



The Holy See

PRAYER FOR PEACE AT THE GREEK-ORTHODOS CHURCH IN QUNEITRA

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II

Golan Heights - May 7, 2001

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Mt 5:9). From this place, so disfigured by war, I wish to raise my heart and voice in prayer for peace in the Holy Land and in the whole world. Genuine peace is a gift from God. Our openness to that gift requires a conversion of heart and a conscience obedient to his Law. Mindful of the sad news of the conflicts and deaths which even today arrives from Gaza, my prayer becomes more intense.

God of infinite mercy and goodness,
with grateful hearts we pray to you today
in this land where Saint Paul once walked.

To the nations he proclaimed the truth that God was in Christ
reconciling the world to himself (cf. *2 Cor 5:19*).

May your voice resound in the hearts of all men and women,
as you call them to follow the path of reconciliation and peace,
and to be merciful as you are merciful.

Lord, you speak words of peace to your people
and to all who turn to you in their hearts (cf. *Ps 85:9*).

We pray to you for the peoples of the Middle East.
Help them to break down the walls of hostility and division
and to build together a world of justice and solidarity.

Lord, you create new heavens and a new earth (cf. *Is 65:17*).
To you we entrust the young people of these lands.

In their hearts they aspire to a brighter future;
strengthen their resolve to be men and women of peace,
and heralds of new hope to their peoples.

Father, you make justice spring forth from the earth (cf. *Is* 45:8).
We pray for the civil leaders of this region
that they may strive to satisfy their peoples' rightful aspirations,
and educate the young in the ways of justice and peace.
Inspire them to work generously for the common good,
to respect the inalienable dignity of every person
and the fundamental rights which have their origin
in the image and likeness of the Creator
impressed upon each and every human being.

In a special way we pray for the leaders of this noble land of Syria.
Grant them wisdom, farsightedness and perseverance;
may they never yield to discouragement in their challenging task
of building the lasting peace for which their people yearn.

Heavenly Father,
in this place which saw the conversion of the Apostle Paul,
we pray for all who believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
Guide their steps in truth and love.
May they be one as you are one, with the Son and the Holy Spirit.
May they bear witness to the peace which surpasses all understanding (cf. *Phil* 4:7)
and to the light which triumphs over the darkness of hostility, sin and death.

Lord of heaven and earth, Creator of the one human family,
we pray for the followers of all religions.
May they seek your will in prayer and purity of heart;
may they adore you and worship your holy name.
Lead them to find in you the strength to overcome fear and distrust,
to grow in friendship and to live together in harmony.

Merciful Father,
may all believers find the courage to forgive one another,
so that the wounds of the past may be healed,
and not be a pretext for further suffering in the present.
May this happen above all in the Holy Land,
this land which you have blessed with so many signs of your Providence,
and where you have revealed yourself as the God of Love.

To the Mother of Jesus, the ever blessed Virgin Mary,
we entrust the men and women living in the land where Jesus once lived.
Following her example, may they listen to the word of God,
and have respect and compassion for others,
especially those who differ from them.
May they be inspired to oneness of heart and mind,
in working for a world that will be a true home for all its peoples!

Salam! Salam! Salam!

Amen!

In concluding I wish to extend a word of appreciation to the International Force stationed here.
Your presence is a sign of the international community's determination to be of assistance in
bringing closer the day of harmony between the peoples, the cultures and religions of the area.
May Almighty God protect you and sustain your efforts!