



The Holy See

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD
WORLD DAY OF PEACE

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Wednesday, 1st January 2020

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good Morning!

Last night we ended the year 2019 by thanking God for the gift of time and for all its advantages. Today we begin 2020 with the same attitude of *gratitude* and *praise*. It is not to be taken for granted that our planet has begun a new revolution around the sun and that we human beings continue to live on it. It is not to be taken for granted. Indeed it is always a “miracle” at which to be amazed and grateful.

On the first day of the year, the Liturgy celebrates the Holy Mother of God, Mary, the Virgin of Nazareth who gave birth to Jesus, the Saviour. That Child is *God's Blessing* to each man and woman, to the great human family and to the whole world. Jesus did not take away the evil of the world, but he defeated it at its root. His salvation is not a magical but rather a “patient” salvation, that is, it requires the patience of love, which takes on iniquity and removes its power. The patience of love. Love makes us patient. Often we lose our patience; I too, and please excuse me for yesterday's bad example. This is why by contemplating the Nativity scene with the eyes of faith, we see the world renewed, freed from the dominion of evil and placed under the royal power of Christ, the Child who lies in the manger.

This is why today, the Mother of God *blesses us*. And how does Our Lady bless us? By showing us her Son. She takes him in her arms and she shows him to us, and thus, blesses us. She

blesses the entire Church, she blesses the whole world. As the angels sang in Bethlehem, Jesus is a “great joy that will come to all people”, he is the Glory of God and peace for mankind (cf. Lk 2:10). And this is the reason why Saint Pope Paul VI wished to dedicate the first day of the year to peace — it is the World Day of Peace — to prayer, to becoming conscious of and responsible for peace. [The message for this year, 2020](#), is as follows: peace is a *journey of hope*, a journey which moves forward through *dialogue, reconciliation and ecological conversion*.

Thus, let us fix our gaze on the Mother and the Son whom she shows us. At the beginning of the year, let us allow ourselves to be blessed by Our Lady with her Son.

Jesus is the blessing for those who are oppressed by the yoke of slavery; moral slavery and physical slavery. He frees with his love. To those who have lost their self esteem, imprisoned in vicious circles, Jesus says: the Father loves you, he does not abandon you, await his return with unshakable patience (cf. Lk 15:20). To those who are victims of injustice and exploitation and see no way out, Jesus opens the door of fraternity where one finds welcoming faces, hearts and hands, where one can share one’s bitterness and despair and regain some dignity. To those who are gravely ill and feel abandoned and discouraged, Jesus comes near, he touches their wounds with tenderness, dresses them with the balm of comfort and turns weakness into strength for the good, to undo the most tangled knots. To those who are in prison and are tempted to close in on themselves, Jesus reopens a horizon of hope, starting from a small glimmer of light.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us come down from the pedestal of our pride — we all have the temptation of pride — and let us ask the blessing of the Holy Mother of God, the humble Mother of God. She shows us Jesus: Let us allow ourselves to be blessed, let us open our heart to his kindness. In this way the year that is beginning will be a journey of hope and of peace, not with words, but through daily gestures of dialogue, reconciliation and care for creation.

After praying the Angelus with the faithful, Pope Francis continued:

Dear brothers and sisters, I offer you all my best wishes for peace and good in the new year, to those here in Saint Peter’s Square and to those joining through the media.

I thank the President of the Republic of Italy, H.E. Mr Sergio Mattarella, for the greeting he addressed to me in his end of the year Message and in exchange I invoke God’s blessing on his lofty mission.

I warmly greet those taking part in the “Peace in All Lands” initiative. This initiative is organized by the Sant’Egidio Community, in Rome and in many cities throughout the world. They also have a school for peace. Keep it up! I greet the pilgrims from the United States of America, New Zealand and Spain; the young Italians, Albanians and Maltese, along with the Sisters of Charity, and the

friends and volunteers of the “*Fraterna Domus*”.

I offer my greeting and encouragement to all the peaceful initiatives that the particular Churches, associations and ecclesial movements have promoted on this World Day of Peace; encounters of prayer and fraternity accompanied by solidarity with the poorest. In particular I recall the march that took place yesterday afternoon in Ravenna, Italy.

My thoughts also go to the many volunteers who courageously choose to be present in a non-violent and unarmed way in places where peace and justice are threatened, as well as the military deployed in peace missions in numerous areas of conflict. Many thanks to them!

To all believers and non-believers, because we are all brothers and sisters, I offer my hope that you will never stop hoping in a peaceful world, to be built together day by day. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch. *Arrivederci!*