

Second Sunday in Christmastide

Parish of The Most Holy and Undivided Trinity

The Catholic Church in

Grimsby, Cleethorpes & Immingham



Contact Us

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(Admin & Finance)

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Parish Sister
Sister Ann Helen Byrne

Newsletter



“Behold
the
Lamb
of
God”

Let us imagine the scene. We are on the bank of the River Jordan. John is baptizing; there are many people, men and women of various ages, who have come there, to the river, to receive baptism from the hands of the man who reminded many of Elijah, the great Prophet who nine centuries before had purified the Israelites of idolatry and led them back to the true faith in the God of the Covenant, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

John preaches that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, that the Messiah is about to reveal himself, and one must prepare, convert and act with righteousness; and he begins to baptize in the River Jordan in order to give the people a tangible means of repentance (cf. Mt 3:1-6). These people came to repent their sins, to make penance, to begin their life anew. He knows; John knows that the Messiah, the Lord's Consecrated One, is now nearby, and the sign to recognize Him will be that the Holy Spirit will descend upon Him. Indeed, He will bring the true baptism, baptism in the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn 1:33).

And thus, the moment arrives: Jesus appears on the riverbank, in the midst of the people, the sinners — like all of us. It is his first public act, the first thing he does when he leaves his home in Nazareth, at the age of 30: he goes down into Judea, goes to the Jordan, and is baptized by John. We know what happens. We celebrated it last Sunday: the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus in the form of a dove and the voice of the Father proclaims him the beloved Son (cf. Mt 3:16-17). It is the sign that John has been waiting for. It is He! Jesus is the Messiah. John is disconcerted, because He manifests himself in an unimaginable way: in the midst of sinners, baptized with them, or rather, for them. But the Spirit enlightens John and helps him understand that in this way God's justice is fulfilled, his plan of salvation is fulfilled: Jesus is the Messiah, the King of Israel, however, not with the power of this world but as the *Lamb of God, who takes upon himself and takes away the sins of the world.*

Thus, John points Him out to the people and to his disciples. Because John had a large circle of disciples, who had chosen him as a spiritual guide, and some of them actually become the first disciples of Jesus. We know their names well: Simon, later called Peter, his brother Andrew, James and his brother John. All were fishermen, all Galileans, like Jesus.

Pope Francis, Angelus, Saint Peter's Square, 20

Parish Office

Will close for Christmas at
12:30pm on Tuesday 23rd
December 2025 and reopen in
the new year on Monday 12th
January 2026 at 9:00am

Holy Trinity Presbytery
Grimsby, DN32 9DZ
01472 342301

**Monday,
Tuesday & Wednesday**
9.00am until 12.30pm
Outside of these times the office
will not be available.

Fr Robbie's Friday Spiritual Surgery

Will resume in the new year
on Friday 16th January 2026

Holy Trinity Presbytery
Grimsby, DN32 9DZ
01472 342301

Each Friday Morning
by Appointment Only
via the Parish Office

Appointment Times Available:
9.00am, 10.00am and 11.00am

Sign up for the Parish Bulletin



Sunday 21st December

Loose Plate £535.23
Contactless/Online £155.00
Standing Orders £1,156.17
Total £1,846.40

Christmas Offering

Loose Plate £1,923.44
Contactless/Online £866.00
Total £2,789.44

Sunday 28th December

Loose Plate £156.51
Contactless/Online £197.00
Standing Orders £1,156.17
Total £1,509.68

Weekly Total Income for December 2025 by week:

Sunday 7th December	£1,866.87
Sunday 14th December	£2,180.92
Christmas Raffle/Fair	£3,700.00
Christmas Flowers	£1,384.65
Sunday 21st December	£1,846.40
Christmas Offering	£2,789.44
Sunday 28th December	£1,509.68
December Total	£15,277.96

News for the Pews

*Fr Robbie, Deacon Stephen, Sr Ann Helen, Sr Bridgetta and Duncan,
Wish you ALL a very Happy 2026.*



RCIA Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults



The course will begin on Wednesday 14th January at 7:15pm in Holy Trinity Presbytery, Grimsby. And will continue, weekly, at the same time and location on the following dates:

January 14th, 21st, 28th.

February 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th.

March 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th.

If you have already been in touch with the Parish Office, you will be contacted with further information. Anyone can attend, but please contact the Parish Office first, so we know who to expect.

The Parish Office will close for Christmas at 12:30pm on Tuesday 23rd December 2025 and reopen in the new year, on Monday 12th January 2026 at 9:00am. If you need a priest in an emergency (e.g. danger of death) while the office is closed, please contact Fr Robbie by calling 01472342301(ext 2) or 07449835765

Thank you from St Pius X Parish, Charles Square, London -
Dear Parishioners, Thank you so much for the kind gift of the altar cloth – a kind of Christmas gift which came on the same day as the announcement of our new Archbishop! Wishing you a most happy Christmas. **Fr Peter Wilson, Parish Priest**

Thank you

I would like to say a big thank to all those who worked hard within our churches to make Advent and Christmas so wonderful again this year - remembering the hard work especially of our Choir, Organists, Flower Arrangers, Readers, Cribs, Welcome Ministry, EMHC Ministers, Altar Servers, Sacristans, Cleaners, Sunday Tea & Coffee, and all those working in the background.

