



The Holy See

***LETTER OF JOHN PAUL II
TO CARD. ANGELO SODANO FOR A DAY OF PRAYER
FOR PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST***

*To His Eminence Cardinal Angelo Sodano
Secretary of State*

The dramatic situation of the Holy Land obliges me once again to address a pressing appeal to the whole Church in order that all believers redouble their prayers for those peoples who are now being torn by unheard of forms of violence. In this period, when Christian hearts turn to the places where the Lord Jesus suffered, died and rose from the dead, we receive increasingly tragic news that adds to the growing dismay of public opinion and gives the impression of a relentless tide of inhuman brutality.

Before the stubborn determination with which both sides are advancing on the path of retaliation and revenge, what appears to the anguished hearts of believers is the prospect of recourse to heartfelt prayer to that God who alone can change the human heart, even the most obstinate one.

On next Sunday, 7 April, the Church will celebrate the mystery of Divine Mercy with special fervour and will thank the One who took upon himself the miseries of our humanity. What better occasion could there be to raise to heaven a unanimous plea for pardon and mercy, to implore from the Heart of God a special intervention upon all those who have the power and responsibility to take the costly necessary steps to turn the warring parties towards agreements that are just and dignified for everyone?

I would therefore be grateful to you, Venerable Brother, if, in the way you consider appropriate, you would transmit my desire to the Pastors of the various Particular Churches, inviting them next Sunday to pray together at this hour which is so serious for all humanity. In this way may a message of permanent and lasting peace reach that Land, so dear to the believers of the three monotheist religions.

With this hope that comes from the depths of my heart, I impart to you and to all my Brothers in the Episcopate a special Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 4 April 2002

IOANNES PAULUS II

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