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Message of the Holy Father to participants in the World Meeting of Justice and Peace Commissions of Episcopal Conferences

The following is the message sent by the Holy Father to participants in the World Meeting of Justice and Peace Commissions of Episcopal Conferences, organized by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, entitled *Justice and Peace Commissions in the service of integral human development in the (post) Covid era: current challenges and prospects for the future in the light of Laudato si' and Fratelli tutti*, taking place online from 17 to 18 November 2021:

Message of the Holy Father

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am pleased to offer you my greetings and cordial good wishes for your work. I thank Cardinal Turkson and the officials of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development for having assembled you, albeit at a distance, to share experiences, evaluations and proposals in this phase of the current global crisis, in light of the Encyclicals *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti*.

Our thoughts go spontaneously to Saint Paul VI, who shortly after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council established the Pontifical Commission *Iustitia et Pax*, and to Saint John Paul II, who reorganized it as the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. In his Encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (1967) – which remains remarkably timely – Pope Paul, after a systematic reflection on the integral development of humanity, came to the conclusion that development can be considered “the new name for peace” (No. 76). Consistent with this approach, the Dicastery to which I have entrusted the mission of promoting integral human development is called to express “the solicitude of the Holy See with regard to justice and peace” (Statute, Art. 1).

I am certain that by their intercession, these two Saints continue to accompany your work in the various Commissions for Justice and Peace of Episcopal Conferences throughout the world. Those Commissions provide indispensable help to the social ministry of the local Churches. Theirs is the task of making better

known the Church's social doctrine, working actively for the protection of the dignity of the human person and human rights, with a preferential option for the poor and the least of our brothers and sisters. In this way, they contribute to the growth of social, economic and ecological justice, and to efforts to foster peace.

In carrying out this mission, you can draw extensively from the Encyclicals *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti*, while working to apply them in the light of various local situations and the different continental, regional and national settings. Indeed, in every part of the world integral development, and thus justice and peace, can only be advanced by pursuing these two paths: *care for our common home* and *fraternity and social friendship*. Two paths arising from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, yet paths on which we can walk alongside many men and women of other Christian confessions, other religions, and those with no particular religious affiliation.

For this reason, I encourage you to persevere in your work with hope, determination and creativity. I do so, fully recognizing the challenges presented by the current situation, marked by the health and social crisis resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and from old and new outbreaks of violence and conflict, amid a tendency to step back from the commitments made after the immense tragedies of the last century.

The current crisis has revealed numerous discrepancies in the economic and political system, while persistent unresolved challenges call for the joint efforts on the part of numerous actors. I urge you, then, to address these issues, also in cooperation with other ecclesial and civil agencies – local, regional and international – committed to the promotion of justice and peace.

Dear brothers and sisters, I entrust each of you, your associates and your families to the maternal protection of Mary Most Holy, Queen of Peace, and I cordially impart to you the Apostolic Blessing.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 15 November 2021, Memorial of Saint Albert the Great

FRANCIS
