



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Dear brothers and sister of many different faiths,

The news reports that from 2016 to today there are at least 18 countries that use minors in armed conflict. These are children torn from their childhoods, deprived of their dreams, with horror etched in their eyes and minds, destined to find an echo of violence throughout their lives. Taken away from their families, victims of kidnapping, these children undergo fanatical and fundamentalist indoctrination and are trained in violence through special drillings.

On the 27th of this month, in our usual appointment with the petition that, united, we turn to God, I ask you to pray for the fate and the life of these **child soldiers**. May the Lord protect them, and disarm the minds of those who plan and carry out such a hateful crime.

In the Gospel we find the proclamation that "the Kingdom of God belongs to little ones". The tenderness of God is echoed in the words of Jesus: "Let the little children come to me". In every other authentic experience of faith we can muster similar feelings. Let us ask the God of peace to instill in each human being the respect and love we owe to all people, but especially to children.

**May the Lord give you peace.**

Assisi, October 2021

+ Domenico Sorrentino, Bishop