

No to violence, no to war, no to arms: Pope Francis calls for a culture of peace

- *Sixty years after **St. John XXIII** published the encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, **Francis** renews his message and denounces that “war is madness, it is beyond reason.”*
- ***The Pope Video** for April is an appeal to build a culture of peace, which should resort “less and less to the use of arms,” because “a lasting peace can exist only without weapons.”*
- ***Francis** asks to “make non-violence a guide for our actions, both in daily life and in international relations.”*

(Vatican City, March 30, 2023) - “Let us develop a culture of peace. A culture of peace,” Pope Francis strongly urges. The Pope Video for April calls for a non-violent culture in the new prayer intention he entrusts to the entire **Catholic Church**, through the **Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network**.

April 11 marks the 60th anniversary of the publication of the encyclical *Pacem in terris* written by **Pope John XXIII** and subtitled “On establishing universal peace in truth, justice, charity, and liberty.” In this month's video, **Francis** strongly renews this message, stressing that “war is madness, it is beyond reason.”

This quote from sixty years ago, cited by **Francis** in the message accompanying his prayer intention, is more relevant than ever, as are the testimonies left by some of the people who sowed seeds of peace in the last century: **St. John XXIII**, of course, but also **Mahatma Gandhi**, **Martin Luther King**, **St. Teresa of Calcutta**. In **The Pope Video** this month, their black-and-white portraits appear amid the scenes of destruction caused by today's violence: from the war in Ukraine to armed conflicts in the Middle East, to the clashes and shootings in even the wealthiest countries. Although there has been no shortage of witnesses, in the end, the world has not yet learned the fundamental lesson: that “Any war, any armed confrontation, always ends in defeat for all.”

Peace is the ultimate goal

Amnesty International published data and statistics on the use of weapons between 2012 and 2016, revealing what results from a culture of violence: for example, more than 500 people die every day from gun violence and an average



THE POPE VIDEO
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of 2000 are injured; 44% of homicides in the world are committed with firearms. This relates directly to the arms industry: 8 million handguns are produced each year, along with 15 billion rounds of ammunition. And as far as armed conflict is concerned, **Action on Armed Violence** (AOAV) anticipated that expectations for 2023 do not seem encouraging: new confrontations, in particular the Russian invasion of Ukraine and outbreaks in Asia, were added to ongoing conflicts in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, among others.

The only possible way to stop this onslaught is to seek and implement, at the local and international level, ways of real dialogue and to assume “non-violence” as “a guide for our actions”. This message echoes what **Pope John XXIII** said 60 years ago: violence “has always destroyed everything. It has inflamed passions, but never assuaged them. It sows no seeds but those of hatred and destruction. Far from bringing about the reconciliation of contending parties, it reduces men and political parties to the necessity of laboriously redoing the work of the past, building on the ruins that disharmony has left in its wake.”

Peace without weapons

At a time in history marked by the conflict in Ukraine, which has involved a large number of countries over the past year, **Francis** recalls that, even in cases of self-defense, the ultimate goal must always be peace: even when this peace, as today, seems distant. But “a lasting peace —he adds— can exist only without weapons”, and for this reason he insists on a matter dear to his heart: the disarmament at all levels, including within society: “the culture of non-violence will progress when countries and citizens alike resort less and less to the use of arms.”

Fr. Frédéric Fornos S.J., International Director of the **Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network**, said: “In the face of the violence of our time, **Francis** proposes a whole month to pray ‘for a more widespread culture of non-violence’. Peace among peoples begins, in fact, in the most concrete and intimate part of our hearts, when I meet my neighbours in the streets... When I see their face, their gaze, especially those who come from elsewhere, those who do not speak my language and do not share my same culture, those who are ‘strange’ in their attitudes and are thus called ‘foreigners’. War and conflict begin here and now, in our hearts, every time we allow violence to replace justice and forgiveness. The **Gospel** shows us that the life of **Jesus** reveals the true way of peace and invites us to follow him. It is in this spirit that we are called to ‘disarm’ ourselves, in the sense of ‘disarming’ our words, our actions, our hatred. Let us pray then, as **Francis** invites us to do,



so that we 'make non-violence a guide for our actions, both in daily life and in international relations.'”

The Pope Video is possible thanks to the generous contributions of many people. You can donate by following [this link](#).

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About The Pope Video

The Pope Video is an official global initiative with the purpose of disseminating the Holy Father's monthly prayer intentions. It is carried out by the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer). **Since the year 2016, The Pope Video has had more than 193 million views across all the Vatican's social networks, and is translated into more than 23 languages, receiving press coverage in 114 countries.** The videos are produced and created by the team of The Pope Video of the Prayer Network, coordinated by Andrea Sarubbi, with the support of La Machi Communication for Good Causes agency. The project is supported by [Vatican Media](#). More information at: [The Pope Video](#)

About the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network is a Vatican foundation, with the mission of mobilizing Catholics through prayer and action in response to the challenges facing humanity and the mission of the Church. These challenges are presented in the form of prayer intentions entrusted by the Pope to the entire Church. The foundation's mission is inscribed in the dynamic of the Heart of Jesus, a mission of compassion for the world. It was founded in 1844 as the Apostleship of Prayer. It is present in 89 countries and is made up of more than 22 million Catholics. It includes a youth branch, the EYM: Eucharistic Youth Movement. In December 2020, the Pope constituted this pontifical work as a Vatican foundation and approved its new statutes. Its international director is Fr. Frédéric Fornos, SJ. For more information, visit: <https://www.popesprayer.va>

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