



Shepherd's Voice

PRAY FOR PEACE: LET PEACE BEGIN AT HOME

Dear Friends,

We live in a world deeply wounded by conflict and division. Wars and violence continue to affect countless lives, not only in distant lands but also in places closer to us. Even our own neighborhoods and communities are not untouched by tensions, divisions and unrest. In such a situation, the Christian response cannot be indifference. As followers of Christ, the Prince of Peace, we are called not merely to desire peace but to become instruments of peace.

War rarely begins on a battlefield. It often begins with an angry word, a wound that is allowed to fester, a prejudice that is nurtured, or forgiveness that is withheld.

Long before peace treaties are signed between nations, peace must be restored in our homes—in the hearts of husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters. When the Risen Lord appeared to His frightened

disciples, His first words were: **“Peace be with you” (Jn 20:19).** This greeting of the Risen Christ continues to be His message to every Christian family and to our troubled world today.

Pope Leo XIV has reminded us that **“peace is not an interval between conflicts.”** True peace is much deeper. It is not simply the absence of war or violence; it is a way of living rooted in justice, reconciliation, truth and love.

The Church has consistently taught us this profound understanding of peace. In *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth), Pope John XXIII reminded the world that genuine peace cannot be built merely upon the silencing of weapons. It must be founded upon truth, justice, love and freedom. The Second Vatican

Council likewise described peace as an **“enterprise of justice”** (*Gaudium et Spes*, 78), reminding us that peace is inseparable from the recognition of the dignity and rights of every human person. Peace, therefore, is ultimately



the fruit of love—a love that respects human dignity and transcends differences of culture, language, tribe, nationality and social status.

The Family: The First School of Peace

The first school of peace is not the classroom but the home. The first lesson in forgiveness is often learned not from a book but by watching parents forgive and apologize to one another. Before children learn about God’s unconditional love through catechism, they encounter—or fail to encounter—that love through the relationships they experience at home.

St. John Paul II beautifully described the family as the **“Domestic Church.”** Within the walls of our homes, children discover whether love is patient, whether respect is genuine, whether words heal or wound, and whether faith is something merely spoken or truly lived. A home filled with kindness, prayer and mutual respect becomes a place where trust grows naturally. Conversely, a home dominated



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by anger, resentment and violence can leave wounds that remain long after childhood.

The greatest inheritance parents can leave their children is therefore not wealth, property or even education, but the memory of a peaceful home—a home where they felt loved, accepted, respected and secure. Such homes become the foundation of peaceful communities and, ultimately, of a peaceful society.

Let Our Homes Become Wellsprings of Peace

It is in this spirit that, during this year dedicated to **“St. Francis of Assisi – A Model for Priests and Religious,”** I once again encourage all our Catholic families to maintain a **Family Chapel**—a simple, prayerful space in every home where the family can gather before God each day.

A Family Chapel need not be elaborate. What matters is that it becomes a sacred place where the family pauses amid the busy life to pray together, listen to God’s Word, give thanks, seek forgiveness and entrust one another to God’s care. In such a space, hearts are gradually transformed, relationships are strengthened and faith is nurtured.

The Family Chapel can also become a place where the seeds of vocation are quietly sown. Vocations do not spring merely from schools, seminaries or formation houses; they first grow within families where children learn to listen to God, to serve others and to recognize His call. A family that prays together creates an atmosphere in which a young person can more readily hear God’s invitation to discipleship and service.

Our children are watching us. They learn from the way we speak to one another, the way we settle disagreements, the way we forgive, the way we pray and the way we treat those who are different from us. The future of our Church and society is quietly being shaped in our homes today.

If peace truly begins at home, then every Christian family, by God’s grace, possesses the power to change the world - **one act of love, one word of forgiveness, one prayer and one peaceful home at a time.**

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, let us continue to pray fervently for peace—in the world, in our country, in our state, in our communities and, above all, in our families. Let us ask the Lord to heal wounded hearts, reconcile those who are divided,

comfort those who suffer and give wisdom and courage to those entrusted with the responsibility of building peace.

May our families remain united in love and faith. May our homes become sanctuaries of forgiveness and prayer, and wells of peace from which peace flows into our communities and society. And may the prayer of St. Francis become our own prayer:

“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.”

May Christ, the Risen Lord and Prince of Peace, bless our families, our Church and our world with His peace.

Yours in Christ,



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