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## Pope Francis: “May weapons be silenced. War cancels out the future”

“Today too, our thoughts turn to Palestine and Israel,” **Pope Francis** said in the greetings to the Italian-speaking faithful at the end of today's general audience in St. Peter's Square. “The number of victims is rising and the situation in Gaza is desperate”, Pope Francis' appeal: “Please, let everything possible be done to avoid a humanitarian disaster. The possible widening of the conflict is disturbing, while so many war fronts are already open in the world. May weapons be silenced, and let us heed the cry for peace of the poor, the people, the children... war does not solve any problem: it sows only death and destruction, foments hate, proliferates revenge.” I have decided to call for a day of fasting and prayer on Friday 27 October, a day of penance to implore peace in this world.”

War cancels out the future, it cancels out the future. I urge believers to take just one side in this conflict: that of peace. But not in words – in prayer, with total dedication.”

“Let us continue to pray for peace in the world, and let us not forget to pray for the martyred Ukraine”, the final appeal: “There is no mention of it now, but the tragedy lingers on.” **“The first step in evangelizing is to have Jesus inside one's heart, it is to ‘fall head over heels’ for him”**, the Pope said in the opening lines of the catechesis, dedicated to Saint Charles de Foucauld, “a man who made Jesus and his poorest brothers the passion of his life, who “drawing upon his intense experience of God, made a journey of transformation towards feeling a brother to all”. “If this does not happen, we can hardly show it with our lives”, Francis remarked. “Instead, we risk talking about ourselves, the group to which we belong, a morality or, even worse, a set of rules, but not about Jesus, his love, his mercy.” “I see this in some new movements that are emerging”, the Pope went on in unscripted remarks: “they talk about many things, about organization, about spiritual journeys, but they do not know how to talk about Jesus. I think that today it would be good for each one of us to ask him- or herself: “Do I have Jesus at the centre of my heart? Have I ‘lost my head’ a bit for Jesus?”.

“Our whole existence must cry out the Gospel”,

Charles de Foucauld used to write. “And very often our existence calls out worldliness, it calls out many stupid things, strange things, and he says: ‘No, all our existence must shout out the Gospel’, Francis exclaimed again departing from the written text. **“We have lost the sense of adoration”**, he denounced: “we must regain it, starting with us consecrated persons, bishops, priests, nuns and all consecrated persons.” “There need to be laypeople close to priests, to see what the priest does not see, who evangelize with a proximity of charity, with goodness for everyone, with affection always ready to be given.” With this phrase, Charles de Foucauld “foreshadows the times of Vatican Council II; he intuits the importance of the laity and understands that the proclamation of the Gospel is up to the entire people of God.” “The saintly laypeople, not climbers”, the Pope said off text, “but those who love Jesus, make the priest understand that he is not a functionary, he is a mediator.” “How we priests need to have beside us those laypeople who truly believe, and who teach us the way by their witness”, Francis exclaimed, and asked: “how can we increase this participation? The way Charles de Foucauld did: by kneeling and welcoming the action of the Spirit, who always inspires new ways to engage, meet, listen and dialogue, always in collaboration and trust, always in communion with the Church and pastors.” **“Saint Charles de Foucauld, a figure who is a prophecy for our time, bore witness to the beauty of communicating the Gospel through the apostolate of meekness”**, the Pope said. He reiterated in unscripted remarks: “Let us not forget that God's style is summarized in three words: proximity, compassion and tenderness. And Christian witness must take this road. And this is how he was, meek and tender. He wanted everyone he met to see, through his goodness, the goodness of Jesus. Indeed, he used to say that he was a ‘servant to someone much better than

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me'. Living Jesus' goodness led him to forge fraternal friendships with the bonds of friendship with the poor, with the Tuareg, with those furthest from his mentality. Gradually these bonds generated fraternity, inclusion, appreciation of the other's culture." "Goodness is simple and asks us to be simple people, who are not afraid to offer a smile", Francis concluded: "And with his smile, with his simplicity, Brother Charles bore witness to the Gospel. Never by proselytism, never: by witness. One does not evangelize by proselytism, but by witness, by attraction. So finally, let us ask ourselves whether we bring Christian joy, Christian meekness, Christian tenderness, Christian compassion, Christian proximity."

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