus, with his freedom from him to travel the world and reach the peripheries, even those of thought. Theologians have the task of encouraging ever anew the encounter of cultures with the sources of Revelation and Tradition. The ancient edifices of thought, the great theological syntheses of the past are mines of theological wisdom, but they cannot be applied mechanically to current questions. One should treasure them to look for new paths. Thanks be to God, the first sources of theology, that is, the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, are inexhaustible and always fruitful; therefore one can and must work towards a “theological Pentecost”, which allows the women and men of our time to hear “in their own native language” a Christian message that responds to their search for meaning and for a full life. For this to happen, a number of preconditions are necessary.

First of all, it is necessary to *start from the Gospel of mercy*, from the proclamation made by Jesus himself and from the original contexts of evangelization. Theology is born amidst specific human beings, who have encountered the gaze and heart of God who seeks them with merciful love. Doing theology is also an act of mercy. I would like to repeat here, from this city where there are not only episodes of violence, but which preserves many traditions and many examples of holiness—in addition to a masterpiece by Caravaggio on the works of mercy and the testimony of the holy doctor Giuseppe Moscati—I would like to repeat what I wrote to the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Argentina: “Even good theologians, like good shepherds, have the odor of the people and of the street and, by their reflection, pour oil and wine into the wounds of mankind. Theology is an expression of a Church which is a “field hospital”, which lives her mission of salvation and healing in the world. Mercy is not just a pastoral attitude but it is the very substance of the Gospel of Jesus. I encourage you to study how the various disciplines—dogma, morality, spirituality, law, and so on—may reflect the centrality of mercy. Without mercy our theology, our law, our pastoral care run the risk of collapsing into bureaucratic narrow-mindedness or ideology, which by their nature seeks to tame the mystery”.^[1] Theology, by following the path of mercy, prevents the mystery from being domesticated.

Secondly, a serious *integration of history* within theology is necessary, as a space open to the encounter with the Lord. “The ability to discover the presence of Christ and the Church's journey through history makes us humble, and removes us from the temptation to seek refuge in the past in order to avoid the present. And this has been the experience of many scholars, who have begun, I wouldn't say as atheists, but rather as agnostics, and have found Christ. Because history could not be understood without this force”.^[two]

Theological freedom is necessary. Without the possibility of experimenting with new paths, nothing new is created, and there is no room for the newness of the Spirit of the Risen One: “For those who long for a monolithic body of doctrine guarded by all and leaving no room for nuance, this might appear as undesirable and leading to confusion. But in fact such variety serves to bring out and develop different facets of the inexhaustible riches of the Gospel” (Ap. Exhort. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 40). This also implies an adequate updating of the *ratio studiorum*. On the freedom of theological thought, I would make a distinction. Among scholars, it is necessary to move ahead with freedom; then, in the final instance, it will be the magisterium to decide, but theology cannot be done without this freedom. But in preaching to the

People of God, please, do not harm the faith of God's people with disputed questions! Let disputed questions remain among theologians. That is your task. But God's people need to be given substantial food that can nourish their faith and not relativize it.

Finally, it is essential to have *light and flexible structures* that express the priority given to welcoming and dialogue, to inter- and trans-disciplinary work and networking. The statutes, the internal organization, the method of teaching, the program of studies should reflect the physiognomy of the Church “which goes forth”. The class schedules and other aspects of university life should be designed to encourage as much as possible the participation of those who wish to study theology: in addition to seminarians and religious, even lay people and women both lay and religious. In particular, the contribution that women are making and can make to theology is indispensable and their participation should therefore be supported, as you do in this Faculty, where there is ample participation of women as teachers and as students.

May this beautiful place, home of the Theological Faculty dedicated to St. Aloysius, whose memorial is celebrated today, be a symbol of beauty to be shared, open to all. I dream of Theological Faculties where one lives differences in friendship, where one practices a theology of dialogue and welcoming; where one experiences the model of the polyhedron of theological knowledge instead of that of a static and disembodied sphere. Where theological research can promote a challenging but compelling process of inculturation.

