

Pope's Christmas Day Message

Beat Swords into Plowshares: Ceasefire in Gaza

Dec. 25—In his [traditional “Urbi et Orbi” blessing](#) at St. Peter’s Square in the Vatican on Christmas Day, Pope Francis demanded the world’s public be informed of the countless billions spent on weapons, called for beating “swords into plowshares,” and again insisted on a lasting ceasefire in tortured Gaza:

The eyes and the hearts of Christians throughout the world turn to Bethlehem; in these days, it is a place of sorrow and silence, yet it was there that the long-awaited message was first proclaimed: “To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11)...

To say “yes” to the Prince of Peace, then, means saying “no” to war, to every war and to do so with courage, to the very mindset of war, an aimless voyage, a defeat without victors, an inexcusable folly. This is what war is: an aimless voyage, a defeat without victors, an inexcusable folly. To say “no” to war means saying “no” to weaponry. The human heart is weak and impulsive; if we find instruments of death in our hands, sooner or later we will use them. And how can we even speak of peace, when arms production, sales and trade are on the rise?...

People, who desire not weapons but bread, who struggle to make ends meet and desire only peace, have no idea how many public funds are being spent on arms. Yet that is something they ought to know! It should be talked about and written about, so as to bring to light the interests and the profits that move the puppet-strings of war.

Isaiah, who prophesied the Prince of Peace, looked forward to a day when “nation shall not lift up sword against nation,” a day when men “will not learn war any more,” but instead “beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks” (2:4). With God’s help, let

us make every effort to work for the coming of that day!

May it come in Israel and Palestine, where war is devastating the lives of those peoples. I embrace them all, particularly the Christian communities of Gaza, the parish of Gaza, and the entire Holy Land. My heart grieves for the victims of the abominable attack of 7 October last, and I reiterate my urgent appeal for the liberation of those still being held hostage. I plead



Instagram

Pope Francis

for an end to the military operations with their appalling harvest of innocent civilian victims, and call for a solution to the desperate humanitarian situation by an opening to the provision of humanitarian aid. May there be an end to the fueling of violence and hatred. And may the Palestinian question come to be resolved through sincere and persevering dialogue between the parties, sustained by strong political will and the support of the international community. Brothers and sisters, let us pray for peace in Palestine and in Israel.