Fr Robbie



We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.

*O star of wonder, star of light,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading,
still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.*

Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a Deity nigh;
prayer and praising, voices raising, worshiping God on high.

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

MASS FOR THE SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

Monday 5th January
6:30pm in Cleethorpes

Tuesday 6th January
9:30am in Grimsby



Steps as you leave St Marys

Since my arrival in the parish, as Deacon Stephen and I wish you a good Sunday morning, I have noticed quite a few near misses of elderly parishioners stumbling down the steps at the front of church as the daylight hits their eyes and losing their footing. Please can I appeal to those of you who are a little less steady of your feet or balance and those becoming frail, to utilise the side door of the church and the ramp (with handle) to travel down the driveway. I would not want anyone to hurt themselves leaving the church. Let us all be sensible and care for one another, and our seniors, as we leave together. Thank you Fr R

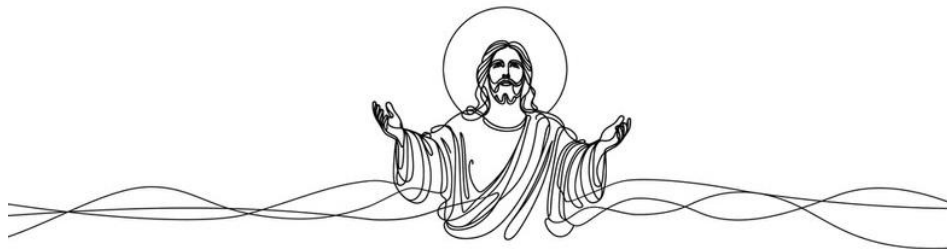
Parish Finance & Administration

As you are aware Duncan had been asked previously, by Fr Andrew, to temporarily take on Finance Administration, and agreed to do so. He has agreed to make this arrangement permanent. I have agreed with Duncan that he is available for Parishioners during office opening hours, but that outside of this time he needs to be able to focus and prioritise finance and gift aid, implementing the recommendations of our most recent end of year audit. In light of this, please do contact Duncan, in the parish office, regarding any questions or queries in relation to, expenses, bookkeeping, gift aid, standing orders and/or legacies moving forward. Thank you - Fr Robbie

Sanitising Hands

Please continue to exercise personal and social responsibility by sanitising your hands when entering and leaving the church. This should continue through the winter. If you are feeling unwell or tested positive for covid or the flu/cold, please stay home and celebrate Mass online to slow the spread to others. Thank you

News for the Pews



Kathleen Robinson RIP - It is with sadness that I announce the passing of Kathleen. Her Funeral Service will take place at **Our Lady Star of the Sea Church, Immingham** on **Tuesday 13th January at 10.30am** followed by committal at **Immingham Cemetery**. Please keep her family in your thoughts and prayers at this sad time. **Requiescat in pace**

Dean Purdon RIP - It is with sadness that I announce the passing of Dean. His Requiem Mass will take place at **St Mary on the Sea Church, Grimsby** on **Wednesday 14th January at 10.30am** followed committal by **Grimsby Cemetery**. Please keep his family in your thoughts and prayers at this sad time. **Requiescat in pace**

Patricia Spencer (Pat) - It is with sadness that I announce the passing of Pat. Her Funeral Service will take place at **Corpus Christi Church, Cleethorpes** on **Friday 16th January at 11.00am** followed by committal at **St Lawrence Churchyard, Fulstow**. Please keep her family in your thoughts and prayers at this sad time. **Requiescat in pace**



A Family Welcoming Parish

Remind your friends that this New Year, the Lord is waiting to spend time with them, and their families.

There is always a pew for You...
...and your family in our Parish.





Our Schools

**St Marys Catholic Primary
Voluntary Academy**
Wellington Street
Grimsby
DN32 7JX

Mr Joseph O'Connor
Headteacher

Tel: 01472 357982
office@smp.nelcmail.co.uk

**St Joseph's Catholic
Voluntary Academy**
Philip Avenue
Cleethorpes
DN35 9DL

Mrs Michelle Steeper
Acting Headteacher

01472 690672
office@sjp.academy

Our Hospital

**Diana, Princess of Wales
Hospital**
Scarcho Road
Grimsby
North East Lincolnshire
DN33 2BA
01472 874111

Parish Safeguarding Team

Richard Mellows
(lead)
&
Sarah Pollard
(deputy lead)
01472 342301 (ext 6)

richard.mellowspsr
@dioceseofnottingham.uk
07513 725509

sarah.pollardpsr
@dioceseofnottingham.uk

Sunday: Yr. A - Eucharistic Prayer: III

Saturday 3rd January - The Most Holy Name of Jesus

5.00pm - **Immingham** - Mass - People of God

6.00pm - **Grimsby** - Polish Language Vigil Mass

Sunday 4th January - Second Sunday in Christmastide

9.00am - **Cleethorpes** - Mass - Simon Lane RIP - Lane Family

11.00am - **Grimsby** - Mass - Robert Dermot Abba RIP - Mary & Bob Abba

Monday 5th January - Vigil of Epiphany of the Lord (Solemnity)

