

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS FRANCIS
FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE WORLD DAY OF PEACE 2014
Fraternity, The Foundation And Pathway To Peace

8 December 2013

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[...] In many parts of the world, there seems to be no end to grave offences against fundamental human rights, especially the right to life and the right to religious freedom. The tragic phenomenon of human trafficking, in which the unscrupulous prey on the lives and the desperation of others, is but one unsettling example of this. Alongside overt armed conflicts are the less visible but no less cruel wars fought in the economic and financial sectors with means which are equally destructive of lives, families and businesses.[...]

[...] Many conflicts are taking place amid general indifference. To all those who live in lands where weapons impose terror and destruction, I assure you of my personal closeness and that of the whole Church, whose mission is to bring Christ's love to the defenceless victims of forgotten wars through her prayers for peace, her service to the wounded, the starving, refugees, the displaced and all those who live in fear. The Church also speaks out in order to make leaders hear the cry of pain of the suffering and to put an end to every form of hostility, abuse and the violation of fundamental human rights.^[1] [...]

[...] I also think of the heartbreaking drama of drug abuse, which reaps profits in contempt of the moral and civil laws. I think of the devastation of natural resources and ongoing pollution, and the tragedy of the exploitation of labour. I think too of illicit money trafficking and financial speculation, which often prove both predatory and harmful for entire economic and social systems, exposing millions of men and women to poverty. I think of prostitution, which every day reaps innocent victims, especially the young, robbing them of their future. I think of the abomination of human trafficking, crimes and abuses against minors, the horror of slavery still present in many parts of the world; the frequently overlooked tragedy of migrants, who are often victims of disgraceful and illegal manipulation. As John XXIII wrote: "There is nothing human about a society based on relationships of power. Far from encouraging, as it should, the attainment of people's growth and perfection, it proves oppressive and restrictive of their freedom".^[2] Yet human beings can experience conversion; they must never despair of being able to change their lives. I wish this to be a message of hope and confidence for all, even for those who have committed brutal crimes, for God does not wish the death of the sinner, but that he converts and lives (cf. Ez 18:23).[...]