

Appeal to pray for peace

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are living through difficult times. Many countries are experiencing social turbulence while others live under the constant threat of violence brought about by extremism and racial and ethnic hatred. As we commemorate the centenary of the death of our dear Brother Charles let us give flesh to our spirituality and globally, as Fraternity, unite in Prayer for peace and unity in the world through the intercession of Blessed Charles de Foucauld.

Let us pray for Christians and Muslims, especially in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, who are the first victims of torture, abuse, injustice.... but most of all they are the victims of the complacency of the rest of the world that looks on with indifference. Because these "little ones" are poor, powerless and ordinary, they do not form part of the mighty society. Let us therefore open a special place for them in OUR lives as members of the Spiritual Family of Charles de Foucauld. It is what he would have done.

Let us pray for the now hundreds of families in Europe who have lost dear ones to extremism, to a war that is visiting them in their own towns, their own homes, their own schools. The places which are meant to be their shelter have become new battlegrounds soaked in innocent blood. Let us pray for those of European birth who abandon country and family to misguidedly join in the drunken spree of violence in the name of jihad.

Let us pray for minorities all over the world: political, religious, racial, ethnic, gender, people with disabilities, who suffer in silence while the world looks on, helpless or indifferent. Let our prayer take flesh and become a voice for the voiceless, an actor for the powerless and a source of dignity for those who have none, or lost the little they had.

Let us pray for the millions of refugees, violently uprooted from their homes and deprived of a decent living. Let us pray for the children of these families who are deprived of an education, nutrition, sleep, a warm bed in the winter, friendships, and the memory of a happy childhood to feed their emotional stability in adulthood. Whenever we can, let us be for them brothers and sisters who reach out in solidarity and friendship. Let us be strong enough to become vulnerable for their sake and meet them on their own terms, not imposing ours.

Let us pray for the societies torn apart by the drug wars especially in Central and South America. Let us pray for their governments that they may battle violence and corruption and restore peace, stability and prosperity to their peoples.

Let us pray especially for the perpetrators of violence, that the Holy Spirit may light up the blindness in their hearts. Let us pray for these fellow brothers and sisters, created in God's image and redeemed by the blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who think that violence is a solution to their and the world's problems.

Like Brother Charles let us be harbingers of peace in our families, in our neighbourhood, in our town, in our country and across the miles as we unite, one Fraternity, one Family, one Society.

Let us remember that differences are there to be celebrated as they make the fabric of life and society rich and beautiful. However beneath it all we are all human: we all love the same, laugh the same, mourn the same, and most of all crave for peace in our lives.

In this Centenary year especially, may God Bless us all.

The European team of the Lay Fraternity
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