



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO SARAJEVO (BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA)

HOLY MASS

HOMILY OF THE HOLY FATHER

Koševo Stadium
Saturday, 6 June 2015

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The word *peace* echoes several times through the Scripture readings which we have just heard. It is a powerful, prophetic word! Peace is God's dream, his plan for humanity, for history, for all creation. And it is a plan which always meets opposition from men and from the evil one. Even in our time, the desire for peace and the commitment to build peace collide against the reality of many armed conflicts presently affecting our world. They are a kind of third world war being fought piecemeal and, in the context of global communications, we sense *an atmosphere of war*.

Some wish to incite and foment this atmosphere deliberately, mainly those who want conflict between different cultures and societies, and those who speculate on wars for the purpose of selling arms. But war means children, women and the elderly in refugee camps; it means forced displacement of peoples; it means destroyed houses, streets and factories; it means, above all, countless shattered lives. You know this well, having experienced it here: how much suffering, how much destruction, how much pain! Today, dear brothers and sisters, the cry of God's people goes up once again from this city, the cry of all men and women of good will: war never again!

Within this atmosphere of war, like a ray of sunshine piercing the clouds, resound the words of Jesus in the Gospel: "Blessed are the peacemakers" (*Mt* 5:9). This appeal is always applicable, in every generation. He does not say: "Blessed are the preachers of peace", since all are capable of proclaiming peace, even in a hypocritical, or indeed duplicitous, manner. No. He says: "Blessed

are the *peacemakers*", that is, those who *make* peace. Crafting peace is a *skilled work*: it requires passion, patience, experience and tenacity. Blessed are those who sow peace by their daily actions, their attitudes and acts of kindness, of fraternity, of dialogue, of mercy... These, indeed, "shall be called children of God", for God sows peace, always, everywhere; in the fullness of time, he sowed in the world his Son, that we might have peace! Peacemaking is a work to be carried forward each day, step by step, without ever growing tired.

So *how does one do this*, how do we build peace? The prophet Isaiah reminds us succinctly: "The effect of righteousness will be peace" (32:17). *Opus justitiae pax* ("the work of justice is peace"), from the Vulgate version of Scripture, has become a famous motto, even adopted prophetically by Pope Pius XII. Peace is a work of justice. Here too: not a justice proclaimed, imagined, planned... but rather a justice *put into practice*, lived out. The Gospel teaches us that the ultimate fulfilment of justice is love: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (*Mt* 22:39; *Rm* 13:9). When, by the grace of God, we truly follow this commandment, how things change! Because we ourselves change! Those whom I looked upon as my enemy really have the same face as I do, the same heart, the same soul. We have the same Father in heaven. True justice, then, is doing to others what I would want them to do to me, to my people (cf. *Mt* 7:12).

Saint Paul, in the second reading, shows us the *attitude needed to make peace*: "Put on then... compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive" (*Col* 3:12-13).

These are the attitudes necessary to become artisans of peace precisely where we live out our daily lives. But we should not fool ourselves into thinking that this all depends on us! We would fall into an illusive moralizing. Peace is a *gift from God*, not in the magical sense, but because with his Spirit he can imprint these attitudes in our hearts and in our flesh, and can make us true instruments of his peace. And, going further, the Apostle says that peace is a gift of God because it is the fruit of his reconciliation with us. Only if we allow ourselves to be reconciled with God can human beings become artisans of peace.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, today we ask the Lord together, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, for the grace to have a simple heart, the grace of patience, the grace to struggle and work for justice, to be merciful, to work for peace, to sow peace and not war and discord. This is the way which brings happiness, which leads to blessedness.