
Pope Francis joins world religious leader in peace ceremony in Rome

Praying together for the victims of war and pandemic is the purpose of the prayer meeting for peace in the spirit of Assisi, under the title "No One Is Saved Alone – Peace and Fraternity", promoted by the Community of Sant'Egidio. The inter-religious event, now at its 34th edition, sees today the participation of Pope Francis during the ecumenical prayer with representatives of many Christian denominations in the Basilica of Saint Mary in Aracoeli on Rome's Capitoline Hill and in the ensuing ceremony with world religious leaders in the presence of President Mattarella. His "brother" Bartholomew, as the Holy Father refers to him in the encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, underlining that the Patriarch of Constantinople was a "source of inspiration" for the encyclical *Laudato Si*, will stand beside him. The ceremony will culminate with a minute of silence in memory of the victims of the pandemic and all wars, the appeal for peace 2020 and the lighting of the candelabrum of peace by all the religious leaders attending. **Authentic peace.** Pope Francis had already taken part in the 2016 Prayer for Peace, held in Assisi to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the first meeting. "May a new season finally begin, in which the globalized world can become a family of peoples", was the Pope's appeal for peace from the city of the Saint, whose name he chose: "May we carry out our responsibility of building an authentic peace - he augured - attentive to the real needs of individuals and peoples, capable of preventing conflicts through a cooperation that triumphs over hate and overcomes barriers through encounter and dialogue. Nothing is lost when we effectively enter into dialogue. Nothing is impossible if we turn to God in prayer. Everyone can be an artisan of peace." https://youtu.be/M9YM_X3HZ4M **Praying together in the city.** On [June 15, 2014](#), when he visited the Community of Sant'Egidio, in its historic seat in the Trastevere district, the Pope explained what it means to pray together in a city like Rome, which besides being the heart of Christianity has always symbolized dialogue among peoples: "This ancient basilica has become a place of daily prayer for many Romans and pilgrims. To pray in the centre of the city doesn't mean to forget the human and urban peripheries. It means to listen and receive the Gospel of love to go forth and encounter the brothers and sisters on the fringes of the city and the world! Every church, every community is called to this in their life that is frenzied and at times confused by the city. Everything begins with prayer. Prayer safeguards the anonymous person in the city from temptations that can also be our own: the belief that everything revolves around us, indifference, paranoia." **The world suffocates without dialogue.** "Working for peace doesn't bring quick results, but it is the work of patient artisans who seek that which unites and set aside that which divides, as Saint John XXIII said", Francis points out, "More prayer and more dialogue are needed: they're necessary. The world suffocates without dialogue. Dialogue is only possible starting from true identity. The world suffocates without dialogue: for this you also make your contribution, in order to promote friendship among religions." From Sant'Egidio, the Pope's message reaches out to the whole world: "Go forth on this path: prayer, the poor and peace. And as you walk this path, you help compassion grow in the heart of society — which is the true revolution, that of compassion and tenderness — to cultivate friendship in place of the ghosts of animosity and indifference." **Forging new paths of peace.** We must "forge new paths of peace", the Pope said addressing religious leaders gathered in [Münster on August 28 2017](#): "especially where conflicts seem intractable, where the will to undertake processes of reconciliation is lacking, where trust is placed in arms and not in dialogue, thus leaving entire peoples plunged into a dark night of violence, without hope for a dawn of peace." "Alongside political and civil leaders, who are responsible for promoting peace everywhere, today and in the future, the religions are called, by prayer and by humble, concrete and constructive efforts, to respond to this thirst, to identify and, together with all men and women of good will, to pave tirelessly new paths of peace", Francis' appeal: "Our path to peace is not that of those who profane God's name by spreading hatred; it has nothing to do with the bane of war, the folly of terrorism or the illusory force of arms. What we may not and must not do is remain indifferent." For this to happen, "the first step is to feel the pain of others, to make it our own, neither overlooking it or becoming inured to it. We must never grow

accustomed or indifferent to evil. The religions cannot desire anything less than peace, as they pray and serve, ever ready to help those hurt by life and oppressed by history, ever concerned to combat indifference and to promote paths of communion.”

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