Conclusion

The criteria of the Foreword of the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* are evangelical criteria. The *kerygma*, dialogue, discernment, collaboration and network – and here I would add *parrhesia*, which was cited as a criterion, which is the ability to press forward to the limits, side by side with *hypomone*, patient endurance, the ability to stay within the limits in order to move forward – these are elements and criteria that translate the way in which the Gospel was lived and proclaimed by Jesus and with which it can still be transmitted today by his disciples.

Theology after *Veritatis Gaudium* is a kerygmatic theology, a theology of discernment, of mercy and of welcoming, in dialogue with society, cultures and religions for the construction of the peaceful coexistence of individuals and peoples. The Mediterranean is a historical, geographical and cultural matrix for kerygmatic welcoming practiced through dialogue and mercy. Naples is an example and special laboratory of this theological research. I wish you all the best in your work!

^[1] *Letter to the Grand Chancellor of the “Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina” for the 100th anniversary of the Founding of the Faculty of Theology*, 3 March 2015.

^[2] *Speech to Participants in the Conference of the Association of Professors of Church History*, 12 January 2019.

Press release of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, 02.10.2019

[B0764]

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the birth of **Mahatma Gandhi, an “apostle of nonviolence”**, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue held in Rome on 1 October 2019 a day-long International Interreligious Study and Reflection on the theme of “Fraternal Love and **Nonviolence** for Global Harmony and Peace”. Fifty scholars, promoters of peace and **nonviolence activists** from different religious traditions took part in the event. With reference to the Abu Dhabi Document on “Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together”, study and reflection focused on the urgent need for **nonviolence** in today’s violence-ridden world and on ways and means of promoting peace and harmony and nurturing friendship and fraternity everywhere. The participants attended the General Audience today, the day of Gandhi’s birth and the **International Day of Nonviolence**.

[01567-EN.01]

[Original text: English]

**Message of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue to Hindus on the Feast of Deepavali
2019, 21.10.2019**

[B0810]

Text in English

Translation into Italian

French language translation

Hindi language translation

Diwali festival is celebrated by all Hindus and is known as Deepavali or "row of oil lamps". Symbolically based on an ancient mythology, it represents the victory of truth over falsehood, of light over darkness, of life over death, of good over evil.

The actual celebration lasts three days marking the beginning of a new year, family reconciliation, especially between brothers and sisters, and adoration of God.

This year the festival will be celebrated by many Hindus on 27th October.

For the occasion, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue sent them a message on the theme: *Believers: builders of fraternity and peaceful coexistence*.

The Message, signed by the President, Card. Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, MCCJ, and by the Secretary, Rev. Msgr. Indunil Kodithuwakku Janakaratne Kankanamalage, was also sent in Hindi.

Below is the text in English, Italian and French and the link to the translation in Hindi:

Text in English

Believers: Builders of Fraternity and Peaceful Coexistence

Dear Hindu Friends,

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue sends you cordial greetings and sincere good wishes as you celebrate Deepavali on 27 October this year. May this festival of lights illuminate your hearts and homes and bring joy and happiness, peace and prosperity to your families and communities. At the same time, may it strengthen your spirit of fraternity with one another.

Alongside the experience of unprecedented advancement in many fields, we live at a time when, on the one hand, efforts are being made towards interreligious and intercultural dialogue, cooperation and fraternal solidarity. On the other hand, there is apathy, indifference and even hatred among some religious people towards others. This is often caused by a failure to recognize the 'other' as a brother or sister. Such an attitude can arise from misguided, ungenerous or unsympathetic sentiments, which upset and unsettle the very fabric of harmonious coexistence in society. It is with concern about this situation that we deem it fitting and beneficial to share with you some thoughts on the need for every individual, particularly Christians and Hindus, to be builders of fraternity and peaceful coexistence wherever they are.