6.30pm - **Cleethorpes** - Vigil Mass - People of God

Tuesday 6th January - Epiphany of the Lord (Solemnity)



9.30am - **Grimsby** - Mass - People of God

Wednesday 7th January - Epiphanytide

9.00am - **Immingham** - Rosary - Glorious Mysteries

9.30am - Immingham - Service of Word & Holy Communion

5.45pm - **Grimsby** - Eucharistic Adoration

6.30pm - Grimsby - Service of Word & Holy Communion

Thursday 8th January - Epiphanytide

9.00am - **Cleethorpes** - Rosary - Luminous Mysteries

9.30am - Cleethorpes - Service of Word & Holy Communion

Friday 9th January - Epiphanytide

5.45pm - **Cleethorpes** - Eucharistic Adoration

6.30pm - Cleethorpes - Service of Word & Holy Communion

Saturday 10th January - Epiphanytide

5.00pm - **Immingham** - Mass - Florence & Dennis Wharton RIP - Pauline

6.00pm - **Grimsby** - Polish Language Vigil Mass

Sunday 11th January - Baptism of the Lord

9.00am - **Cleethorpes** - Mass - Denise & Patricia McGoran RIP John McGor

11.00am - **Grimsby** - Mass - People of God

Monday 12th January - Feria

No Mass/No Service

Tuesday 13th January - Feria

10.30am - **Immingham** - Funeral Service - Kathleen Robinson RIP

5.45pm - **Grimsby** - Eucharistic Adoration with Confessions

6.30pm - **Grimsby** - Mass - Raymond Willis RIP Tricia Willis

Wednesday 14th January - Feria

10.30am - **Grimsby** - Requiem Mass - Dean Purdon RIP

Thursday 15th January - Feria

9.00am - **Cleethorpes** - Rosary - Luminous Mysteries

9.30am - **Cleethorpes** - Mass - Intentions of Joseph Ugochukwa Ogbonna

Friday 16th January - Feria

11.00am - **Cleethorpes** - Funeral Service - Patricia Spencer RIP (Pat)

5.45pm - **Cleethorpes** - Eucharistic Adoration with Confessions

6.30pm - **Cleethorpes** - Mass - Keith & Dorothy Lund RIP Karin Lund

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

Please pray for these intentions



Albert & Marie Flosse & Family RIP

Alice & Barry Plant RIP

Angela Booth RIP

Angela Murray RIP

Arthur & Winifred, Jack & Lilian Aisthorpe, David & Raymond Aisthorpe

Arthur Henry Smith; Josefa, Severo & Diana Samarinta RIP

Bella Moss RIP

Bill & Doreen Green

Bill, Mary, Paul & John Wood

Blessings On Bose And Mini

Bob, Michael & Bede

Caroline Medley RIP

Cecelia & Thomas Shennan RIP

Cecelia & Thomas Shennan RIP

Charles (Snr) Doris, Charles (Jnr) & Antony Harrowing

Charles Merrey RIP

Charles Quinn RIP

Chikum, Chinua & Chiazio

Clive Turner RIP

Damon & Heather, Jacob & Emily

David Sieviewright, Florette Rouillon, And Alain Rouillon RIP

David Waters RIP

Deceased Members Of Sedman, Fenn, Hallett & Roberts Families

Deceased Members Of The Gammon Family

Deceased Members Of The Jackson Family, Betty, Bob And Philip

Deceased Members Of The Lynch, Keane, Pugh, O'donnell & Vincent Families

Deceased Members Of The McMahon & Wade Families

Deceased Members Of The Money, Lonsdale & Lohon Families

Deceased Members Of The O'connor Family

Deceased Members Of The O'reilly Family

Deceased Members Of The Riley, Dales & Cahill Family

Deceased Members Of The Strype, Vernon & Shennan Families

Deceased Members Of The Taylor & Edgecombe Families

Deceased Relatives & Friends Of Nanette Brown

Doris Brown

Edward Owen McMahon

Ellen & Edward Leggett RIP

Ellen Purdon RIP

Eternal Rest For The Members Of The Walker Family RIP

Family & Friends Of Hanrahan, Winter & Cassidy

Family In East Timor

Florence Eva Howard RIP

For Deceased Parents & Siblings Of Pat Liles

For Deeper Faith, Protection & Peace Throughout 2026.

