

Pope Francis Calls for Peace in First Speech in Portugal

Speaking at the Belém Cultural Centre, the Holy Father called for “paths of peace” and “bridges of understanding”.

Pope Francis today called on Europe to seek paths of peace, to build bridges of understanding and to work towards a “diplomacy of peace that extinguishes conflicts and calms tensions”.

In his speech at the Cultural Centre of Belém (CCB), during a meeting with the authorities, civil society and the diplomatic corps, the Supreme Pontiff made a strong appeal for peace, questioning the path that the Old Continent is taking, by not offering “paths of peace, innovative ways to end the war in Ukraine and so many conflicts that bleed the world”.

In Fatima, the prayer for peace, through the Rosary, is a constant, following the express request that Our Lady left to the Little Shepherds, in the apparitions of 1917. “Pray the

Rosary every day to achieve peace for the world and the end of war", said the Lady "brighter than the sun" to the seers, in the first apparition, on 13 May 1917.

On 25 March 2022, Pope Francis consecrated Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in a ceremony celebrated by himself in the Vatican and by his papal legate, Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, in Cova da Iria.

Also during his visit to Fatima, in May 2017, Pope Francis presented himself as a "pilgrim of light, hope and peace", and asked for peace in the homily of the Mass that canonised Francisco and Jacinta Marto.

"I could not fail to come here to venerate the Virgin Mary and to entrust to her all her sons and daughters. Under her mantle they are not lost; from her embrace will come the hope and the peace that they require, and that I implore for all my brothers and sisters in baptism and in our human family, especially the sick and the disabled, prisoners and the unemployed, the poor and the abandoned," the Pontiff said.



Pope Francis consecrates Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on 25 March 2022, in a celebration held in the Chapel of Apparitions by Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, his Legate.

Pope calls for "a Europe that can find its youthful spirit"

In his speech at the CCB, the Pontiff said he dreamed of "a Europe, the heart of the West, that uses its ingenuity to extinguish the fires of war and light up the lights of hope; a Europe that knows how to rediscover its youthful spirit".

He also regretted that nowadays, faced with the difficulties of living, it is easier to find "quick and wrong remedies such as easy access to death", referring to euthanasia, which he said was "a convenient solution that seems sweet, but in reality is more bitter than the waters of the sea".

He also outlined his concerns, among others, about environmental issues, problems affecting young people, such as lack of work, difficulty in finding housing and fear of starting a family, noting that investments in weapons mean fewer resources for areas such as health, education and employment.

In a speech with many references to Portugal's links to the sea, in which he quoted several Portuguese authors, such as Luís de Camões, Sofia de Mello Breyner Andresen and Fernando Pessoa, the Pope noted that in the country there is still "very much alive the sense of neighbourliness and solidarity", the encounter with others.

He added that "what gives true meaning to the encounter is the search; and you have to walk a long way to reach what is near", he said, quoting José Saramago.

He concluded with a "God bless Portugal!".

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