



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Dear brothers and sisters of many different faiths,

While as Christians we partake in the beauty of the mystery of the Child of Bethlehem, our hearts are extended to the sufferings of the world, in unison with our brothers and sisters of many religions. As well as the suffering in Ukraine, there are others, such as the following, which are less emphasized by the news media. The United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) has reported that more than eleven thousand children have been killed or maimed in **Yemen's civil war**, which has been escalating for nearly eight years. According to other sources, however, the toll could be even higher. Since 2015, when a Saudi-led coalition intervened against Shiite Huthi rebels who had captured the capital, Sanaa, the year before, hundreds of thousands have died in the fighting or from indirect consequences of the war, such as starvation and epidemics. It is estimated that nearly 2.2 million Yemeni children today are severely malnourished; a quarter of them are under five years of age, and most of them are at risk of cholera, measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases. This is the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Our monthly prayer time is for them. Far from being an excuse for the solidarity efforts we need to enact, it should nurture and support the efforts for peace-building and aid that are urgently needed, especially for the children of Yemen. Therefore, let us join in their suffering, and on December 27 from churches, mosques, homes and every other place of prayer, let our plea to the one God rise loudly to inspire thoughts of peace and support immediate relief efforts to those who are hungry, sick or seriously at risk of losing their lives.

May the Lord give you peace

Assisi, December 2022

+ Domenico Sorrentino, Bishop