



CARDINAL MARC OUELLET
Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops

GREETINGS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CCEE

27 OCTOBER 2022

Dear Brothers, Bishops of Europe,

I cordially greet you at the beginning of this annual session of the CCEE, sharing with you the "cry for Peace" that rose to the sky from the Colosseum in Rome during the inter-religious prayer meeting organised by the Community of Sant'Egidio and which was concluded by Pope Francis on Tuesday 25 October.

The Holy Father spoke for as he has many times before, in favour of Peace, lamenting the failure of wars in general and especially the current tragedy of the conflict in Europe, in the suffering Ukraine: *“Let us not be infected by the perverse rationale of war; let us not fall into the trap of hatred for the enemy. Let us once more put peace at the heart of our vision for the future, as the primary goal of our personal, social and political activity at every level. Let us defuse conflicts by the weapon of dialogue”*¹.

We pastors of the Catholic Church in Europe, pastors of our local Churches, are engaged in the common effort to bear witness to Peace and restore it where it is trampled upon. Our weapons are ancient and ever new:

¹ FRANCIS, speech at the meeting promoted by the Community of Sant'Egidio: “The cry for peace. Religions and Cultures in dialogue”, 25.10.2022.

prayer, dialogue, humanitarian aid, as well as solidarity with the victims of aggression and oppression.

We European pastors are a network of peace, a network of communion and hope. In the darkest moments we have always been called to fix our gaze on the central event of human history: the victory of the Lord over sin and death; today we are also called to fight for Peace on behalf of our faith in the resurrection of Christ, which obliges us to keep Hope alive in the human vocation for reconciliation and universal brotherhood.

In these days of sharing and mutual listening, let us help each other to strengthen our Episcopal Network of Peace; our peoples need our witness of unity and charity, especially in favour of the many refugees, by giving food to the hungry and shelter to the displaced, praying for everyone, especially for those responsible for all wars, so that Divine Mercy may touch the hearts of these men and women and make them change course for the common good of suffering humanity.

An important event for European and world youth, will be celebrated at WYD in Lisbon next summer. This youth gathering, accompanied by many bishops, will be a *chance* for Europe, an opportunity to forge bonds of fraternity and friendship between peoples, an occasion to reflect on the meaning of life as a vocation as well as the responsibility of Christians towards the tragedy of wars.

In continuity with the International Symposium held in Rome last February, entitled: “*For a fundamental theology of the priesthood*”, I plan to participate in WYD, together with the Scientific Committee that organised the event, with a vocational promotion project in the context of the “communion of vocations”. To this end, the proceedings of the *Symposium* will be published in six languages and made available to all, starting with the bishops, for the promotion of all vocations. I think a fundamental reflection on the relationship

between the common priesthood of all the baptised and the ministerial priesthood is necessary if we want to base a synodal praxis on faith and not only on democratic culture. I believe that the Church of the future in Europe will be the child of the prophetic vision that came out of the Second Vatican Council, or it will not have that evangelising *dunamis* that the Holy Spirit imprinted on that Assembly as well as the Holy Pope who presided over it. The synodal path undertaken is a road *with no return*, in the sense that it traces the sure way that conciliar wisdom has indicated, to build an increasingly missionary Christian community, a challenge of love in the midst of a secularised society, a sort of *horizontal transcendence*. These are our times, in which structures of sin² are generating wars: may the peaceful weapons of faith and the proclamation of Christ's charity bring them to halt. Thank you.