



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Dear brothers and sisters of many different faiths,

Among the many scenarios of war, in our monthly prayer meeting for peace, we cannot fail to focus on the violence that has struck the **Holy Land** and is increasingly assuming the proportions of a real massacre. First and foremost, we want to reach out to the victims and their loved ones with a warm embrace that goes out to everyone, to the brothers and sisters of Israel and the brothers and sisters of Palestine, with all the concrete solidarity they urgently need. They are all dear to us. We put ourselves in each of their shoes with their sufferings, their reasons, their concerns, their tragedies.

In fact, what has happened and is happening robs us of words. All we have left are our words of prayer reaching up to heaven. It is through relying on God's mercy that we do not lose hope that the deafness and indifference of men can be overcome. The Document signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, in 2019 in Abu Dhabi reads: "(...) God has forbidden to kill, affirming that whoever kills a person is like one who kills the whole of humanity, and that whoever saves a person is like one who saves the whole of humanity". How sad it is that this teaching is being betrayed in the very land that bore the children of Abraham. On October 27, the 37th anniversary of the historic meeting of many religious leaders in Assisi, I invite everyone to join Pope Francis' similar initiative to unite spiritually to ask that the painful cry of the many victims of this bloody conflict be heard by God and with His help that all kinds of violence cease in a final and lasting way so that the two peoples, Israeli and Palestinian, can live in peace and with mutual respect.

**May the Lord give you peace**

Assisi, October 2023

+ Domenico Sorrentino, Bishop