

Even now, let's earnestly pursue peace!"

Call for Peace by the Catholic Bishops in Eritrea

Dear People of God,

As spiritual leaders and shepherds of the people of God and fellow citizens, we express our deep and sadness by the recently ignited fraternal war in our neighboring country of Ethiopia. War is anti-life and anti-development. On the contrary it kills, maims, destroys, displaces and sows lasting grievances and hatred among people. The consequence of war is actually a self-evident truth to the whole world, and especially to the peoples in the Horn of Africa. Sadly, conflicts have persisted unabated.

Once a war starts, no one knows when and where it ends. And in war all the parties are losers and there is now winner. That is why the late Pope, St. John Paul II stated that war does not have any meaningful value, and is always unjust". In other words, war destroys the four pillars of peace – **Truth, Justice, Love and Freedom/Liberty**:

- ❖ **Truth** – in a society it does not only assures individual rights, it safeguards the common good by protecting the rights of others as a building block of peace;
- ❖ **Justice** – guarantees the rights of others, incentivizing progress to build peace;
- ❖ **Love** – instills empathy for the needs of other people, creating reciprocity to build peace through intellectual and spiritual participation in dignity;
- ❖ **Freedom** – guided by their conscience, allows people to assume their obligation in contributing to the development of peace.

Guided by faith and wisdom, we envision that what is on the ground does not remain always the same. Therefore, a quest for peace cannot be divorced from respecting human dignity and human rights. Peace and truth are intimately connected in unbroken linkage through -

- Transmission of true and correct information;
- Equal justice for all before the law
- Transparent democratic process, which guarantees the participation of citizens;
- Readiness to resolve conflicts through peaceful, truthful and constructive means - asserts Pope John XXIII's exhortation for building sustainable peace.

Therefore, in the name of God and for the sake of the involved peoples, we call for immediate cessation of this destructive hostilities and refrain from all the inflammatory words and propaganda that are fanning the fire between the warring sides. We urge all parties to come to the table and resolve the conflict through dialogue.

We ask all clergy, religious and the faithful to commit themselves in prayer and imploration. May the Almighty King of Peace and Holy Redeemer bring true reconciliation and peace in our region.

Catholic Bishops in Eritrea

18th Nov. 2020