

CHAPTER ELEVEN
THE PROMOTION OF PEACE
I. BIBLICAL ASPECTS

488. *Before being God's gift to man and a human project in conformity with the divine plan, peace is in the first place a basic attribute of God.* "the Lord is peace" (*Jdg* 6:24). Creation, which is a reflection of the divine glory, aspires to peace. God created all that exists, and all of creation forms a harmonious whole that is good in its every part (cf. *Gen* 1:4,10,18,21,25,31). Peace is founded on the primary relationship that exists between every human being and God himself, a relationship marked by righteousness (cf. *Gen* 17:1). Following upon the voluntary act by which man altered the divine order, the world experienced the shedding of blood and division. Violence made its appearance in interpersonal relationships (cf. *Gen* 4:1-16) and in social relationships (cf. *Gen* 11:1-9). Peace and violence cannot dwell together, and where there is violence, God cannot be present (cf. *1 Chr* 22:8-9).

489. *In biblical revelation, peace is much more than the simple absence of war; it represents the fullness of life* (cf. *Mal* 2:5). Far from being the work of human hands, it is one of the greatest gifts that God offers to all men and women, and it involves obedience to the divine plan. Peace is the effect of the blessing that God bestows upon his people: "The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace" (*Num* 6:26). This peace produces fruitfulness (*Is* 48:19), well-being (cf. *Is* 48:18), prosperity (cf. *Is* 54:13), absence of fear (cf. *Lev* 26:6) and profound joy (cf. *Pr* 12:20).

490. Peace is the goal of life in society, as is made extraordinarily clear in the messianic vision of peace: when all peoples will go up to the Lord's house, and he will teach them his ways and they will walk along the ways of peace (cf. *Is* 2:2-5). A new world of peace that embraces all of nature is the promise of the messianic age (cf. *Is* 11:6-9), and the Messiah himself is called "Prince of peace" (*Is* 9:5). Wherever his peace reigns, wherever it is present even in part, no longer will anyone be able to make the people of God fearful (cf. *Zeph* 3:13). It is then

that peace will be lasting, because when the king rules according to God's justice, righteousness flourishes and peace abounds "till the moon be no more" (Ps 72:7). God longs to give peace to his people: "he will speak of peace to his people, to his saints, to those who turn to him in their hearts" (Ps 85:9). Listening to what God has to say to his people about peace, the Psalmist hears these words: "Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss" (Ps 85:11).

491. *The promise of peace that runs through the entire Old Testament finds its fulfillment in the very person of Jesus.* Peace, in fact, is the messianic attribute *par excellence*, in which all other beneficial effects of salvation are included. The Hebrew word "*shalom*" expresses this fullness of meaning in its etymological sense of "*completeness*" (cf. *Is* 9:5ff; *Mic* 5:1-4). The kingdom of the Messiah is precisely the kingdom of peace (cf. *Job* 25:2; *Ps* 29:11; 37:11; 72:3,7; 85:9,11; 119:165; 125:5, 128:6; 147:14; *Song* 8:10; *Is* 26:3,12; 32:17f.; 52:7; 54:10; 57:19; 60:17; 66:12; *Hag* 2:9; *Zech* 9:10; *et al.*). Jesus "is our peace" (*Eph* 2:14). He has broken down the dividing wall of hostility among people, reconciling them with God (cf. *Eph* 2:14-16). This is the very effective simplicity with which Saint Paul indicates the radical motivation spurring Christians to undertake a life and a mission of peace.

On the eve of his death, Jesus speaks of his loving relation with the Father and the unifying power that this love bestows upon his disciples. It is a farewell discourse which reveals the profound meaning of his life and can be considered a summary of all his teaching. The gift of peace is the seal on his spiritual testament: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (*Jn* 14:27). The words of the Risen Lord will not be any different; every time that he meets his disciples they receive from him the greeting and gift of peace: "Peace be with you" (*Lk* 24:36; *Jn* 20:19,21,26).

492. The peace of Christ is in the first place reconciliation with the Father, which is brought about by the ministry Jesus entrusted to his disciples and which begins with the proclamation of peace: "Whatever house you enter, first say,

'Peace be to this house!'" (Lk 10:5; cf. Rom 1:7). Peace is then reconciliation with one's brothers and sisters, for in the prayer that Jesus taught us, the "Our Father", the forgiveness that we ask of God is linked to the forgiveness that we grant to our brothers and sisters: "Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Mt 6:12). With this twofold reconciliation Christians can become peacemakers and therefore participate in the Kingdom of God, in accordance with what Jesus himself proclaims in the Beatitudes: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God" (Mt 5:9).

