

“No more war, war never again! It is peace, peace which must guide the destinies of peoples and all mankind!”

This quote is not mine, even if it constitutes my greatest wish. It's from Pope Saint Paul VI. It was he who declaimed it before the headquarters of the UN on October 4th, 1965.

I believe that starting my homily with this quote makes sense since today, in addition to being New Year's Day and the Solemnity of Saint Mary, the Holy Mother of God, it is also World Day of Peace.

Yes, peace... What the world lacks most nowadays, and yet, the greatest good. The Jews knew that. This is why when they meet and greet each other, they do not simply say “hello”, but Shalom, designating peace, a situation of well-being, serenity, prosperity, and security; therefore, in saying shalom to a fellow one, the Jew wishes them total peace.

Being a true Jew, Jesus also highlighted the importance of peace. Just like His Father who asked Aaron to bless the people with words of peace (1st reading), Jesus, too, made peace the most precious gift that he gave to his disciples, of which we also are.

Before His birth, Isaiah (9:5) foretold that He would be called: Prince of Peace. At His birth, the Angels sang: “Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to people of goodwill!” Before His passion, He had said to His Apostles: “I leave you peace; It's my peace that I give you!” (Jn 14:27). After His resurrection, peace was the first gift He gave to them, saying “Peace be with you!” (Jn 20:19). So, we wonder: what is peace, that it is so important?

“Peace is not the absence of war; it is a virtue, [a disposition of the heart], a state of mind, a desire for benevolence, confidence, justice” (Spinoza’s B).

And if the Church, on this first day of the New Year, invites us to celebrate, the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God, and peace, in one celebration, it’s because there is no real difference between the two. Moreover, Mother of God – *Theotokos* -, she is Mother of the Prince of peace; she is the Queen of peace, the bearer of the one who bears everything.

It's to such a Mother that we come this morning to present to her our world lacking peace, our families, our loved ones, those in difficulty and who have no one to pray for them or to assist them. We also come to present to her war zones, refugees, those who are persecuted, those with any need, all those who are seeking peace, and our spiritual battles.

This is the whole meaning of the prayer of the Rosary where we take up the greeting of the Archangel to Mary and where we experience her maternal intercession.

Together, on this solemnity of Saint Mary, Mother of God, let us pray to her together: “Hail Mary, full of grace...”