Religion fundamentally inspires us "to see in the other a brother or sister to be supported and loved" (*Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, co-signed by Pope Francis and Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar in Abu Dhabi on 4 February 2019). It teaches us, moreover, to respect the inviolable dignity and the inalienable rights of others without any unwarranted bias towards their creed or culture. Only when adherents of religions demand of themselves a life consistent with their religious ethic will they be seen to fulfill their role as builders of peace and as

witnesses to our shared humanity. For this reason, religions are to sustain the efforts their adherents make in leading an authentic life so as to “bring forth the fruits of peace and brotherhood, for it is in the nature of religion to foster... an increasingly fraternal relationship among people” (Pope John Paul II, *Message for the World Day of Peace*, 1992). As such, living in a spirit of fraternity and fellowship through constant dialogue should be a natural corollary of being a religious person, Hindu or Christian.

Though negative news dominates the headlines, this should not dampen our resolve to sow seeds of fraternity, for there is a hidden sea of goodness that is growing and leads us to hope in the possibility of building, together with the followers of other religions and all men and women of good will, a world of solidarity and peace. The conviction that building a world of fraternity is possible is reason enough for us to engage all the more in efforts towards building the edifice of fraternity and peaceful coexistence, keeping “the good of everyone at heart” (Pope Francis, *Message for the Opening of the Annual Interreligious Prayer Meeting for Peace*, “Bridges of Peace”, Bologna, 14 October 2018).

It is a happy coincidence that the beginning of this month marked the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi, “an outstanding and courageous witness to truth, love and **nonviolence**” (Pope John Paul II, *Prayer for Peace at the Conclusion of the Visit to Raj Ghat*, Delhi, 1 February 1986) and a valiant protagonist of human fraternity and peaceful coexistence. We would do well to draw inspiration from his example of him in living peaceful coexistence.

As believers grounded in our own religious convictions and with shared concern for the welfare of the human family, may we join hands with those of different religious traditions and all people of good will, and strive to do all we can – with a sense of shared responsibility – to build a more fraternal and peaceful society!

Wishing all of you a joyful celebration of Deepavali!

Miguel Ángel Cardinal Ayuso Guixot, MCCJ
President

Rev. Msgr. Indunil Kodithuwakku Janakaratne Kankanamalage
Secretary

[01680-EN.01] [Original text: English]

2020

Press conference entitled "Preparing the future, building peace in the time of Covid-19", 07.07.2020

[B0376]

Intervento del Card. Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson

Intervento di Suor Alessandra Smerilli

Intervento del Dott. Alessio Pecorario

At 11.30 this morning, a press conference entitled "Preparing the future, building peace in the time of Covid-19" took place in the "John Paul II" Hall of the Holy See Press Office.

The following took part: His Eminence Card. Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and President of the Vatican Commission for Covid-19; Sr. Alessandra Smerilli, Coordinator of the Economic Task Force of the Vatican Commission for Covid-19 and Full Professor of Political Economy at the Pontifical Faculty of Educational Sciences Auxilium; Dr. Alessio Pecorario, Coordinator of the Security Task Force of the Vatican Commission for Covid-19 and Official of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

Here are the speeches:

Intervento del Card. Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson

Testo in lingua inglese

Traduzione in lingua italiana

Traduzione in lingua spagnola

Testo in lingua inglese

As we all know, we are facing one of the worst humanitarian crises since World War II. As the world takes emergency measures to address a global pandemic and a global economic recession, both underpinned by a global climate emergency, we must also consider the implications for peace of these interconnected crises. The Vatican COVID-19 Commission, especially through the Task Forces on Security and Economics, has been analyzing some of these implications. Let me highlight the followings. While today unprecedented sums are devoted to military expenditure (including the largest nuclear modernization programs), the sick, the poor, the marginalized, and victims of conflict are being disproportionately affected by the present crisis. Until now, the interconnected crises (health, socio-economics and ecology) are widening the gap not only between the rich and the poor, but also between zones of peace, prosperity and environmental justice and zones of conflict, deprivation and ecological devastation.

