

**WORLD DAY OF PEACE 2025  
1 JANUARY 2025**



**FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES: GRANT US YOUR PEACE**

Pope St. Paul VI instituted the World Day of Peace on 1 January 1968. In his Message of 1968, the late Holy Father said the following to say about the institution of a World Day of Peace on the first day of each new year:

“It is Our desire that then, every year, this commemoration be repeated as a hope and as a promise, at the beginning of the calendar which measures and outlines the path of human life in time, that Peace with its just and beneficent equilibrium may dominate the development of events to come.”

**LISTENING TO THE PLEA OF AN ENDANGERED HUMANITY**

“Forgive Us Our Trespasses: Grant Us Your Peace” is the title of the Message of Pope Francis chose for the World Day of Peace 2025. In this Message the Holy Father refers to the Jubilee Year 2025 since both give us hope and “inspire us to seek to establish the liberating justice of God in our world”.

The Holy Father exhorts each one of us to “feel in some way responsible for the devastation to which the earth, our common home, has been subjected.”. Without resorting to equivocation Pope Francis says:

**“At the beginning of this year, then, we desire to heed the plea of suffering humankind in order to feel called, together and as individuals, to break the bonds of injustice and to proclaim God’s justice.”**

**“SPORADIC ACTS OF PHILANTHROPY ARE NOT ENOUGH”**

Pope Francis stresses that if we want “to break the bonds of injustice” in order “to proclaim God’s justice”, we need to go beyond “sporadic acts of philanthropy”:

**“Sporadic acts of philanthropy are not enough. Cultural and structural changes are necessary, so that enduring change may come about.”**

This means that while acts of philanthropy may be good, they ultimately sustain unjust systems by making an unjust order temporarily tolerable for the vulnerable. If we want to “proclaim God’s justice” – which is different from the world’s justice – we have to embark on the journey of hope by seeking “cultural and structural changes”.

The Holy Father proposes three actions for this journey of hope for cultural and structural changes. He says:

**“I would like to offer the proposals capable of restoring dignity to the lives of entire peoples and enabling them to set them out anew on the journey of hope.”**

### **FIRST ACTION: FORGIVING OF INTERNATIONAL DEBT OF POOR COUNTRIES**

Pope Francis reenergises the call that Pope St. John Paul II had made at the Great Jubilee of 2000, when the latter appealed for the international debt to be ‘reduc(ed) substantially, if not cancell(ed) outright’. Pope Francis points to the ‘ecological debt’ that powerful and prosperous nations owe the poorer nations. These nations are the world’s worst polluters but its burden falls most heavily on the poorer and powerless nations.

In other words the ‘ecological debt’ of the powerful and prosperous nations and the ‘international debt’ of the less developed and powerless nations are two sides of the same coin!

Hence Pope Francis calls on the wealthy nations to forgive the international debt, emphasising that this is *“no appeal for solidarity, but above all for justice”*.

To prevent the forgiving of this debt from being a single and isolated act of charity, the Holy Father calls for *“a new financial framework...leading to the creation of a global financial Charter based on solidarity and harmony between peoples.”*

### **SECOND ACTION: ABOLITION OF DEATH PENALTY**

The second action is a call for “a firm commitment to respect for the dignity of human life from conception to natural death”.

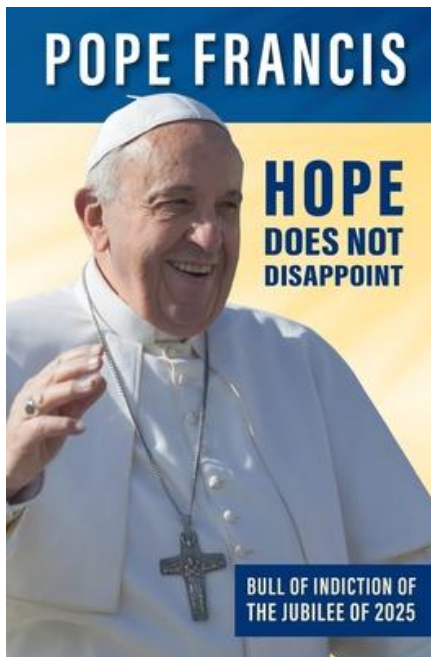
These words form the foundation upon which the Holy Father calls for the abolition of the death penalty in all nations. As His Holiness explains, the death penalty is morally wrong on two counts. First of all, it is an attack on the inviolability of life. Secondly, it destroys any hope of forgiveness of debt and the possibility of healing.

### **THIRD ACTION: REDIRECT MILITARY INDUSTRY FUNDS TO COMBAT WORLD HUNGER**

Citing his predecessors Pope Benedict XVI and St. Paul VI, Pope Francis wishes *“to make yet another appeal, for the sake of future generations... 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 Holy Father urges us *“to work at eliminating every pretext that encourages young people to regard their future as hopeless or dominated by the thirst to avenge the death of their dear ones.”*

## THE HOLY FATHER’S WISH FOR 2025



*“May 2025 be a year that peace flourishes! A true and lasting peace that goes beyond quibbling over the details of agreements and human compromises.*

*May we seek the true peace that is granted by God to hearts disarmed:*

*hearts not set on calculating what is mine and what is yours;*

*hearts that turn selfishness into readiness to reach out to others;*

*hearts that see themselves as indebted to God and thus prepared to forgive the debts that oppress others;*

*hearts that replace anxiety about the future with the hope that every individual can be a resource for the building of a better world.”*

To reflect on the full text of Pope Francis’s Message, go to

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/20241208-messaggio-58giornatamondiale-pace2025.html>

To reflect on the Papal Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee of 2025 click on

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls/documents/20240509\\_spes-non-confundit\\_bolla-giubileo2025.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls/documents/20240509_spes-non-confundit_bolla-giubileo2025.html)