May It Be A Fruitful Year For The Mutondo Families & Community

For God's Blessings

For Peace On Earth On All

For Reconciliation, Peace And Justice In The World

For The Family Of Louise Drake, Especially Sister Nora

For The Health And Recovery Of Pauline Fordham

For The Leighton's Family & Friends

For The Perry, Rose & Harry Families

For The Repose Of The Soul Of Marjorie Stephenson

For The Repose Of The Souls Of Hugh Farrell's Family & Friends

For The Rooney & Cole Families

For The Welfare Of Ron & Mary Farrell And Susan & John Armstrong

For The Welfare Of The Conway Family

For The Welfare Of The Friends And Family Of The Whites

For Venezuela

Frederick Russell Brown RIP

George & Margaret Wharton RIP

God's Blessings & Favour

Helen & Charles Campbell RIP

In Thanksgiving

In Thanksgiving

Jacqueline Sieviewright

James & Odette Whitefield & Family RIP

Joe And Catherine Hopkinson RIP

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

Please pray for these intentions



John & Anastasia Leaver RIP

John & Annie Togher

John Mildred Hughes RIP

John Philip Hughes RIP

Kath & Eddie Whelpton

Kath Jones

Keith, Dorothy & Basil Lund RIP

Ken & Brenda Codd RIP

Lane & Leggett Families

Leopolo Maglana Sr. Sesenia Maglana Terry Dunwell, Joel Cericon,

Lyn Lyn Maglana

Lily & John Walker

Lucy & Charles Mowforth RIP

Mamma E Papino RIP

Margaret & Bob Taylor RIP

Mary Hinton, John Hinton, Rj & Rose Moylan

Maureen Tuckey RIP

Michael Hurley, Tommy Lynch, Kevin Nesbit & Alan Tyrer

Michael Patrick Heaney RIP

Michael Togher

Michael Wilson

Mick & Marilyns Friend & Neighbour RIP

Mick Metcalf

Monica Quinn RIP

Muriel Easton (Fred)

O' Reilly Family, Bill Mckeen & Family, Emma Grantham

Olive & Essra Frederiksmose

Pat Leggett's Family

Peace For All Who Suffer In Mind Or Body & For All Victims Of War & Famine

Peace For The Hutchinson Family

Peace On Earth

Peace, Joy & Happiness For All Of Peter Matthew's Children & Family

Peter Taylor RIP

Phil (Philomena) Myers RIP

Quinn & Knight Families

Raymond Mack RIP

Richard Sales RIP

Richard Smith & Family RIP

Robert Dermot Abba RIP

Ryan Whelpton

Special Family Intention

Special Intention

Susan Raithby RIP

The Deceased Members & Friends Of The Strype, Vernon & Shennan Families

The Liddy Family

The Young & Lawson Families & Friends

Tom & Elsie Rice RIP

Una Cunningham

Vi & Harry Randell

Willerton & Harrowing Families

William & Vera Harrison, Kath Warburton, Crowshaw & Harrison Families RIP



CHRISTMAS OFFERING



Please support our Parish,
by giving an offering this Christmas



To gift-aid your offering,
Please donate online via the QR code
or use the card machines.

*Envelopes will be distributed at the end of the
Fourth Sunday of Advent Masses*

*There will also be collection boxes at all of the
Christmas Masses.*



Crib Offerings



FRIENDS
OF THE
HOLY LAND
GIVING HOPE TO VULNERABLE CHRISTIANS





Urbi et Orbi Message of the Holy Father Leo XIV

Christmas 2025

Dear brothers and sisters,

“Let us all rejoice in the Lord, for our Saviour has been born in the world. Today, true peace has come down to us from heaven” (Entrance Antiphon, Christmas Mass during the Night). Thus sings the liturgy on Christmas night, and the announcement of Bethlehem resounds in the Church: the Child born of the Virgin Mary is Christ the Lord, sent by the Father to save us from sin and death. Indeed, he is our peace; he has conquered hatred and enmity through God’s merciful love. For this reason, “the Lord’s birth is the birth of peace” (Saint Leo the Great, Sermon 26).

Jesus was born in a stable because there was no room for him in the inn. As soon as he was born, his mother Mary “wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger” (cf. Lk 2:7). The Son of God, through whom all things were created, was not welcomed, and a poor manger for animals was his crib.

The eternal Word of the Father whom the heavens cannot contain chose to come into the world in this way. Out of love, he wanted to be born of a woman and so share our humanity; out of love, he accepted poverty and rejection, identifying himself with those who are discarded and excluded.

Already in the birth of Jesus, we glimpse the fundamental decision that would guide the entire life of the Son of God, even to his death on the cross: the decision not to leave us under the burden of sin, but to bear it himself for us, to take it upon himself. He alone could do so. At the same time, however, he showed us what we alone can do, which is to take on our own share of responsibility. Indeed, God, who created us without us, will not save us without us (cf. Saint Augustine, Sermon 169, 11, 13), that is, without our free will to love. Those who do not love are not saved; they are lost. And those who do not love their brother or sister whom they see, cannot love God whom they do not see (cf. 1 Jn 4:20).

