



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE ECUMENICAL
PRAYER MEETING FOR PEACE***

*Clementine Hall
Thursday, 29 October 1987*

Dear Friends,

as Bishop of Rome, successor of Peter the Apostle, who died and was buried in this city, I am happy to welcome you in the name of God, the Creator and Redeemer of the world.

You have come here, invited by a group, mostly made up of lay men and women, the Community of Sant'Egidio, which exercises its ministry to the poor, the derelict and the sick, particularly in the Trastevere section of this city of Rome.

It is certainly a very good thing that the *local* Churches in the larger unity of the Catholic communion invite others to pray for peace; our Christian brothers, in the first place; but also, when possible and desirable, brothers and sisters from other religions. When this is done with due respect for the faith convictions of each one, with due openness to the truth, and with reverence for the ways of prayer of all concerned, including the host, then an important witness is given to the deep commitment of all religious men and women to the building of peace.

You have gathered here in Trastevere, to pray for the great gift of peace, on a date very near to the first anniversary of the *World Day of Prayer for Peace* at Assisi. While that event remains unique, it is good that, locally, believers of many religious persuasions meet for prayer and meditation. This can be done on various dates during the calendar year. However, as you are aware, every year I publish a special Message on the subject of peace, inviting all religious men and women, indeed all men and women of good will, to reflect and commit themselves anew to the cause of peace, meeting also for prayer. This has been done for the last twenty years. The theme

of next year's World Day of Peace, 1 January 1988, is: *Free to call upon God and so live peace*, linking as it were freedom to believe and practise religion, privately and publicly, with peace in each nation and among all nations.

I earnestly hope that you will take this thought home from your meeting here in Rome, and, as you commit yourselves once more to peace, be always and everywhere true representatives and defenders of the freedom to believe and practise religion.

The theme of your present meeting is: *prayer at the root of peace*. Yes, prayer should accompany work for peace, from beginning to end, from intercession to thanksgiving, including fasting, silent meditation and service to others.

We Christians, as believers in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, who came into this world in the name of peace, and offered his life "to gather into one all the children of God who are scattered abroad" (*Jo. 11, 52*), are convinced that only in him is true peace to be found.

It is therefore in his blessed name that I greet you here in Rome.

May he present to his Eternal Father whatever is done, in good faith and purity of spirit, everywhere, for the sake of peace.

The peace of the Lord be with you all.

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