There can be no healing without peace. Reducing conflicts is the only chance for reducing injustices and inequalities. Armed violence and conflict and poverty are indeed linked in a cycle that prevents peace, furthers human rights abuses and hampers development.

I welcome the UN Security Council's recent endorsement of a global cease-fire.^[i] We can't fight the pandemic if we are fighting, or preparing to fight, each other. I also welcome the endorsement by 170 countries to the UN call to silence the guns!^[ii] But one thing is to call or endorse a cease-fire statement, another thing is to implement it. In order to do so, we need to freeze weapons production and dealing. The current interconnected crises I mentioned (health, socio-economics and ecology) demonstrate the urgent need for a globalization of solidarity to reflect our global interdependence. In the last two decades,

international stability and security have deteriorated.^[iii] It seems that political friendship and international concord increasingly cease to be the supreme good that nations desire and are ready to commit to. Regrettably, instead of being united for the common good against a common threat that knows no borders, many leaders are deepening international and internal divisions. In this sense, the pandemic, through health fatalities and complications, economic recession and conflicts represents the perfect storm! We need global leadership that can re-build bonds of unity while rejecting scapegoating, mutual recrimination, chauvinistic nationalism, isolationism, and other forms of selfishness. As Pope Francis said last November in Nagasaki, we must “break down the climate of distrust” and prevent the “erosion of multilateralism”^[iv]. In the interest of building a sustainable peace, we must foster a ‘culture of encounter’ where men and women discover one another as members of one human family, share the same belief. Solidarity. Trust. Encounter. Common good. **Nonviolence**. We believe these are the foundations of actual human security.

The Church strongly supports projects of peacebuilding that are essential for conflict and post-conflict communities to respond to COVID-19. Without controlling arms, it is impossible to ensure security. Without security, the responses to the pandemic are not complete.

The COVID-19 pandemic, the economic recession, and the climate change make ever clearer the need to give priority to positive peace over narrow notions of national security. Pope John XXIII already signaled the need for this transformation by re-defining peace in terms of the recognition, respect, safeguarding, and promotion of the rights of the human person (*Pacem in terris*, 139). Now, more than ever, is the time for nations of the world to shift from national security by military means to human security as the primary concern of policy and international relations. Now is the time for the international community and the Church to develop bold and imaginative plans for collective action commensurate with the magnitude of this crisis. Now is the time to build a world that better reflects a truly integral approach to peace, human development, and ecology.

Thank you!

^[i] <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/07/1067552>

^[ii] <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/06/1066982>

^[iii] <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2019/09/27/190927b.html>

^[iv] http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/november/documents/papa-francesco_20191124_messaggio-arminucleari-nagasaki.html

[00864-EN.01] [Original text: English]

**Visit of the Holy Father Francis to Bari on the occasion of the meeting of reflection and spirituality
"Mediterranean frontier of peace (19-23 February 2020) - Eucharistic celebration and recital of the
Angelus, 23.02.2020**

[B0120]

**Homily of the Holy Father
Before the Angelus**

at 10.45 this morning, at 10.45, in Corso Vittorio Emanuele II in Bari, the Holy Father Francis presided over the Eucharistic celebration at the conclusion of the meeting of reflection and spirituality "Mediterranean frontier of peace" during which he pronounced the "homily.

At the end of the celebration, after the greeting and words of thanks from the Archbishop of Bari-Bitonto, HE Mons. Francesco Cacucci, the Pope led the recitation of the Angelus with the faithful and pilgrims gathered. So he went by car to Piazzale Cristoforo Colombo from where - at 12.50 - he left by helicopter to return to the Vatican.