Sisters and brothers, responsibility is the sure way to peace. If all of us, at every level, would stop accusing others and instead acknowledge our own faults, asking God for forgiveness, and if we would truly enter into the suffering of others and stand in solidarity with the weak and the oppressed, then the world would change.

Jesus Christ is our peace first of all because he frees us from sin, and also because he shows us the way to overcome conflicts — all conflicts, whether interpersonal or international. Without a heart freed from sin, a heart that has been forgiven, we cannot be men and women of peace or builders of peace. This is why Jesus was born in Bethlehem and died on the cross: to free us from sin. He is the Savior. With his grace, we can and must each do our part to reject hatred, violence and opposition, and to practice dialogue, peace and reconciliation.

On this day of celebration, I wish to send a warm and fatherly greeting to all Christians, especially those living in the Middle East, whom I recently visited on my first Apostolic Journey. I listened to them as they expressed their fears and know well their sense of powerlessness before the power dynamics that overwhelm them. The Child born today in Bethlehem is the same Jesus who says: “In me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (Jn 16:33).

From God let us ask for justice, peace and stability for Lebanon, Palestine, Israel and Syria, trusting in these divine words: “The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust for ever” (Is 32:17).

Let us entrust the entire European continent to the Prince of Peace, asking him to continue to inspire a spirit of community and cooperation, in fidelity to its Christian roots and history, and in solidarity with – and acceptance of – those in need. Let us pray in a particular way for the tormented people of Ukraine: may the clamour of weapons cease, and may the parties involved, with the support and commitment of the international community, find the courage to engage in sincere, direct and respectful dialogue.

From the Child of Bethlehem, we implore peace and consolation for the victims of all current wars in the world, especially those that are forgotten, and for those who suffer due to injustice, political instability, religious persecution and terrorism. I remember in a special way our brothers and sisters in Sudan, South Sudan, Mali, Burkina Faso and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In these final days of the Jubilee of Hope, let us pray to God made man for the beloved people of Haiti, that all forms of violence in the country will cease and that progress will be made on the path of peace and reconciliation.

May the Child Jesus inspire those in Latin America who hold political responsibilities, so that, in facing the numerous challenges, space may be given to dialogue for the common good, rather than to ideological and partisan prejudices.

Let us ask the Prince of Peace to illuminate Myanmar with the light of a future of reconciliation, restoring hope to the younger generations, guiding its entire people along paths of peace, and accompanying those who live without shelter, security or confidence in tomorrow.

We ask the Lord that the ancient friendship between Thailand and Cambodia be restored, and that the parties involved will continue to work towards reconciliation and peace.

We also entrust to God the peoples of South Asia and Oceania, who have been severely tested by recent, devastating natural disasters that have struck entire communities. In the face of such trials, I invite everyone to renew, with heartfelt conviction, our shared commitment to assisting those who suffer.

Dear brothers and sisters, in the darkness of the night, “the true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world” (Jn 1:9), but “his own people did not accept him” (Jn 1:11). Let us not allow ourselves to be overcome by indifference towards those who suffer, for God is not indifferent to our distress.

In becoming man, Jesus took upon himself our fragility, identifying with each one of us: with those who have nothing left and have lost everything, like the inhabitants of Gaza; with those who are prey to hunger and poverty, like the Yemeni people; with those who are fleeing their homeland to seek a future elsewhere, like the many refugees and migrants who cross the Mediterranean or traverse the American continent; with those who have lost their jobs and those who are looking for work, like so many young people who struggle to find employment; with those who are exploited, like many underpaid workers; with those in prison, who often live in inhumane conditions.

The invocation of peace that rises from every land reaches God’s heart, as one poet wrote:

“Not the peace of a cease-fire,
not even the vision of the wolf and the lamb,
but rather
as in the heart when the excitement is over
and you can talk only about a great weariness...

Let it come
like wildflowers,
suddenly, because the field
must have it: wildpeace.”ⁱ

On this holy day, let us open our hearts to our brothers and sisters who are in need or in pain. In doing so, we open our hearts to the Child Jesus, who welcomes us with open arms and reveals his divinity to us: “But to all who received him... he gave power to become children of God” (Jn1:12).

In a few days' time, the Jubilee Year will come to an end. The Holy Doors will close, but Christ our hope remains with us always! He is the Door that is always open, leading us into divine life. This is the joyful proclamation of this day: the Child who was born is God made man; he comes not to condemn but to save; his is not a fleeting appearance, for he comes to stay and to give himself. In him, every wound is healed and every heart finds rest and peace. "The Lord's birth is the birth of peace."

To all of you, I offer heartfelt good wishes for a peaceful and holy Christmas!

From the Vatican

25 December 2025

LEO PP. XIV

ⁱ Y. Amichai, "Wildpeace", in *The Poetry of Yehuda Amichai*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015



Message of the Holy Father Leo XIV for the 59th World Day of Peace

1st January 2026

Peace be with you all: Towards an “unarmed and disarming” peace

“Peace be with you!”

