
Pope at audience: “The armed aggression of these days is an outrage against God”

“Jesus’ peace does not overpower others; it is not an armed peace, never!”, the Pope exclaimed in his catechesis at today’s general audience in Paul VI Hall, dedicated to Easter. Francis repeatedly mentioned the war in Ukraine. “The armed aggression of these days, like every war, represents

an outrage against God, a blasphemous betrayal

of the Lord of Passover, a preference for the face of the false god of this world over his meek one”, are the Pope’s words of concern for the ongoing conflict: “War is always a human act, to bring about the idolatry of power”, he added off text. “Before his final Passover, Jesus says to his disciples: ‘Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid’”, the Pope reminded the faithful: “Yes, because while worldly power leaves only destruction and death in its wake – we have seen this in recent days – his peace builds up history, starting from the heart of every person who welcomes us.”

“Here is the deception that is repeated throughout history, the temptation of a false peace, based on power, which then leads to hatred and betrayal of God”,

Francis said commenting on a “great story by Dostoevsky, the so-called **Legend of The Grand Inquisitor**”, which is “always relevant.” “The peace Jesus gives to us at Easter – Francis explained - is not the peace that follows the strategies of the world, which believes it can obtain it through force, by conquest and with various forms of imposition.” *“This peace, in reality, is only an interval between wars: we are well aware of this”, is the reference to present-day circumstances: “The peace of the Lord follows the way of meekness and the cross: it is taking responsibility for others.”* “Indeed, Christ took on himself our evil, sin and death”, the Pope said: “He took all of this upon himself. In this way he freed us. He paid for us. His peace is not the fruit of some compromise, but rather is born of self-giving. This meek and courageous peace, though, is difficult to accept. In fact, the crowd who exalted Jesus is the same that a few days later will shout, ‘Crucify him!’ and, fearful and disappointed, will not lift a finger for him.” “The weapons of the Gospel are prayer, tenderness, forgiveness and freely-given love for one’s neighbour, love for every neighbour”, Francis pointed out: “This is how God’s peace is brought into the world.” *“While worldly power leaves only destruction and death in its wake – we have seen this in recent days – his peace builds up history, starting from the heart of every person who welcomes us.”* “They are two different approaches: the way the world gives us peace, and the way God gives us peace. They are different”, the Pope explained in unscripted remarks: Jesus does not have “a triumphal Passover” ahead of him. “The only thing that he is concerned about in the preparation of his entry into Jerusalem is to ride ‘a colt tied, on which no-one has ever yet sat.’ This is how Christ brings peace into the world: through meekness and mildness, symbolized by that tethered colt, on which no-one had ever sat. No-one, because God’s way of doing things is different to that of the world.” Easter is therefore “the true feast of God and humanity, because the peace that Christ gained on the cross in giving himself is distributed to us”, Francis said: “Therefore, the Risen Christ, on Easter Day, appears to the disciples, and how does he greet them? ‘Peace be with you!’ This is the greeting of Christ victorious, the Risen Christ.” “Easter means ‘passage’. This year above all, it is a blessed occasion to pass from the worldly god to the Christian God, from the greed that we carry within us to the charity that sets us free, from the expectation of a peace brought by force to the commitment to bear real witness to the peace of Jesus. Let us place ourselves before the Crucified One, the wellspring of our peace, and ask him for peace of heart and peace in the world.”

