Pope Francis urges “forgiving those who trespass against us” to achieve peace

On the occasion of the World Day of Peace, which is celebrated every 1 January, Pope Francis dedicated his message for 2025 to the theme of forgiveness: ***“Forgive us our trespasses: grant us your peace”***.

Recalling that the Catholic Church is celebrating the Year of Jubilee in 2025, the Pope recalled an ancient Jewish tradition which, with the sound of the *jobel* (ram’s horn), meant “to restore God’s justice in every aspect of life: In the use of the land, in the possession of goods, and relationships with others, above all the poor and the dispossessed”, the Pope underlines that **“ in our day too, the Jubilee is an event that inspires us to seek to establish the liberating justice of God in our world”**.

“Each of us must feel in some way responsible for the devastation to which the earth, our common home, has been subjected”, the Bishop of Rome continues in his message, referring also to “of all manner of disparities, the inhuman treatment meted out to migrants, environmental decay, the confusion wilfully created by disinformation, the refusal to engage in any form of dialogue and the immense resources spent on the industry of war.”, and to all those factors which threaten peace, fraternity, and which represent “a threat to the existence of humanity as a whole”.

Therefore, in recognising that we are “debtors”, the Pope exhorts us to forgive, asking God to forgive us our trespasses, as the Lord’s Prayer says, and with a demanding affirmation: “just as we forgive those who trespass against us” (cf. *Mt* 6:12).

Three proposals in the key of hope

Concretely, the Pope suggests three specific actions to restore dignity and to walk in hope during the Jubilee. First, “**reducing substantially, if not cancelling outright, the international debt** which seriously threatens the future of many

nations. In recognition of their ecological debt, the more prosperous countries ought to feel called to do everything possible to forgive the debts of those countries that are in no condition to repay the amount they owe".

The second task proposed by Francis has to do with the defence of the "culture of life", for which he calls for " firm commitment to respect for the dignity of human life from conception to natural death", also advocating the **"elimination of the death penalty in all nations"**.

Finally, thinking of the younger generations, the Pope asks that "in this time marked by wars, let us use at least a fixed percentage of the money earmarked for armaments **to establish a global Fund to eradicate hunger and facilitate in the poorer countries educational activities** aimed at promoting sustainable development and combating climate change".

"The future is a gift meant to enable us to go beyond past failures and to pave new paths of peace", the Pontiff adds, reaffirming with St John XXIII that **"true peace can be born only from a heart 'disarmed' of anxiety and the fear of war".**