This ancient greeting, still in use today in many cultures, was infused with new life on the evening of Easter on the lips of the risen Jesus. “Peace be with you” (Jn 20:19, 21) is his Word that does not merely desire peace, but truly brings about a lasting transformation in those who receive it, and consequently in all of reality. For this reason, the Apostles’ successors give voice every day throughout the world to the most silent of revolutions: “Peace be with you!” From the very evening of my election as Bishop of Rome, I have wanted to join my own greeting to this universal proclamation. And I would like to reiterate that this is the peace of the risen Christ – a peace that is unarmed and disarming, humble and persevering. It comes from God who loves us all unconditionally.

The peace of the risen Christ

The Good Shepherd, who gives his life for the flock and has other sheep not of this fold (cf. Jn 10:11, 16), is Christ, our peace, who has conquered death and broken down the walls of division that separate humanity (cf. Eph 2:14). His presence, his gift and his victory continue to shine through the perseverance of many witnesses through whom God’s work carries on in the world, becoming even more visible and radiant in the darkness of our times.

The contrast between darkness and light is not only a biblical image describing the labor pains of a new world being born; it is also an experience that unsettles us and affects us amid the trials we face in our historical circumstances. In order to overcome the darkness, it is necessary to see the light and believe in it. This is a call that Jesus’ disciples are invited to live in a unique and privileged way; yet it also finds its way into every human heart. Peace exists; it wants to dwell within us. It has the gentle power to enlighten and expand our understanding; it resists and overcomes violence. Peace is a breath of the eternal: while to evil we cry out “Enough,” to peace we whisper “Forever.” Into this horizon the Risen One has led us. Sustained by this conviction, even amid what Pope Francis called “a third world war fought piecemeal,” peacemakers continue to resist the spread of darkness, standing as sentinels in the night.

Sadly, it is also possible to forget the light. When this happens, we lose our sense of realism and surrender to a partial and distorted view of the world, disfigured by darkness and fear. Many today call “realistic” those narratives devoid of hope, blind to the beauty of others and forgetful of God’s grace, which is always at work in human hearts, even though wounded by sin. Saint Augustine urged Christians to forge an unbreakable bond with peace, so that by cherishing it deeply in their hearts, they would be able to radiate its luminous warmth around them. Addressing his community, he wrote: “If you wish to draw others to peace, first have it yourselves; be steadfast in peace yourselves. To inflame others, you must have the flame burning within.”

Dear brothers and sisters, whether we have the gift of faith or feel we lack it, let us open ourselves to peace! Let us welcome it and recognize it, rather than believing it to be impossible and beyond our reach. Peace is more than just a goal; it is a presence and a journey. Even when it is endangered within us and around us, like a small flame threatened by a storm, we must protect it, never forgetting the names and stories of those who have borne witness to it. Peace is a principle that guides and defines our choices. Even in places where only rubble remains, and despair seems inevitable, we still find people who have not forgotten peace. Just as on the evening of Easter Jesus entered the place where his disciples were gathered in fear and discouragement, so too the peace of the risen Christ continues to pass through doors and barriers in the voices and faces of his witnesses. This gift enables us to remember goodness, to recognize it as victorious, to choose it again, and to do so together.

An unarmed peace

Shortly before being arrested, in a moment of intimate confidence, Jesus said to those who were with him: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives.” And he immediately added: “Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid” (Jn 14:27). Their distress and fear were certainly connected to the violence soon to befall him. But, more deeply, the Gospels do not hide the fact that what troubled the disciples was his nonviolent response: a path that they all, Peter first among them, contested; yet the Master asked them to follow this path to the end. The way of Jesus continues to cause unease and fear. He firmly repeats to those who would defend him by force: “Put your sword back into its sheath” (Jn 18:11; cf. Mt 26:52). The peace of the risen Jesus is unarmed, because his was an unarmed struggle in the midst of concrete historical, political and social circumstances. Christians must together bear prophetic witness to this novelty, mindful of the tragedies in which they have too often been complicit. The great parable of the Last Judgment invites all Christians to act with mercy in this awareness (cf. Mt 25:31-46). In doing so, they will find brothers and sisters at their side who, in different ways, have listened to the pain of others and freed themselves inwardly from the deception of violence.

Although many people today have hearts ready for peace, they are often overcome by a great sense of powerlessness before an increasingly uncertain world. Saint Augustine had already pointed out this particular paradox: “It is not difficult to possess peace; it is, perhaps, more difficult to praise it. To praise peace, we may find that we lack the necessary talent; we search for the right ideas and weigh our words. But to have peace, it is there, within reach, and we can possess it without effort.”

