



Sunday July 23, 2006- Day of Prayer and Penance for Peace in Middle East

VATICAN CITY, JUL 20, 2006 - Faced with worsening situation in the Middle East, the Holy See's Press Office released the following notice:

"The Holy Father is following with great concern the destinies of all the peoples involved and has proclaimed this Sunday, July 23, as a special day of prayer and penance, inviting the pastors and faithful of all the particular Churches, and all believers of the world, to implore from God the precious gift of peace.

"In particular, the Supreme Pontiff hopes that prayers will be raised to the Lord for an immediate cease-fire between the sides, for humanitarian corridors to be opened in order to bring help to the suffering peoples, and for reasonable and responsible negotiations to begin to put an end to objective situations of injustice that exist in that region; as already indicated by Pope Benedict XVI at the Angelus last Sunday, July 16.

"In reality, the Lebanese have the right to see the integrity and sovereignty of their country respected, the Israelis the right to live in peace in their State, and the Palestinians have the right to have their own free and sovereign homeland.

"At this sorrowful moment, His Holiness also makes an appeal to charitable organizations to help all the people struck by this pitiless conflict."

RESOURCES:

Archdiocese of Boston: See the homepage of the Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs <http://rcab.org/EandI/HomePage.html>. Go to the link "Peace in the Middle East." The "Points for Peacemaking" are helpful talking points to begin to frame the issues for the discussion of peace in any context of conflict.

USCCB statements on the current conflict in Israel, Gaza, and Lebanon may be found on the USCCB homepage www.usccb.org

SUGGESTED INTERCESSION:

For the people of the Middle East; that violence will cease, that avenues of humanitarian aid will open, and that negotiations for a just and lasting peace for all will begin immediately, let us pray to the Lord.

"Let us pray to Mary Queen of Peace, that she may implore from God the fundamental gift of harmony, bringing political leaders back to the way of reason and opening new possibilities of dialogue and understanding. With this in mind, I invite the local Churches to raise special prayers for peace in the Holy Land and in the entire Middle East."

- Pope Benedict XVI, July 16, 2006

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