We publish below the homily that the Pope gave during the Holy Mass and the introductory words to the recital of the Angelus:

**Homily of the Holy Father
French language translation
Translation into English
German language translation
Spanish language translation
Portuguese language translation
Polish language translation**

Homily of the Holy Father

Jesus quotes the ancient law: "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (*Mt* 5:38; *Ex* 21:24). We know what he meant: whoever takes something away from you, you will take away the same thing. It was actually a great progress, because it prevented worse retaliation: if someone hurt you, you will repay him in the same measure, you won't be able to do him worse. Closing the contests in a draw was a step forward. Yet Jesus goes further, much further: "But I tell you, do not oppose the wicked" (*Mt* 5:39). **But how, Lord? If someone thinks ill of me, if someone hurts me, can't I repay him with the same coin? "No", says Jesus: non-violence, no violence.**

We may think that Jesus' teaching pursues a strategy: in the end the wicked will desist. But this is not the reason why Jesus asks us to love even those who hurt us. What is the reason? That the Father, our Father, always loves everyone, even if he is not reciprocated. He "makes his sun rise on evil and on good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (v. 45). And today, in the first reading, he tells us: "Be holy, because I, the Lord your God, am holy!" (*Lev* 19,2). That is: "Live like me, seek what I seek". Jesus did so. He didn't point the finger at those who unjustly condemned and cruelly killed him, but he opened his arms to them on the cross. And he forgave those who put nails in his wrists (cf. *Lk* 23:33-34).

So, if we want to be disciples of Christ, if we want to call ourselves Christians, this is the way, there is no other. Loved by God, we are called to love; forgive yourself, to forgive; touched by love, to give love without waiting for others to begin; saved freely, not to seek any profit in the good we do. And you can say: "But Jesus exaggerates! He even says: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"

(Mt 5:44); he talks like that to get attention, but maybe he doesn't really mean that". But yes, he really means that. Here Jesus does not speak in paradoxes, he does not mince words. He is direct and clear. He cites the ancient law and solemnly says: " *But I tell you: love your enemies* ". They are intentional words, precise words.

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. It is the Christian novelty. It is the Christian difference. Praying and loving: this is what we must do; and not only towards those who love us, not only towards our friends, not only towards our people. Because the love of Jesus knows no bounds and barriers. The Lord asks us for the courage of a love without calculations. Because the measure of Jesus is love without measure. How many times have we neglected his requests, behaving like everyone else! Yet the command of love is not a simple provocation, it is at the heart of the Gospel. We do not accept excuses about love for all, we do not preach comfortable prudence. The Lord was not prudent, he did not compromise, he asked us for *the extremism of charity*. The extremism of love is the only licit Christian extremism.

Love your enemies . Today, during Mass and afterwards, it will do us good to repeat these words to ourselves and apply them to people who treat us badly, who annoy us, who we struggle to welcome, who rob us of our serenity. *Love your enemies* . It will also do us good to ask ourselves some questions: "What am I worried about in life: enemies, those who hate me? Or to love?". Don't worry about other people's wickedness, about those who think ill of you. Instead, start disarming your heart for the love of Jesus. Because those who love God have no enemies in their hearts. Worship of God is the opposite of the culture of hatred. And the culture of hatred is fought against *the cult of lamentation*. How many times do we complain about what we don't receive, about what's wrong! Jesus knows that many things are wrong, that there will always be someone who will hurt us, even someone who will persecute us. But he only asks us to pray and love. Here is the revolution of Jesus, the greatest in history: from the enemy to hate to the enemy to love, from the cult of lamentation to the culture of gift. If we belong to Jesus, this is the way! There is no other.

It's true, but you can object: "I understand the greatness of the ideal, but life is something else! If I love and forgive, I won't survive in this world, where the logic of force prevails and everyone seems to think for themselves". But then the logic of Jesus is a loser? He is a loser in the eyes of the world, but a winner in the eyes of God. Saint Paul told us in the second reading: "Let no one be deceived, for the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the sight of God" (1 Cor 3:18-19) . God sees beyond. He knows how to win. He knows that evil can only be overcome with good. He saved us like this: not with the sword, but with the cross. Loving and forgiving is living as winners. We will lose if we defend the faith by force. The Lord would also repeat to us the words he said to Peter in Gethsemane: "Put your sword back into its sheath" (Jn 18.11). In today's Gethsemane, in our indifferent and unjust world, where we seem to be witnessing the agony of hope, the Christian cannot do like those disciples, who first took up the sword and then fled. No, the solution is not to draw the sword against someone or even to escape from the times we live in. The solution is the way of Jesus: active love, humble love, love "to the end" (Jn 13:1).

