

My dear children: may Jesus watch over my daughters and sons for me!

Faced with the new war in Europe, let us unite ourselves wholeheartedly to the Pope's invitation to respond to violence with prayer and fasting. In addition to the day of fasting for peace that we will observe on 2 March, let us, with the confidence that comes from being his children, continue imploring God frequently every day for the gift of peace. Prayer and the experience of fasting bring us closer to those people who are suffering from deprivation and anxiety, and whose future is uncertain.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God” (*Mt 5:9*). It is natural for us to feel powerless to change the course of history. But let us rely on the strength of prayer. Without our Lord, all efforts to bring peace to hearts will fall short. At the same time, let us realize that peace is an ongoing task. Taking an active role in living this beatitude means contributing to and fostering peace in our own families, at work, and in society, because God wants each one of us to be a guardian of our brothers and sisters (cf. *Gen 4:9*).

Especially at Holy Mass, and in our prayer to our Lady, Queen of Peace, let us be very mindful of all those who are suffering.

Your Father blesses you with all his affection,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Leonardo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rome, 26 February 2022