

Talk by Patriarch Bechara Peter Cardinal Rai at a Prayer Service for Peace in the Middle East at the Holy Family Church, Manhattan, N.Y., June 27, 2016

Cardinal Dolan,  
Bishop Gregory,  
Archbishop Paul,  
Chorbishop Michael,  
Father Murray,  
Esteemed Brother Bishops, Clergy, Religious, Ecumenical Leaders,  
Brothers and sisters in Christ

I thank wholeheartedly His Eminence, Cardinal Dolan, for his desire to host this Prayer Service for Peace in the Middle East. Many persons of good will have tried, in so many ways, to bring about peace through the means of political, humanitarian, interfaith and ecumenical dialogue, and ordinary and extraordinary human efforts to resolve differences. Nonetheless, the Middle East is still burdened with active war, with unabated hatred, and with unresolved conflicts.

Therefore, we continue to turn to God in fervent and sincere prayer, offered by Christians and non Christians alike. We are confident that we can reach the heart of God, who alone can give what humanity cannot.

Pope Benedict once said that "we should never resign ourselves to believe that peace in the Middle East is impossible". We all share his opinion.

Peace is a gift from God for humanity, and our God is the God of Peace. Christ brought that Peace to our land through his incarnation and death in order to redeem the whole of humanity. By his resurrection he brought peace to human hearts and spread it among the people giving them a new life. He is the "Prince of Peace", as prophesied by Isaiah.

Peace in the Middle East is possible, if good intentions are guaranteed and if the International Community commits itself to put an end to the ongoing wars and to find peaceful solutions, which guarantee a just, global and lasting peace.

Peace is possible if people repent and go back to God, and if they are reconciled to each other. Peace is possible if justice is practiced, injustice eliminated, respect for the dignity of each person is guaranteed and his/her rights are safeguarded.

Peace is possible when countries work to bring about integral human development for all. "Development is the new name for Peace" said Blessed Paul VI. For this peace we are praying today.

I thank you again, dear Cardinal Dolan, and all those who have joined together with us today in prayer. This initiative truly gives us hope and helps us work for justice and peace in accordance with the will of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who said: "Blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called children of God." (Mt. 5,9)

Sincere thanks to all of you. You are truly the peace makers of whom Jesus said would be called the "children of God".