

Communicationes N. 283

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World prayer for peace

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Convocation by the Father General

March 9, 2015 (Communicationes).- Fr. Saverio Cannistrá

Dear brothers and sisters:

Next March 28 is the 500th anniversary of the birth of Saint Teresa of Jesus. That date, so fervently awaited and so carefully prepared for throughout these past few years in all monasteries, convents, and Secular Carmelite fraternities, is now very close at hand.

My homily of October 14 in the church of La Santa in Ávila, during the Mass celebrated on the eve of the commencement of the official events of this 5th Centenary, envisioned all of us trying to give a gift to our Holy Mother on such a significant day and noted that, without doubt, the best gift is and always will be her own self, Teresa of Jesus.

On day 26th I invite you, as sons and daughters, to offer her what unquestionably will fill her with joy: an hour of prayer. A special hour of prayer, in which the intention of all is peace in the world. *The world is all in flames*, cried Teresa at the sight of all the conflicts and divisions that ravaged society in her day. Our world is also in flames and we are often not sufficiently sensitive or we lack the confidence necessary to believe that we can do something to quench that fire. Distracted at times by the minor affairs of our daily life and by more immediate problems, we forget to lift our eyes to look at the horizon and discover in it the signs of our society's suffering: wars, conflict, terrorism, public or domestic violence, cries of pain, quelled even before they are uttered.

On that day we will not be able to hide, leaving the resolution of those problems to those who govern, those who hold responsibility. March 26 is a day for the voice of Saint Teresa to resound in our hearts, and together with her, make up our minds to do that *little bit* which is within us, convinced that, the state of affairs in the world being what they are, we should not be *discussing with God matters that have little importance*.

I joyfully announce to you that our Holy Father Francis, looking kindly on this initiative, has decided to begin this hour of world prayer on the same date, the 26th. From that moment, almost coinciding with the hour in which Teresa came into the world, I invite you to recollect yourselves in prayer, holding present this intention: peace.

May we, in union with Christ, the true Friend, who brought reconciliation with God to the world, lift our eyes to heaven begging the Father for the gift of peace, which demands dialogue that favors reconciliation among men: forgiving so that we may be forgiven, as our Lord told us. Let us open our hearts to forgiveness; let us ask it of those we have offended and beseech God to grant us peace, the peace that Jesus promised us; not the peace of the world, but that which fills the heart with gladness and frees us from all cowardice.

Sons and daughters of the Church, let us live intensely this initiative that Pope Francis has made his own and, from his hand, let us also call all believers to it, following the example Saint John Paul II taught us in Assisi.

In union with all, brothers and sisters, in Jesus of Teresa.

Guidelines for the celebration

March 9, 2015 (Communicationes).-Fr. Emilio José Martínez

Dear brothers and sisters:

On this day, the Father General of the Order, Saverio Cannistrà, ocd, has called us to an hour of world prayer for peace to be held in all our monasteries and convents as well as in the fraternities of the Secular Carmel this coming March 26.

As Father Saverio himself notes, Pope Francis will begin this prayer, and the Order thanks him from the heart for wishing to lead this initiative, making it ecclesial. It is, without a doubt, a lovely gift for our Holy Mother.

The hour of prayer will begin at 06:00 (GMT). From that moment, communities and fraternities can start to pray the prayer for peace at the time and in the manner they consider most opportune and suitable. In some countries, it may be pertinent to transfer the prayer to the 27th: there is no problem with that. It is not necessary for the hour to coincide everywhere; the purpose is to *fill* these hours on that day with our supplication for peace.

I enclose here an outline of prayer prepared by the Center for Pastoral Spirituality Initiatives of Burgos (Spain), which is not binding at all. It is sent only in the spirit of guidance and with the goal that communities that wish to do so, can use it.

We beg you that throughout this month, you make this initiative public in such a way that all who want to, may participate: make it known to diocesan bishops, your pastors, lay groups that visit you, and all the members of the Teresian family so that together with you they can take part in prayer, or prepare other prayer celebrations themselves with the same intention. It also would be beautiful to invite families to participate, who in their homes can unite with the world prayer for peace, and also those who are sick or alone, so they may feel accompanied in prayer on this day.

In this hour of prayer we will set a candle in a place that is visible also from the outside as a sign (it will be necessary beforehand to explain the significance of this lit candle by some means).

In accordance with the Holy See, we also want to invite Christian faithful of other denominations or religions, as Father General notes in his letter. Where possible, we ask that you see to it that this invitation reaches our Christian brethren and members of other religions. Following the guidelines of the Magisterium and together with diocesan commissions on ecumenism and interreligious dialogue, opportune ecumenical and interreligious celebrations may be convoked.

May God, through the intercession of Saint Teresa and our Mother of Mount Carmel and Saint Joseph, listen to this plea that we place in the hands of his Son, trusting in the Spirit who prays within us.

World prayer for peace

March 9, 2015 (Communicationes).-

(Proposed to the Holy Father Pope Francis)

(At the beginning or end of Mass on March 26, to be celebrated in Santa Marta, the Holy Father presiding, world prayer will begin with these words):

Dear brothers and sisters:

The Order of Discalced Carmelites, friars, nuns, and seculars, the entire Teresian family, in union with the whole Church, today celebrates the 500th anniversary of the birth of its foundress, Saint Teresa of Jesus, Doctor of the Church.

At the request of the Father General of the Order, during the span of this day a world hour of prayer for peace will take place in all convents, monasteries, and fraternities. I unite myself joyfully to this initiative and begin with these words our supplication to God, Father of all of us, so that, through the intercession of Christ Jesus, he will pour his Spirit over all the nations, so

that dialogue among men will triumph over violence and the conflicts that scourge our world. To this prayer I invite all faithful Catholics, all Christians of other denominations, and also members of other religions and men and women of good will.

[Brief silence. A candle is lit ad propositum.]

[The following Teresian text may be read by the Holy Father or a lector]:

“The world is all in flames [...] and are we to waste time asking for things that if God were to give them we would have one soul less in heaven? No, my Sisters, this is not the time to be discussing with God matters that have little importance” (Teresa of Jesus, *Way of Perfection* 1,5).

[The Holy Father or a lector continues]:

The world is all in flames is the sorrowful cry of Teresa as she contemplates the conflicts, wars, and divisions in society and the Church of her time. Today we also make this our cry and present it to Jesus as a supplication: Lord, the world is all in flames!

[Silence]

[The Holy Father continues]:

We, like Saint Teresa, know that by our own efforts we will not attain the precious gift of peace. Therefore, with our petition let us hold tightly to the power of the redeeming Cross of Christ: *“Oh my Lord and my Mercy, my only Good! What more do I seek in this life than a union so close to you, that there can be no distinction between you and me? With such a companion, what can be difficult? With you so close to me, what dare I not attempt for your sake?”*

Joined to the Cross of Christ and from the hand of the Virgin, his Mother and our Mother, and from the hand of Teresa, we beseech God to increase the opportunities for dialogue and encounter among men, that we learn to ask for forgiveness so that peace may grow in the world like the fruit of the reconciliation that he has come to bring to us.

Let us pray:

Lord our God, who by your Spirit raised up Saint Teresa of Jesus to show your Church the way to perfection, grant that we may live by her doctrine and awaken in us a longing for true holiness, whose fruit is reconciliation that leads to peace. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.