



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the Lord give you peace!

The month of October is approaching, and with it the realisation that for the past year the Holy Land, and not only, has been plunged into a vortex of violence and hatred never seen or experienced before. The intensity and impact of the tragedies we have witnessed in the past twelve months have deeply lacerated our conscience and our sense of humanity.

Violence, which has caused and is causing thousands of innocent victims, has also found its way into political and social language and actions. It has struck a profound blow to the common feeling of belonging to the Holy Land, to the consciousness of being part of a plan of Providence that wanted us here to build together His Kingdom of peace and justice, and not to make it instead a reservoir of hatred and contempt, of mutual rejection and annihilation.

In recent months we have already spoken out clearly about what is happening and have repeatedly reiterated our condemnation of this senseless war and what has generated it, calling on everyone to stop this drift of violence, and to have the courage to find other ways of resolving the current conflict, which take into account the demands of justice, dignity and security for all.

We can only call once again on those in authority and those who bear the grave responsibility of making decisions in this context, to a commitment to justice and respect for every person's right to freedom, dignity and peace.

We too have a duty to commit ourselves to peace, first by preserving our hearts from all feelings of hatred, and instead cherishing the desire for good for everyone. By committing ourselves, each in our own community contexts and in the forms we can, we should support those in need, help those who are personally invested to alleviate the suffering of those affected by this war, and promote every action of peace, reconciliation and encounter. Yet, we also need to pray, to bring our pain and our desire for peace to God. We need to convert, to do penance, and to implore forgiveness.

Therefore, I invite you to a day of prayer, fasting and penance on **7th October**, a date that has become symbolic of the drama we are experiencing. The month of October is also the Marian month and on October 7 we celebrate the memory of Mary Queen of the Rosary.

May each of us, with the rosary or in whatever form he or she sees fit, personally but better again in community, find a moment to pause and pray, and bring to the "merciful Father and God of all consolation" (2 Cor. 1:3), our desire for peace and reconciliation. We invoke the intercession of Mary Queen of the Rosary for this beloved Land and its inhabitants.

Sincerely in Christ,

†Pierbattista Card. Pizzaballa

Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem

Prayer for Peace

Lord our God,
Father of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and Father of all mankind,
Who in the cross of Your Son
and through the gift of His own life,
at great cost You wished to destroy
the wall of enmity and hostility
that separates peoples and makes us enemies:
Send into our hearts
the gift of the Holy Spirit,
that He may purify us from every feeling
of violence, hatred and revenge,
enlighten us to understand
the irrepressible dignity
of every human person,
and inflame us to the point of consumption
for a peaceful and reconciled world
in truth and justice,
in love and freedom.
Almighty and eternal God,
in Your hands, are the hopes of men
and the rights of every people:
Assist with Your wisdom those who govern us
so that, with Your help,
they will become sensitive to the sufferings of the poor
and of those who suffer the consequences
of violence and war;
may they promote the common good and lasting peace
in the region
and throughout the earth.
Virgin Mary, Mother of Hope,
obtain the gift of peace
for the Holy Land that gave birth to you
and for the whole world.
Amen.