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## **Editorial**

# **The Peace and Joy of Easter**

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Pope Francis called wars during COVID-19 pandemic ‘scandalous’ in Easter speech (D’Emilio, 2021). During his last year’s traditional Easter address, April 2021, Pope Francis denounced as “scandalous” Sunday how warfare continues to rage and military arsenals are fattened around the world as the coronavirus pandemic causes social and economic suffering.

Francis recalled personal experiences of suffering in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Eastern Europe as a result of the numerous military conflicts and other kinds of violence.

He also renewed his call to the international community to expedite the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines and guarantee that supplies reach the world’s poorest countries.

"Everyone, particularly the most vulnerable among us, requires support and has the right to required care," the Pope stated.

Francis urged nations to overcome "delays in vaccine delivery and to assist their dissemination, particularly in the poorest countries," as he urged states to overcome "delays in vaccine delivery and to facilitate their dissemination." He began his presentation with a

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sense of outrage, lamenting the fact that there has been no shortage of conflict during the pandemic.

"The pandemic continues to spread, and the social and economic situation continues to be severe, particularly for the poor. Nonetheless – and this is shameful - armed conflicts continue, and military arsenals are being bolstered," Francis stated angrily. "This is the controversy of the day."

During a visit to the Iraqi Christian enclave of Qaraqosh, Pope Francis warns against 'religious exploitation.'

He made the address over an hour after celebrating Easter Mass in St. Peter's Basilica, with no more than 200 Catholics in the pews awaiting his return, according per pandemic protocols.

Typically, the worldwide speech is delivered from the central balcony of the basilica, which overlooks St. Peter's Square. Rather than that, for the second consecutive Easter, it was read indoors to dissuade people from congregating in St. Peter's Square.

"Dear brothers and sisters, many Christians celebrated Easter this year under severe financial constraints and, in some cases, were unable to attend liturgical celebrations," Francis declared before giving a special Apostolic benediction on the faithful worldwide.

"We hope that those restrictions, as well as all other restrictions on religious freedom and worship worldwide, be abolished, allowing everyone to freely pray and praise God," the pontiff remarked.

He made no explicit reference to any country or region that put limits on worship during the pandemic or that normally restricts religious liberty.

What Pope Francis wished for last Easter is relevant even today. When we celebrate the paschal event of Jesus, the cornerstone

of Christian faith, we need to reaffirm our commitment to peace and joy among ourselves and with God.

The crisis among nations, the agony of the people, especially those suffering from the pandemic, is very much part of our paschal mystery. As we look for meaningful solutions, let us resolve to accept the pain that cannot be eliminated and find solace and consolation on the cross, with the eyes open to the Risen Lord.

Like Lazarus or Devasahayam (1712-1752), who will be canonised on May 15, 2022, may we draw joy and fulfilment from the Risen Lord, in spite of the many crosses we face!

The Editor

### Reference

D’Emilio, F. (2021, April 4). *Pope Francis calls wars during COVID-19 pandemic ‘scandalous’ in Easter speech—National / Globalnews.ca*. Global News. <https://globalnews.ca/news/7737776/pope-francis-easter-2021/>



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