Dear brothers and sisters, today Jesus, with his limitless love, raises the bar of our humanity. In the end we can ask ourselves: "And we, will we make it?". If the goal were impossible, the Lord would not have asked us to reach it. But alone it is difficult; it is a grace that must be asked for. Ask God for the strength to love, tell him: "Lord, help me to love, teach me to forgive. I can't do it alone, I need you". And we must also ask for the grace to see others not as obstacles and complications, but as brothers and sisters to be loved. Very often we ask for help and thanks for us, but how little we ask to know how to love! We don't ask enough to be able to live the heart of the Gospel, to be truly Christians. But «in the evening of life, we will be judged on love» (St. John of the Cross, *Words of light and love*, 57). Let's choose love today, even if it costs, even if it goes against the tide. Let's not let ourselves be conditioned by common thought, let's

not settle for half measures. We welcome the challenge of Jesus, the challenge of charity. We will be true Christians and the world will be more humane.

[00264-IT.02] [Original text: Italian]

2021

Press conference on the closing of the special year on the fifth anniversary of *Laudato si'* and on the presentation of the *Laudato si'* Action Platform, 25.05.2021

[B0331]

Speech by His Eminence Card. Peter KA Turkson

Intervention by Fr. Joshtrom Isaac Kureethadam

Speech by Sr. Sheila Kinsey

Speech by Carolina Bianchi

At 11.30 this morning the Press Conference on the closing of the special year on the fifth anniversary of *Laudato si'* and on the presentation of the *Laudato si'* Action Platform will take place in live *streaming* from the Holy See Press Office .

Speakers: His Eminence Card. Peter KA Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development; Fr. Joshtrom Isaac Kureethadam, Coordinator of the "Ecology and Creation" Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development; Sr. Sheila Kinsey, Co-Executive Secretary of the Commission for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) of the International Union of Superiors General; and Carolina Bianchi, *Laudato si'* animator of the Global Catholic Movement for the Climate (GCCM) and INECOOP collaborator for the *Policoro* youth project of the Italian Episcopal Conference.

Speech by Sr. Sheila Kinsey

Text in English

Translation into Italian

Spanish language translation

Text in English

What a time of celebration! We are here for the launch of the *Laudato si'* Action Platform- recognizing that “Interdependence obliges us to think of one world with a common plan.” (LS 164). I was chosen to speak about the sectors of this platform because religious are present in all of the sectors. Through our members and ministries, we are able to influence the other groups.

The seven sectors are comprised of important areas of our church: families, educational institutions, economy, religious orders, parishes & dioceses, hospitals & healthcare centres, and organizations & groups. It is the expectation that the persons in these groups are able to share the richness and variety of their experiences.

The leadership of the sectors are members of the *Laudato si'* Steering Board which provides the overall framework for the implementation of the platform. The meetings have provided opportunities for thoughtful and fruitful discussions that have built a vibrant community. Here issues and concerns related to the implementation of the platform are addressed in a timely manner.

Our sector is composed of religious men and women: priests, brothers, and sisters, from around the world and working in various capacities. In our meetings, we listen carefully to one another as we discern our way together. Three pillars guide our planning efforts. The first, is to encourage congregations to make a commitment to *Laudato si'* based on the congregation's charism, one that is prophetic, public, and

accountable. The second, is to transition to an integral ecology through actualizing the seven *Laudato si'* Goals. Here we encourage a reflective process of discernment, an assessment, by listening to local voices as concerns are raised. Dreams that are shared inspire us forward and seek to be embedded in a community project cycle. The third, is journeying and working together in partnerships, in advocacy efforts, with integrity and based on the principles of **nonviolence** as we meet the challenge of the ecological crisis.