When we treat peace as a distant ideal, we cease to be scandalized when it is denied, or even when war is waged in its name. We seem to lack those “right ideas,” the well-considered words and the ability to say that peace is near. When peace is not a reality that is lived, cultivated and protected, then aggression spreads into domestic and public life. In the relations between citizens and rulers, it could even be considered a fault not to be sufficiently prepared for war, not to react to attacks, and not to return violence for violence. Far beyond the principle of legitimate defence, such confrontational logic now dominates global politics, deepening instability and unpredictability day by day. It is no coincidence that repeated calls to increase military spending, and the choices that follow, are presented by many government leaders as a justified response to external threats. The idea of the deterrent power of military might, especially nuclear deterrence, is based on the irrationality of relations between nations, built not on law, justice and trust, but on fear and domination by force. “Consequently,” as Saint John XXIII had already written in his day, “people are living in the grip of constant fear. They are afraid that at any moment the impending storm may break upon them with horrific violence. And they have good reasons for their fear, for there is certainly no lack of such weapons. While it is difficult to believe that anyone would dare to assume responsibility for initiating the appalling slaughter and destruction that war would bring in its wake, there is no denying that the conflagration could be started by some chance and unforeseen circumstance.”

Moreover, it should be noted that global military expenditure increased by 9.4% in 2024 compared to the previous year, confirming the trend of the last ten years and reaching a total of \$2718 billion (or 2.5% of global GDP). Furthermore, the response to new challenges seems to involve not only enormous economic investment in rearmament, but also a shift in educational policies. Rather than fostering a culture of memory that preserves the hard-won awareness of the twentieth century and the millions of victims, we now see communication campaigns and educational programs – at schools, universities and in the media – that spread a perception of threats and promote only an armed notion of defence and security.

And yet, “those who truly love peace also love the enemies of peace.” Saint Augustine thus advised not to burn bridges or persist in reproach, but to prefer listening and, where possible, engaging in discussions with others. Sixty years ago, the Second Vatican Council concluded with a renewed awareness of the pressing need for dialogue between the Church and the contemporary world. In particular, the Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* drew attention to the evolution of warfare: “The hazards peculiar to modern warfare consist in the fact that they expose those possessing recently developed weapons to the risk of perpetrating crimes like these and, by an inexorable chain of events, of urging people to even worse acts of atrocity. To obviate the possibility of this happening at any time in the future, the bishops of the world gathered together to implore everyone, especially government leaders and military advisors, to give unceasing consideration to their immense responsibilities before God and before the whole human race.”

Reiterating the appeal of the Council Fathers, and considering dialogue to be the most effective approach at every level, we must acknowledge that further technological advances and the military implementation of artificial intelligence have worsened the tragedy of armed conflict. There is even a growing tendency among political and military leaders to shirk responsibility, as decisions about life and death are increasingly “delegated” to machines. This marks an unprecedented and destructive betrayal of the legal and philosophical principles of humanism that underlie and safeguard every civilization. It is necessary to denounce the enormous concentrations of private economic and financial interests that are driving States in this direction; yet that alone would not be enough, unless we also awakened conscience and critical thought. The Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* presents Saint Francis of Assisi as a model of such awakening: “In the world of that time, bristling with watchtowers and defensive walls, cities were a theatre of brutal wars between powerful families, even as poverty was spreading through the countryside. Yet there Francis was able to welcome true peace into his heart and free himself of the desire to wield power over others. He became one of the poor and sought to live in harmony with all.” This is a narrative that we are called to continue today, and that means joining forces to contribute to a disarming peace, a peace born of openness and evangelical humility.

A disarming peace

Goodness is disarming. Perhaps this is why God became a child. The mystery of the Incarnation, which reaches its deepest descent even to the realm of the dead, begins in the womb of a young mother and is revealed in the manger in Bethlehem. “Peace on earth,” sing the angels, announcing the presence of a defenceless God, in whom humanity can discover itself as loved only by caring for him (cf. Lk 2:13-14). Nothing has the power to change us as much as a child. Perhaps it is precisely the thought of our children and of others who are equally fragile, that cuts to the heart (cf. Acts 2:37). In this regard, my venerable predecessor wrote that “human fragility has the power to make us more lucid about what endures and what passes, what brings life and what kills. Perhaps for this reason, we so often tend to deny our limitations and avoid fragile and wounded people: they have the power to question the direction we have chosen, both as individuals and as a community.”

John XXIII was the first pope to advocate “integral disarmament,” which can only be achieved through renewal of the heart and mind. In *Pacem in Terris*, he wrote: “Everyone must realize that, unless this process of disarmament be thoroughgoing and complete, and reach people’s very souls, it is impossible to stop the arms race, or to reduce armaments, or — and this is the main thing — ultimately to abolish them entirely. Everyone must sincerely co-operate in the effort to banish fear and the anxious expectation of war from our minds. But this requires that the fundamental principles upon which peace is based in today’s world be replaced by an altogether different one, namely, the realization that true and lasting peace among nations cannot consist in the possession of an equal supply of armaments but only in mutual trust. And we are confident that this can be achieved, for it is a thing which not only is dictated by common sense, but is in itself most desirable and most fruitful of good.”

