

Pope Francis laments Easter of War in Urbi et Orbi blessing 2022



In his *Urbi et Orbi* blessing on Easter 2022, Pope Francis lamented an “Easter of War” as he prayed for peace in Ukraine and around the world.

“Today, [Jesus] alone has the right to speak to us of peace. Jesus alone, for he bears wounds... our wounds,” the pope said on April 17, from the central loggia of St. Peter’s Basilica, overlooking the Vatican square.

“His wounds are indeed ours, for two reasons. They are ours because we inflicted them upon him by our sins, by our hardness of heart, by our fratricidal hatred. They are also ours because he bore them for our sake; he did not cancel them from his glorified body; he chose to keep them, to bear them forever,” Francis continued.

“They are the indelible seal of his love for us, a perennial act of intercession, so that the heavenly Father, in seeing them, will have mercy upon us and upon the whole world,” he said.

“The wounds on the body of the risen Jesus are the sign of the battle he fought and won for us, won with the weapons of love, so that we might have peace and remain in peace.”

“As we contemplate those glorious wounds, our incredulous eyes open wide; our hardened hearts break open and we welcome the Easter message: ‘Peace be with you!’” he stated. “Brothers and sisters, let us allow the peace of Christ to enter our lives, our homes, our countries.”

Pope Francis gave the traditional *Urbi et Orbi* blessing following Easter Sunday Mass in St. Peter’s Square. Local authorities estimate 100,000 people were present at the Vatican and in the surrounding area for the blessing.

“*Urbi et Orbi*” means “To the City [of Rome] and to the World” and is a special apostolic blessing given by the pope every year on Easter Sunday, Christmas, and other special occasions.

The Catholic Church grants a plenary indulgence to anyone who participates in the blessing in person or through the media and who also fulfills the usual conditions.

In his blessing, Pope Francis reflected on a passage from John 20:19. When the Resurrected Jesus appeared in the midst of his disciples, as they mourned him, and said, “Peace be with you,” showing them the wounds in his hands and feet.

Like the disciples, the pope said, “Our eyes, too, are incredulous on this Easter of war. We have seen all too much blood, all too much violence. Our hearts, too, have been filled with fear and anguish, as so many of our brothers and sisters have had to lock themselves away in order to be safe from bombing. We struggle to believe that Jesus is truly risen, that he has truly triumphed over death. Could it be an illusion? A figment of our imagination?”

“No, it is not an illusion! Today, more than ever, we hear echoing the Easter proclamation so dear to the Christian East: ‘Christ is risen! He is truly risen!’”

“Faced with the continuing signs of war, as well as the many painful setbacks to life, Jesus Christ, the victor over sin, fear and death, exhorts us not to surrender to evil and violence,” Francis urged. “May we be won over by the peace of Christ. Peace is possible; peace is a duty; peace is everyone’s primary responsibility.”

An applause broke out when the pope prayed for peace in Ukraine, “so sorely tried by the violence and destruction of the cruel and senseless war into which it was dragged.”

“In this terrible night of suffering and death,” he said, “may a new dawn of hope soon appear. Let there be a decision for peace. May there be an end to the flexing of muscles while

people are suffering. Please, let us not get used to war. Let us all commit ourselves to imploring peace, from our balconies and in our streets. May the leaders of nations hear people's plea for peace."

He said he holds the Ukrainian people, victims of the war, in his heart.

The pope had a special word for the Ukrainian children who are fleeing the war, especially those who have been orphaned.

"As we look at them, we cannot help but hear their cry of pain, along with that of all those other children who suffer throughout our world: those dying of hunger or lack of medical care, those who are victims of abuse and violence, and those denied the right to be born," he said.

He urged people to be more sensitive and attentive to situations of war and violence not only in Europe, but around the world.

In his blessing, Pope Francis prayed for peace in the Middle East: For reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians, for peace in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq.

He also prayed for stability in Libya and an end to the forgotten, years-long conflict in Yemen.

"We ask the risen Lord for the gift of reconciliation for Myanmar, where a dramatic scenario of hatred and violence persists, and for Afghanistan, where dangerous social tensions are not easing and a tragic humanitarian crisis is bringing great suffering to its people," he said.

He asked the Lord to grant peace to the entire continent of Africa, that terrorist attacks, especially in the Sahel region, would end.

Pope Francis named Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Africa as three countries in particular need of prayers due to violence, and humanitarian and environmental crises.

"May the risen Christ accompany and assist the people of Latin America, who in some cases have seen their social conditions worsen in these difficult times of pandemic, exacerbated as well by instances of crime, violence, corruption and drug trafficking," he said.

He also prayed for the Catholic Church in Canada, that the risen Lord will accompany it on its journey of reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

"May the Spirit of the risen Christ heal the wounds of the past and dispose hearts to seek truth and fraternity," he stated, according to a Catholic News Agency report.