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Francis links war proliferation to arms profiteering

Thomas C. Fox | Sep. 8, 2013 The Francis Chronicles

Pope Francis, speaking during his Sunday Angelus, urged everyone to keep praying for peace in the Middle East, saying the search for peace is a long one that requires patience and perseverance, according to a Vatican radio report.

Francis condemned the proliferation of wars and conflicts and questioned whether these wars were wars about civil and religious problems or simply commercial wars to sell arms on the black market.

His remarks came just hours after an estimated 100,000 people attended a prayer vigil in St. Peter?s Square and countless others throughout the world join him in a day of prayer and fasting for peace.

Below find the English translation of Francis' Angelus address, as reported by Vatican radio:???

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!??In the Gospel for today, Jesus reiterates the conditions for being his disciples: not putting anything before your love for Him, carrying your cross, and following Him. Many people came up to Jesus, wanted to be one of His followers; and this would happen especially in the wake of some prodigious dream, that indicated Him as the Messiah, the King of Israel. But Jesus doesn?t want to create illusions for anyone. He knows full well what awaits Him in Jerusalem, the road that the Father is asking Him to take: it?s the road of the cross, of sacrificing Himself for the redemption of our sins. Following Jesus doesn?t mean taking part in a triumphal parade! It means sharing in His merciful love, becoming part of His great mission of mercy towards each and every man.

The mission of Jesus is precisely a mission of mercy, of forgiveness, of love! Jesus is so merciful! And this universal forgiveness, this mercy, comes through the cross. ??Jesus doesn?t want to carry out this mission alone: He wants to involve us too, in the mission that the Father entrusted to Him. After the resurrection, He will say to His disciples. ?As the Father sent me, so am I sending you? If you forgive anyone?s sins, they are forgiven? (John 20, 21.22). A disciple of Jesus gives up all his or her goods, because he or she has found in Him the greatest Good, within which every other good receives its true worth and meaning: family relations, other relationships, work, cultural and economic wealth, and so forth? A Christian detaches from everything, and then finds everything in the logic of the Gospel, the logic of love and service.??To explain this requirement, Jesus uses two parables: the one of the tower to be built, and the one of the king who goes to war.

The second parable goes like this: ?What king, marching to war against another king, would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other, who was advancing against him with twenty thousand? If not, then while the other king was still a long way off, he would send envoys to sue for peace? (Luke 14, 31-32). Here Jesus doesn?t want to discuss war, it?s only a parable. But at this moment in time, when we?re strongly praying for peace, this Word of the Lord affects us closely, and fundamentally it says: there?s a deeper war we must fight, all of us! It?s the strong and brave decision to renounce evil and its seductions, and to choose good, fully prepared to pay personally: that?s following Christ, that?s taking up our cross! This deep war against evil! ??What?s the point of fighting wars, many wars, if you?re not capable of fighting this deep war against evil? There?s no point! It?s no good? This means, among other things, this war

against evil means saying no to fratricidal hatred, and to the lies that it uses; saying no to violence in all its forms; saying no to the proliferation of arms and their sale on the black market. There are so many of them! There are so many of them! And the doubt always remains: this war over there, this other war over there ? because there are wars everywhere ? is it really a war over problems, or is it a commercial war, to sell these arms on the black market? These are the enemies we must fight, united and coherent, following no other interests but those of peace and of the common good.

??Dear brothers, today we also remember the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, a celebration particularly beloved by the Oriental Churches. And all of us, now, can send our warm greetings to all the brothers, sisters, bishops, monks, nuns of the Oriental Churches, Orthodox and Catholic: our warm greetings! Jesus is the sun, Mary is the first light that announces its dawning. Yesterday evening we kept vigil, calling on Her intercession in our prayer for peace in the world, especially in Syria and in the whole of the Middle East. We invoke Her now as Queen of Peace. Queen of Peace, pray for us! Queen of Peace, pray for us

???Below is an English translation of Francis? post-Angelus appeal:???

I would like to thank everyone who, in various ways, joined in the Vigil of Prayer and Fasting yesterday evening.

I thank the many people who united the offering of their sufferings. I express my gratitude to the civil authorities, as well as to the members of other Christian communities and of other religions, and to men and women of good will who have undertaken, on this occasion, periods of prayer, fasting and reflection.??But the task remains: we move forward with prayer and works of peace. I invite you to continue to pray so that the violence and devastation in Syria may cease immediately and that a renewed effort be undertaken to achieve a just solution to this fratricidal conflict. Let us pray also for other countries in the Middle East, in particular for Lebanon, that it may find its hoped-for stability and continue to be a model of peaceful co-existence; for Iraq, that sectarian violence may give way to reconciliation; and that the peace process between the Israelis and Palestinians may proceed with determination and courage. Finally, let us pray for Egypt, that all Egyptians, Muslims and Christians, may commit themselves to build up together a society dedicated to the good of the whole population.??The search for peace is long and demands patience and perseverance! Let us keep praying for this!??

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