

Faced with the drama of war, let us pray and work for peace!

“He shall judge between the nations, and set terms for many peoples.
They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks;
One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again.
House of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!” (Is 2, 4-5).

Dear TOR brothers and sisters,

May the Lord give you peace!

Today this greeting becomes a heartfelt supplication towards the Creator and a deep wish for each one of you and, especially, for all our brothers and sisters who are suffering from the war in Ukraine, although we do not forget other parts of the planet. As Franciscans friars and sisters, we are called to be witnesses and bearers of the peace of Christ, especially in situations of conflict and aggression against life. The leaders of the nations involved bear a grave responsibility in this conflict, since their peoples are the ones who suffer the consequences of their decisions. The media is already reporting the horrors of war being endured by those desperately sheltering from the attacks, including children, women and the elderly; those who flee hastily to neighboring countries and those who have already lost their lives violently. Let us pray to the Father of humanity, Lord of life and history, for all the victims of this war and for those who are directly suffering from it, so that they may soon find security and assistance in their anguish and suffering. Let us ask the Most High Good Lord to enlighten those who have in their hands the power to decide the course of events so that they seek just and peaceful solutions to their conflicts, thinking of the common good of all peoples.

In this context, many individual and collective voices have been raised to condemn the armed conflict and propose diplomatic negotiations between the parties involved. The voice of the successor of the Apostle Peter, Pope Francis, has resounded clearly, inviting dialogue and prayer for peace. Let us do everything possible to participate in the day of prayer and fasting called by the Holy Father for this Ash Wednesday (see attached file). This initiative has been announced by many media, but perhaps some of us have not had the opportunity to listen carefully. This Sunday will be a great opportunity to promote it to the faithful gathered at the Eucharistic celebration and in other events or media.

Without a doubt, we are living through crucial historical moments: while we are heading towards what seems to be the end of the pandemic, another great threat to humanity appears, since the consequences of an international war in our time cannot be calculated.

Faced with the drama of war, let us pray and work for peace every day with faith-filled supplications, and building and rebuilding human relationships, through the real and concrete experience of evangelical values.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Mt 5:9).

Negombo, Sri Lanka, February 26, 2022.

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