



'There is no God of war!'

According to Vatican Radio, Pope Francis made this categorical statement during his daily morning Mass today, just hours before he was to leave for the Umbrian hill town of Assisi, to take part in the closing ceremony today of an international summit of interfaith leaders to pray for world peace.

Francis is returning to Assisi, just over a month after his Aug. 4 visit, this time to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Meeting of Prayer for Peace, desired by John Paul II on Oct. 27, 1986.

In this morning's homily, before departing for the interfaith summit, the Pope stressed that war and "the inhumanity of a bomb that explodes, killing and injuring people, and cutting off humanitarian aid so that it cannot get to children, the elderly, the sick" is the work of "the evil one" who "wants to kill everyone."

"We are all children of God," Francis stressed, "And God is the God of peace. There is no god of war. He who makes war is evil; it is the devil who wants to kill everyone. "

Francis began this morning's homily, observing, "today, men and women of all religions, we will go to Assisi - not to make a 'show': simply to pray and to pray for peace."

Don't Turn a Deaf Ear

The Jesuit Pope recalled his letter to all the world's bishops, calling on them to organize prayer meetings on this day, inviting "Catholics, Christians, believers and all men and women of good will , of any religion, to pray for peace," because, "the world is at war! The world is suffering!"

Francis commented that today's First reading concludes in this way: 'He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will himself also call and not be heard.'

"If we now shut our ears to the cry of these people who are suffering under the bombs, who suffer the exploitation of arms dealers, it may be that when it happens to us, we will not be heard," the Pope reflected. "We cannot turn a deaf ear to the cry of pain of our brothers and sisters who are suffering from war. "

War Begins in the Heart

"We do not see the war," Francis criticized, commenting: "We are scared by some act of terrorism" but "this has nothing to do with what is happening in those countries, in those lands where the bombs, day and night, fall and fall" and "kill children, the elderly, men, women..."

"The war is far away?" asked the Pope. "No! It's very close" because "the war touches everyone...war begins in the heart ."

"May the Lord grant us peace in our hearts," Pope Francis prayed. May He "take away all desire for greed, covetousness, for fighting. No! Peace, peace!" the Pope exclaimed again. So that "our heart is the heart of a man or woman of peace. And beyond the divisions of religions: everyone, everyone, everyone!"

We should be ashamed

With this reality, the Pope stressed there can be no divisions between faiths. "It is not enough to simply thank God because maybe the war "does not affect us."

"We think today not only about the bombs, the dead, the wounded; but also about the people - children and the elderly - for whom humanitarian aid has yet to arrive so they can eat. Medicines cannot arrive. They are hungry, sick! Because the bombs are preventing the aid from getting to them."

Pope Francis concluded, saying that while we pray today, it would be nice if all of us were to feel ashamed that "humans, our brothers, are capable of doing this," and that during today's day of prayer and penance, that this cry for peace opens our hearts to compassion, love, and saves us from selfishness.