



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Dear brothers and sisters of many different faiths,

With a heart filled with sadness, in unison with Pope Leo XIV, from this City of Peace marked by the prophecy of St. Francis, I come asking you once again to join your prayers with ours for the **children who are victims of war**. Unfortunately, the number of innocent children being killed in ongoing armed conflicts is tragically increasing. Children are the most vulnerable part of the populations engaged in wars. In addition to those who die as a direct result of bombings, explosions, and shootings, there are also children who are injured and cannot get proper medical care, as well as those who die of hunger and diseases contracted due to the hardships caused by the ravages of war. Many lose their families, homes, and schools, becoming orphans without any points of reference or protection.

In addition to incurring trauma that will remain indelibly imprinted on their minds, children are among the first to accumulate huge amounts of hatred and hostility, which too often result in revenge and a spiraling of violence that is destined to continue for years to come. They are deprived of the education and training necessary for them to grow up in a healthy way. It is therefore the duty of the international community to guarantee humanitarian corridors, access to education, medical care, and psychological support. Every child has the right to live in peace, to play, to dream, and to grow up free of violence, because a society without children is a society without hope.

For all children who are victims of the insanity of war, let us therefore join our voices in prayer on September 27, each in our own places of worship and according to our own traditions and languages, to echo the Spirit of Assisi inaugurated on October 27, 1986, which remains more than ever a beacon for our times. May the God of life protect the lives of children.

May the Lord give you peace

Assisi, September 2025

+ Domenico Sorrentino, Bishop