The working group for this sector meets regularly to reflect on what we have been learning from our contacts and to determine next steps. Currently, we are working with suggested targets for the action platform. We will also be considering some templates and guides to help with planning and the sharing of resources. Enthusiasm for the *Laudato si'* Action Platform is growing with the strength of our network. Our grassroots coordination for this project, Sowing Hope for the Planet, is encouraged by the leaders and members of the major superiors of religious men and women, the USG and UISG. Through SHFP, we developed an interactive framework for community building, education, sharing resources and support. Our working group is also connected to 900 members who are solidly committed to promoting *Laudato si'* and who provide additional input to the development of the platform. We are grateful for all the dynamic energy and support for our work together as we face the realistic challenges before us.

For Pope Francis reminds us, *All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents* (LS 14).

[00719-EN.01] [Original text: English]

Translation into Italian

What a festive moment! *We are here for the launch of the Laudato Si ' Action Platform* - recognizing that "Interdependence obliges us to think of a single world with a common project". (LS 164). I was chosen to speak on the sectors of this platform because religious are present in all sectors. Through our membership and ministries, we are able to influence other groups.

The seven sectors include important areas of our Church: families, educational institutions, the economy, religious orders, parishes and dioceses, hospitals and health centres, organizations and groups. The expectation is that people in these groups are able to share the richness and variety of their experiences. Sector leaders are members of the *Laudato Si'* Steering Committee which provides the overall framework for the implementation of the platform. The meetings provided opportunities for thoughtful and fruitful discussions that built a vibrant community. Here questions and concerns related to the implementation of the platform are addressed in a timely manner.

Our sector is made up of men and women religious: priests, brothers and sisters, from all over the world and working in various capacities. In our meetings, we listen carefully to each other as we discern our journey together. Three pillars guide our planning efforts.

The first is to encourage congregations to make a commitment to *Laudato si'* based on the congregation's charism, which is prophetic, public and accountable.

The second is the transition to an integral ecology through the implementation of the seven objectives of *Laudato si'*. Here we encourage a reflective process of discernment, an evaluation, listening to local voices when concerns are raised. Shared dreams inspire us to move forward and seek to be incorporated into a cycle of community projects.

The third area is to travel and work together in partnership, advocacy efforts, with integrity and based on the principles of **nonviolence**, as we face the challenge of the ecological crisis.

The working group for this area meets regularly to reflect on what we have learned from our contacts and to determine next steps. We are currently working on the suggested objectives for the Platform for Action. We'll also look at some templates and guides to help with resource planning and sharing. Enthusiasm for the *Laudato Si'* Platform for Action is growing with the strength of our network. Our grassroots coordination for this project, "Sowing Hope for the Planet," is encouraged by the leaders and senior high school members of the men and women religious, USG and UISG. Through SHFP, we have developed an interactive framework for community building, education, resource sharing and advocacy. Our working group is also connected to 900 members who are solidly committed to the promotion of *Laudato si'* and who provide further input to the development of the Platform. We are grateful for all the dynamic energy and support in our work together as we tackle the realistic challenges ahead.

For Pope Francis reminds us: *We can all cooperate as God's instruments for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvement and talent (LS 14).*

2022

Audience with the Delegation of the Mongolian Buddhist Authority, 05.28.2022

[B0403]

Discorso del Santo Padre
Traduzione in lingua inglese

This morning the Holy Father Francis received in audience the Delegation of Mongolian Buddhist Authorities on the occasion of the commemoration of the Catholic Church's 30 years of presence in the Asian country and the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Mongolia.

We publish below the words of greeting that the Pope addressed to those present during the meeting:

Discorso del Santo Padre
Traduzione in lingua inglese

I offer a warm and respectful welcome to you, dear Buddhist leaders from Mongolia, together with Bishop Giorgio Marengo, *Apostolic Prefect of Ulaanbaatar, who is accompanying you*. I am grateful for this, your first visit to the Vatican as official representatives of Mongolian Buddhism, which seeks to consolidate your friendly relations with the Catholic Church for the sake of advancing mutual understanding and cooperation in the building of a peaceful society. The occasion is particularly significant, since this year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Apostolic Prefecture in your country and of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Mongolia.

