

My dear members of the Salesian Family, my dear young people:

Yesterday, the Holy Father made a lively appeal, full of pain and faith and hope. I was touched by his final words, "It is time to stop. Please stop, I beg you with all my heart, please stop." I am convinced that most men and women of good will in our world share this request.

What is certain is that everything is lost with war and everything is to be gained with Peace! Pope Francis made an explicit reference to children whose life has been destroyed and who are robbed of all hope. And while war is a tragedy and a horror for parents and grandparents, it is the end for children who are the most defenceless and who cannot understand what is happening. Dear brothers and sisters at all points of the compass where the Salesian charism is present: allow me to ask therefore, that we join in this prayer of the Holy Father, that we pray with true faith that the Lord may touch all hearts, including the hearts of the people who can decide to put an end to the wars that are going on at present. May God grant us the grace of being always bearers and builders of his peace. Let us pray that this great pain be converted into the New Life of the Risen Lord. We pray that we may always strive for peace and we pray for children and young people who suffer the most. May the Lord continue to let his hope shine upon us. A fraternal embrace.

Fr Ángel Fernández Artime, Rector Major "Dear Fr Ángel, I read in ANS your request to the Salesian Family to join the call of Pope Francis for peace. On behalf of our Institute I declare our adherence to this request, coming, as it does, on the hundredth anniversary of the First World War. The words of Pope Francis after the Angelus last Sunday found a clear echo in our hearts.

"Stop, please," is also our word and our wish. We want to do something concrete as part of our commitment to peace in the world. We think that prayer is our first contribution to the building of this valuable asset... prayer, and a life that witnesses to the love of God, Father of all, who does not exclude anyone from the banquet of life and joy.

Another contribution we can make is to build communion in the community. The Spirit helps us to give an evangelical quality to our relationships, making us reliable and credible signs of the new commandment that Jesus gave us: "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15:12).

Love believes all things, hopes all things. Love is the final word.

We also want to make a renewed commitment to our mission of educating the younger generations. We are convinced that peace is built with small everyday gestures, cultivating positive thoughts, inculcating respect for the dignity and the rights and duties of every human being, acceptance of diversity as a richness, the value of dialogue and every culture.

In asking for the gift of peace, our thoughts turn especially to the suffering of children, young people and women - the most vulnerable and defenceless in society.

Together we ask the Lord for a true peace, a lasting peace, a peace founded on justice, and we pledge our solidarity, particularly in the field of education.

With all the FMA of the world I greet you with gratitude and affection."