



# WORLD DAY OF PEACE

01 JANUARY, 2021

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## *History*

On the 8th of December of 1967 exactly two years ago after the end of the II Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI sent a message to all mankind of goodwill, inviting everybody to celebrate PEACE Day in all the world, every 1st day of the Civil Calendar, that is the 1st January of 1968.

Thus this day started to be celebrated during the Cold War, when the arms race was at its peak. Pope Paul VI wrote thus: "It is our desire that each year, this celebration will be repeated as an omen and promise that there will be peace, with its just and beneficial balance, that which dominates the future development of our history.

Thus started the World day for Peace. Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, president of the Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, said in 1968 that it was a happy initiative that Paul VI, 30 years before, was like a message in a bottle which Paul VI launched in the sea".

John Paul II assumed the initiative of Paul VI, saying in his first message: "To all Christians, believers, man of good will, I tell you "don't be afraid to bet for peace, to educate for peace". The aspiration for peace will never deceive you. The work done in favour of peace, inspired on charity that does not pass, will give its fruit. Peace will be the last word of history.

## *Setting*

*We suggest that this celebration will put the Virgin Mary in a preferential place. Set a statue or image that evokes peace and justice or poster with these words.*

## *Appropriate hymn*

## *Introduction*

This day must not change the liturgical calendar, which dedicates the first day of the year to celebrate the Divine Maternity of Mary. Rather than this religious memory should project a light of kindness, wisdom and hope in the promotion of the great gift desired of peace, which the world needs.

We only want to "launch the idea" in the hope that it will reach not only in the wider sense the civil world, but such idea meets in all parts many promoters, skilful and capable to express on the "Day of Peace", that sincere and strong

character of conscientious humanity... that knows how to give to the world's history a happier organized and civil development.

It is therefore to true peace, a just and balanced peace, in the sincere appreciation of the human rights and the independence of each nation which invites all wise and strong men to dedicate this day and this prayer.

*Word of God*

### **Reading Numbers 6, 22-27**

El Señor habló a Moisés:

*The Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron and his sons, "This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you, the Lord turn is face toward you and give you peace".*

*So they will put my name on the Israelites ad I will bless them"*

*Silence*

*Appropriate hymn*

*Word of the Church*

### **Joy and Peace**

Christian spirituality proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life, and encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption. A constant flood of new consumer goods can baffle the heart and prevent us from cherishing each thing and each moment. To be serenely present to each reality, however small it may be, opens us to much greater horizons of understanding and personal fulfilment. Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little. It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack.

Such sobriety, when lived freely and consciously, is liberating. In reality, those who enjoy more and live better each moment are those who have given up dipping here and there, always on the

look-out for what they do not have. They experience what it means to appreciate each person and each thing, learning familiarity with the simplest things and how to enjoy them. Even living on little, they can live a lot, above all when they cultivate other pleasures and find satisfaction in fraternal encounters, in service, in developing their gifts, in music and art, in contact with nature, in prayer.

Once we lose our humility, and become enthralled with the possibility of limitless mastery over everything, we inevitably end up harming society and the environment. It is not easy to promote this kind of healthy humility or happy sobriety when we consider ourselves autonomous, when we exclude God from our lives or replace him with our own ego, and think that our subjective feelings can define what is right and what is wrong.

Inner peace is closely related to care for ecology and for the common good because, lived out authentically, it is reflected in a balanced lifestyle together with a capacity for wonder which takes us to a deeper understanding of life. Many people today sense a profound imbalance which drives them to frenetic activity and makes them feel busy, in a constant hurry which in turn leads them to ride rough-shod over everything around them. This too affects how they treat the environment. An integral ecology includes taking time to recover a serene harmony with creation, reflecting on our lifestyle and our ideals, and contemplating the Creator who lives among us and surrounds us, whose presence “must not be contrived but found, uncovered”.

We are speaking of an attitude of the heart, one which approaches life with serene attentiveness, which is capable of being fully present to someone without thinking of what comes next, which accepts each moment as a gift from God to be lived to the full. Jesus taught us this attitude when he invited us to contemplate the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, or when seeing the rich young man and knowing his restlessness, “he looked at him with love” (Mk 10:21). He was completely present to everyone and to everything, and in this way he showed us the way to overcome that unhealthy anxiety which makes us superficial, aggressive and compulsive consumers.

One expression of this attitude is when we stop and give thanks to God before and after meals. I ask all believers to return to this beautiful and meaningful custom. That moment of blessing, however brief, reminds us of our dependence on God for life; it strengthens our feeling of gratitude for the gifts of creation; it acknowledges those who by their labours provide us with these

goods; and it reaffirms our solidarity with those in greatest need.  
(cf *Laudato si*, 222-227)

### *Silence*

#### *World of Claret*

The hyperactivity in which he lived does not separate him from God, it does not prevent his introspection. The balance between action and spiritual experience is constant and natural to him. Claret teaches us how being active is a way of praying to God:

“There is time to be silent and time to talk, and, at the same time silence is a virtue only for those circumstance of time, moderation and prudence. The same thing I say with regards to retreats, as some uselessly try to find in them peace.

The **true peace** in the heart is not found in retreats or lack of occupations in which God wants his servants to work. They are, of course, worthy of compassion, those who complain when they spend their time in leisure which distracts them. When activities come through obedience or duties, there is nothing to be afraid of; they themselves will lead us to God. How many do I know who in the midst of the bustle of the streets and squares, know how to find there their heart, in which God talked to them, a loneliness which is difficult to find the same in Tebaida! **It is for God's love!!!.**”

Claret show a creative apostleship and fast in ideas which his enterprising character takes one after the other looking for help and arousing enthusiasm. And that is possible thanks to the love of God, as he tells us in the following text of his Ascetic letter: Yes, all that you do or leave to do, it is only for love of God. If your eyes open or close, it is for the love of God. If your tongue speaks or is silent, it is for the love of God; if your feet move or are quiet and not only that, but as love is so witty, it is not happy only by loving and serving God with that it knows, but that the understand of he who really loves God, day and night, it is finding and inventing ways so that God is not displeased, but known, loved and served in all creatures, and – and in the forge of the Heart of Mary – it is moving continually.

*Claret's letter "on silence and retreat"*

*Silence*

*Restless peace. Poem by Pedro Casaldaliga.*

The peace that shakes us  
with the urgency of the Kingdom.

The Peace that invades us,  
like the wind of the Spirit,  
routine and fear,  
the tranquility of the beaches  
and prayer of refuge.

Peace of broken arms  
in the defeat of arms.  
Peace from the hunger for justice,  
the Peace that becomes "ours"  
without fences or borders,  
which is both "Shalom" and "Salam",  
sorry, return, hug ...

Give us your peace  
this marginal peace  
that spells in Bethlehem  
and die on the cross  
and triumphs at Easter.

Give us, Lord, that restless peace,  
that does not leave us alone!

*Final hymn*