Peace is the ardent yearning of humanity today. Consequently, there is an urgent need, through dialogue at all levels, to promote a culture of peace and **nonviolence**, and to work to that end. This dialogue must invite all people to reject violence in every form, including violence done to the environment. Sadly too, there are those who continue to abuse religion by using it to justify acts of violence and hatred.

Jesus and the Buddha were peacemakers and promoters of **nonviolence**. “Jesus himself lived in violent times. Yet he taught that the true battlefield, where violence and peace meet, is the human heart... He unfailingly preached God’s unconditional love, which welcomes and forgives. He taught his disciples to love their enemies (cf. *Mt5:44*)... Jesus marked out the path of **nonviolence**. He walked that path to the very end, to the cross, whereby he became our peace and put an end to hostility (cf. *Eph2:14-16*)”. Thus, “to be true followers of Jesus today also includes embracing his teaching about **nonviolence**” (*Message for the 2017 World Day of Peace*, 3).

The core message of the Buddha was **nonviolence and peace**. He taught that “victory begets enmity; the defeated dwell in pain. Happily, the peaceful live, discarding both victory and defeat” (*Dhammapada*, XV, 5 [201]). In addition, he insisted that self-conquest is greater than the conquest of others: “Though one may conquer a thousand times a thousand men in battle, yet he indeed is the noblest victor who conquers himself” (ibid, VIII, 4 [103]).

In a world ravaged by conflicts and wars, we, as religious leaders deeply rooted in our respective religious teachings, have a duty to awaken in humanity the firm resolve to renounce violence and to build a culture of peace.

Though the presence of more formal communities of the Catholic faithful in your country is fairly recent, and their numbers small but significant, the Church is fully committed to fostering a culture of encounter, in imitation of her Master and Founder, who commanded his disciples: “Love one another as I love you” (*Jn 15:12*). Let us strengthen our friendship for the benefit of everyone. Mongolia has a long-standing tradition of peaceful coexistence between different religions. It is my hope and prayer that this ancient history of harmony in diversity may continue in our own day through the effective implementation of religious freedom and the promotion of joint initiatives for the common good. Your presence here today is itself a sign of hope. With these sentiments, I encourage you to persevere in your fraternal dialogue and your good relations with the Catholic Church in your country, for the sake of peace and harmony.

Thank you once again for your visit, which is greatly appreciated. I trust that your stay in Rome will be both pleasant and enriching. I am also certain that your meeting with the members of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue will provide an opportunity to explore further ways to promote Buddhist-Christian dialogue in Mongolia and in the region.

To you and to all those whom you represent in the different Buddhist monasteries in Mongolia, I offer prayerful good wishes of abundant prosperity and peace!

[00835-EN.01] [Original text: Italian]
[B0403-XX.01]

Telegram of the Holy Father signed by the Cardinal Secretary of State [on] the assassination of the former Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, 09.07.2022

[B0525]

We publish below the telegram of condolences for the assassination of the former Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, which took place yesterday, Friday 8 July 2022, sent - in the name of the Holy Father Francis - by the Cardinal Secretary of State, Pietro Parolin, to H.E. Archbishop Leo Boccardi, Apostolic Nuncio in Japan:

Telegramma

THE MOST REVEREND LEO BOCCARDI
APOSTOLIC NUNCIO IN JAPAN
TOKYO

HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS WAS DEEPLY SADDENED TO LEARN OF THE ASSASSINATION OF MR SHINZO ABE, FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN, AND HE OFFERS HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES TO HIS FAMILY, FRIENDS AND THE PEOPLE OF JAPAN. IN THE WAKE OF THIS SENSELESS ACT, HE PRAYS THAT JAPANESE SOCIETY WILL BE STRENGTHENED IN ITS HISTORIC COMMITMENT TO PEACE AND **NONVIOLENCE**.

CARDINAL PIETRO PAROLIN
SECRETARY OF STATE

[01063-EN.01] [Original text: English]

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