



World Day of Peace 2022

DISCUSSION GUIDE

The first of January each year is the World Day of Peace. On this day, the Pope delivers a message to the World. Pope Francis' Message on the 55th World Day of Peace can be found here:

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/20211208-messaggio-55giornatamondiale-pace2022.html>

It focuses on dialogue between generations, teaching and education, and work as tools for building a sustainable peace.

This Discussion Guide offers some starting points for personal or group reflection and discussion.

The Messenger of Peace

The message starts with Isaiah 52:7 "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace".

It describes how the announcement of peace can make the world beam with beauty. The passage reflects our deep yearning for a world free from violence, conflict, and oppression.

Pope Francis goes on to describe how in recent times we have seen the pandemic, worsening climate change, increasing hunger and thirst, and an economic model based on selfishness intensify the "cry of the earth and the cry of the poor". We join with these cries as we deeply long for "justice and peace".

- How have the recent times affected your own peace and that of your community?
- Which particular instance or form of violence, conflict or oppression do you wish would end? How would that make you feel?
- How have you heard the "cry of the earth and the cry of the poor"? What is your own soul crying out for?

**"...the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth constantly make themselves heard, pleading for justice and peace."
(n 1)**

Peace: The Fruit of a Shared Commitment

Pope Francis says: "In every age, peace is both a gift from on high and the fruit of a shared commitment. Indeed, we speak of an 'architecture' of peace, to which different institutions of society contribute, and an 'art' of peace that directly involves each one of us" (n 1).

Often, we hear that charity begins at home. Pope Francis believes that peace starts in individuals' hearts but then grows further and further outward to encapsulate the globe.

"All can work together to build a more peaceful world, starting from the hearts of individuals and relationships in the family, then within society and with the environment, and all the way up to relationships between peoples and nations" (n 1).

He sees the *Path to Peace* or *Integral Human Development* as made of three main tools or paths: Dialogue between the generations, teaching and education to build a thriving civil society, and labour as means to realise human dignity.

Dialogue

Much of Catholic Social Teaching emphasises the importance of dialogue and Pope Francis again brings it to the fore as his first 'path to peace'.

"In a world still gripped by the pandemic that has created untold problems, some people attempt to flee from reality, taking refuge in their own little world; others react to it with destructive violence. Yet between selfish indifference and violent protest there is always another possible option: that of dialogue. Dialogue between generations" (n 2).

He says dialogue is built on honest conversations, positive exchange of views and basic trust. The parties "must be willing to make room for others and not to insist on monopolising the entire scene by pursuing their own immediate interests" (n 2).

He sees intergenerational dialogue as key to this.

- What institutions do you see as contributors to peace and why?
- What do we need to do to make our hearts the foundation of a peaceful world?
- How should we react when we meet people who may not want peace?

"Here I wish to propose three paths for building a lasting peace. Dialogue... education... labour" (n 1).

- What is your understanding of dialogue?
- Have you ever participated in a "dialogue"? What was that experience like?
- How can we change our mindset from our immediate personal interests to our common future?

"All honest dialogue, in addition to a correct and positive exchange of views, demands basic trust between the participants. We need to learn how to regain this mutual trust" (n 2).

Walking together across generations

“Great social challenges and peace processes necessarily call for dialogue between the keepers of memory – the elderly – and those who move history forward – the young” (n 2).

Pope Francis continues with his theme of bringing the elders of our society and the young together to exchange the strengths of both generations.

He says that although economic trends may push the groups apart, it is only through the groups working together that mutual projects for the future can benefit from the lessons of the past and bloom into the future.

- What intergenerational relationships do you have? What do you learn from these relationships? Are they based within the family only, or in a community or business context?
- There are some in society who devalue the young and those who are growing older. Why do you think they do that?

“We need only think of care for our common home. The environment, in fact, ‘is on loan to each generation, which must then hand it on to the next’” (n 2).

Teaching and education as drivers of peace

Pope Francis’ second path to peace is teaching and education. For Pope Francis, “teaching and education are the foundations of a cohesive civil society capable of generating hope, prosperity and progress” (n 3).

Education is the means through which people become more free, learn their rights and responsibilities, and learn how to promote and defend peace.

Pope Francis wants us to make a cultural and ‘global pact’ where all our institutions, businesses, communities and families train children and students to become mature women and men (n 3).

- Can you recall moments within your education that taught you about justice and peace? What was the context?
- Pope Francis speaks about a cultural pact to create mature women and men. What parts of our education system do this now? What would need to change to strengthen this?

“It is essential, then, to forge a new cultural paradigm through ‘a global pact on education for and with future generations...’” (n 3).

Investing in education not armaments

Pope Francis laments that there is a continuing trend where funding in education is seen “more as expenditure than investments” (n 3). Meanwhile investment in military resources is higher than during the Cold War.

Pope Francis challenges this saying, “it is high time, then, that governments develop economic policies aimed at inverting the proportion of public funds spent on education and on weaponry” (n 3).

He believes that the money spent on military purposes could be much better spent on health care, schools and infrastructure which would be much more beneficial for development and peace.

- Have you seen a decrease in funding to education in your local, state, or federal government electorate?
- Bishop Vincent Long, chair of the Australian Bishops Commission for Social Justice, Mission and Service has [raised questions about our own military spending](#). What investments could build peace and how can we support them?

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Labour: the foundation of justice and solidarity

For Pope Francis, “the workplace enables us to learn to make our contribution towards a more habitable and beautiful world” (n 4). Labour, the third path of peace, is a way of expressing ourselves, our interests, our gifts, our commitment, and cooperation with others. It provides for us and our families, it is a necessity in our lives.

Yet only one third of the world’s workers benefit from a system of social protection while others, due to the pandemic, economic exploitation, or their social situation, - especially migrant workers - are in conditions akin to slavery or forced into organised crime.

Pope Francis believes, “The only answer to this is an expansion of dignified employment opportunities ... ‘work is a necessity, part of the meaning of life on this earth, a path to growth, human development and personal fulfilment’. We need to combine our ideas and efforts in order to create the solutions and conditions that can provide everyone of working age with the opportunity, through their work, to contribute to the lives of their families and of society as a whole” (n 4).

- What purpose does labour or work give to your life and what role does it have in peace?
- What opportunities or social protections should all working people enjoy?
- How can we help create ‘the solutions and conditions’ for all to have these opportunities?

“Labour is an indispensable factor in building and keeping peace” (n 4).

Be artisans of peace

Finally, Pope Francis entreats politicians, people in business, social enterprises, and companies to respect the human rights of all who work for them or are affected by their practices. He says they have a key role in building peace.

He also says that all of us have a role to play and thanks those who already work in the fields of care, education, human rights, medical care, social and familial care, and support for those would have lost their jobs. Pope Francis believes all of us can strive to be “artisans of peace”.

- What businesses or companies do you know that are helping to build peace?
- Who are the ‘artisans of peace’ in your life and how can we thank them?

“I renew my thanks to all those who continue to work with generosity and responsibility...” (n 4).

Pope Francis finishes by saying:

To government leaders and to all those charged with political and social responsibilities, to priests and pastoral workers, and to all men and women of good will, I make this appeal:

let us walk together with courage and creativity on the path of intergenerational dialogue, education, and work.

May more and more men and women strive daily, with quiet humility and courage, to be artisans of peace.

And may they be ever inspired and accompanied by the blessings of the God of peace! (n 4).