An essential service that religions must render to a suffering humanity is to guard against the growing temptation to weaponize even thoughts and words. The great spiritual traditions, as well as right reason, teach us to look beyond blood ties or ethnicity, beyond associations that accept only those who are similar and reject those who are different. Today, we see that this cannot be taken for granted. Unfortunately, it has become increasingly common to drag the language of faith into political battles, to bless nationalism, and to justify violence and armed struggle in the name of religion. Believers must actively refute, above all by the witness of their lives, these forms of blasphemy that profane the holy name of God. Therefore, alongside action, it is more necessary than ever to cultivate prayer, spirituality, and

ecumenical and interreligious dialogue as paths of peace and as languages of encounter within traditions and cultures. Throughout the world, it is to be hoped that “every community become a ‘house of peace,’ where one learns how to defuse hostility through dialogue, where justice is practiced and forgiveness is cherished.” Now more than ever, we must show that peace is not a utopia by fostering attentive and life-giving pastoral creativity.

At the same time, this should in no way detract from the importance of the political dimension. Those entrusted with the highest public responsibility must “give serious thought to the problem of achieving more humane relations between States throughout the world. This adjustment must be based on mutual trust, sincerity in negotiations and the faithful fulfilment of obligations. Every aspect of the problem must be examined, so that, eventually, a point of agreement may emerge from which sincere, lasting, and beneficial treaties can be initiated.” This is the disarming path of diplomacy, mediation and international law, which is sadly too often undermined by the growing violations of hard-won treaties, at a time when what is needed is the strengthening of supranational institutions, not their delegitimization.

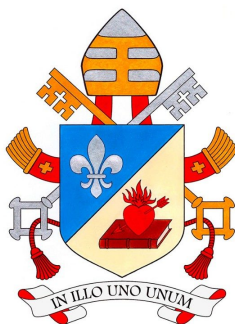
In today’s world, justice and human dignity are at an alarming risk amid global power imbalances. How can we live in this time of destabilization and conflict, and free ourselves from evil? We need to encourage and support every spiritual, cultural and political initiative that keeps hope alive, countering the spread of “fatalistic terms, as if the dynamics involved were the product of anonymous impersonal forces or structures independent of the human will.” For, as has been suggested, “the best way to dominate and gain control over people is to spread despair and discouragement, even under the guise of defending certain values.” Against this strategy, we must promote self-awareness in civil societies, forms of responsible association, experiences of nonviolent participation, and practices of restorative justice on both a small and large scale. Leo XIII had already made this clear in his Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*: “The consciousness of his own weakness urges the human person to call in aid from without. We read in Scripture: ‘Two are better than one, for they have the advantage of their society. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up’ (Eccles 4:9-10). And further: ‘A brother that is helped by his brother is like a strong city’ (Prov 18:19).”

May this be one of the fruits of the Jubilee of Hope, which has moved millions of people to rediscover themselves as pilgrims and to begin within themselves that disarmament of heart, mind and life. God will surely respond to this by fulfilling his promises: “He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord” (Is 2, 4-5).

From the Vatican

8 December 2025

LEO PP. XIV



**PRAYER INTENTIONS OF THE HOLY FATHER
ENTRUSTED TO HIS WORLDWIDE PRAYER NETWORK
FOR THE YEAR 2026**

JANUARY

For prayer with the Word of God.

Let us pray that praying with the Word of God be nourishment for our lives and a source of hope in our communities, helping us to build a more fraternal and missionary Church.

FEBRUARY

For children with incurable diseases.

Let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope.

MARCH

For disarmament and peace.

Let us pray that nations move toward effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence.

APRIL

For priests in crisis.

Let us pray for priests going through moments of crisis in their vocation, that they may find the accompaniment they need and that communities may support them with understanding and prayer.

MAY

That everyone might have food.

Let us pray that everyone, from large producers to small consumers, be committed to avoid wasting food, and to ensure that everyone has access to quality food.

JUNE

For the values of sports.

Let us pray that sports be an instrument of peace, encounter, and dialogue among cultures and nations, and that they promote values such as respect, solidarity, and personal growth.

JULY

For respect for human life.

Let us pray for the respect and protection of human life in all its stages, recognizing it as a gift from God.

AUGUST

For evangelization in the city.

Let us pray that in large cities often marked by anonymity and loneliness we find new ways to proclaim the Gospel, discovering creative paths to build community.

SEPTEMBER

For the care of water.

Let us pray for a just and sustainable management of water, a vital resource, so that everyone may have equal access to it.

OCTOBER

For mental health ministry.

Let us pray that the mental health ministry be established throughout the Church, helping to overcome the stigma and discrimination of persons with mental illnesses.

NOVEMBER

For the proper use of wealth.

Let us pray for the proper use of wealth, that not succumbing to the temptation of selfishness, it may always be put at the service the common good and solidarity of those who have less.

DECEMBER

For single-parent families.

Let us pray for families experiencing the absence of a mother or father, that they may find support and accompaniment in the Church, and help and strength in the Faith during difficult times.

Vatican, December 31, 2024

Original: Italian