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Francis at Easter: transformation, world peace

Thomas C. Fox | Mar. 31, 2013 NCR Today

In his first *Urbi et Orbi* message of his pontificate this Easter Sunday, Pope Francis, echoing the words of his namesake, invited people of all ages, from all walks of life to ?ask the risen Jesus, who turns death into life, to change hatred into love, vengeance into forgiveness, war into peace?.

His Easter message stressed the need for transformation in the world, especially the need to end warfare and build peace.

He prayed for peace in the Middle East, particularly between Israelis and Palestinians, ?who struggle to find the road of agreement, that they may willingly and courageously resume negotiations to end a conflict that has lasted all too long.?

Peace in Iraq, "that every act of violence may end," and "above all for dear Syria, for its people torn by conflict and for the many refugees who await help and comfort. How much blood has been shed! And how much suffering must there still be before a political solution to the crisis will be found??

He prayed for peace for Africa. ?In Mali, may unity and stability be restored; in Nigeria, where attacks sadly continue, gravely threatening the lives of many innocent people, and where great numbers of persons, including children, are held hostage by terrorist groups. Peace in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and in the Central African Republic, where many have been forced to leave their homes and continue to live in fear.?

He prayed for peace in Asia, ?above all on the Korean peninsula: may disagreements be overcome and a renewed spirit of reconciliation grow.?

For the first time as pope he prayed publicly for an end to human trafficking, calling it ?the most extensive form of slavery in the 21st century.?

Full text of Pope's Urbi et Orbi [1]

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