493. *Working for peace can never be separated from announcing the Gospel, which is in fact the "good news of peace" (Acts 10:36; cf. Eph 6:15) addressed to all men and women. At the centre of "the gospel of peace" (Eph 6:15) remains the mystery of the cross, because peace is born of Christ's sacrifice (cf. Is 53:5) — "Upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we were healed". The crucified Jesus has overcome divisions, re-establishing peace and reconciliation, precisely through the cross, "thereby bringing the hostility to an end" (Eph 2:16) and bringing the salvation of the Resurrection to mankind.*

II. PEACE: FRUIT OF JUSTICE AND LOVE

494. *Peace is a value [1015] and a universal duty [1016] founded on a rational and moral order of society that has its roots in God himself, "the first source of being, the essential truth and the supreme good".[1017] Peace is not merely the absence of war, nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies.[1018] Rather it is founded on a correct understanding of the human person [1019] and requires the establishment of an order based on justice and charity.*

Peace is the fruit of justice,[1020] (cf. Is 32:17) understood in the broad sense as the respect for the equilibrium of every dimension of the human person. Peace is threatened when man is not given all that is due him as a human person, when his dignity is not respected and when civil life is not directed to the common good. The defence and promotion of human rights is essential for the building up

of a peaceful society and the integral development of individuals, peoples and nations.[1021]

Peace is also the fruit of love. “True and lasting peace is more a matter of love than of justice, because the function of justice is merely to do away with obstacles to peace: the injury done or the damage caused. Peace itself, however, is an act and results only from love”.[1022]

495. Peace is built up day after day in the pursuit of an order willed by God[1023] and can flourish only when all recognize that everyone is responsible for promoting it.[1024] To prevent conflicts and violence, it is absolutely necessary that peace begin to take root as a value rooted deep within the heart of every person. In this way it can spread to families and to the different associations within society until the whole of the political community is involved.[1025] In a climate permeated with harmony and respect for justice, an authentic culture of peace [1026] can grow and can even pervade the entire international community. Peace is, consequently, the fruit of “that harmony structured into human society by its Divine Founder and which must be actualized by men as they aspire for ever greater justice”.[1027] Such an ideal of peace “cannot be obtained on earth unless the welfare of man is safeguarded and people freely and trustingly share with one another the riches of their minds and their talents”.[1028]

496. *Violence is never a proper response.* With the conviction of her faith in Christ and with the awareness of her mission, the Church proclaims “that violence is evil, that violence is unacceptable as a solution to problems, that violence is unworthy of man. Violence is a lie, for it goes against the truth of our faith, the truth of our humanity. Violence destroys what it claims to defend: the dignity, the life, the freedom of human beings”.[1029]

The contemporary world too needs the witness of unarmed prophets, who are often the objects of ridicule.[1030] “Those who renounce violence and bloodshed and, in order to safeguard human rights, make use of those means of defence available to the weakest, bear witness to evangelical charity, provided they do so without harming the rights and obligations of other men and societies. They bear

legitimate witness to the gravity of the physical and moral risk of recourse to violence, with all its destruction and death”.[1031]

III. THE FAILURE OF PEACE: WAR

497. *The Magisterium condemns “the savagery of war”*[1032] *and asks that war be considered in a new way.*[1033] In fact, “it is hardly possible to imagine that in an atomic era, war could be used as an instrument of justice”.[1034] War is a “scourge” [1035] and is never an appropriate way to resolve problems that arise between nations, “*it has never been and it will never be*”,[1036] because it creates new and still more complicated conflicts.[1037] When it erupts, war becomes an “unnecessary massacre”,[1038] an “adventure without return”[1039] that compromises humanity's present and threatens its future. “*Nothing is lost by peace; everything may be lost by war*”.[1040] The damage caused by an armed conflict is not only material but also moral.[1041] In the end, war is “the failure of all true humanism”,[1042] “it is always a defeat for humanity”: [1043] “never again some peoples against others, never again! ... no more war, no more war!” [1044]

498. *Seeking alternative solutions to war for resolving international conflicts has taken on tremendous urgency today,* since “the terrifying power of the means of destruction — to which even medium and small-sized countries have access — and the ever closer links between the peoples of the whole world make it very difficult or practically impossible to limit the consequences of a conflict”.[1045] It is therefore essential to seek out the causes underlying bellicose conflicts, especially those connected with structural situations of injustice, poverty and exploitation, which require intervention so that they may be removed. “For this reason, another name for peace is *development*. Just as there is a collective responsibility for avoiding war, so too there is a collective responsibility for promoting development”.[1046]

499. *States do not always possess adequate means to provide effectively for their own defence, from this derives the need and importance of international and regional organizations,* which should be in a position to work together to resolve conflicts and promote peace, re-establishing relationships of mutual trust that

make recourse to war unthinkable.[1047] “There is reason to hope ... that by meeting and negotiating, men may come to discover better the bonds that unite them together, deriving from the human nature which they have in common; and that they may also come to discover that one of the most profound requirements of their common nature is this: that between them and their respective peoples it is not fear which should reign but love, a love which tends to express itself in a collaboration that is loyal, manifold in form and productive of many benefits”.[1048]

a. Legitimate defence

500. A war of aggression is intrinsically immoral. In the tragic case where such a war breaks out, leaders of the State that has been attacked have the right and the duty to organize a defence even using the force of arms.[1049] To be licit, the use of force must correspond to certain strict conditions: “the damage inflicted by the aggressor on the nation or community of nations must be lasting, grave and certain; all other means of putting an end to it must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective; there must be serious prospects of success; the use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated. The power of modern means of destruction weighs very heavily in evaluating this condition. These are the traditional elements enumerated in what is called the ‘just war’ doctrine. The evaluation of these conditions for moral legitimacy belongs to the prudential judgment of those who have responsibility for the common good”.[1050]

If this responsibility justifies the possession of sufficient means to exercise this right to defence, States still have the obligation to do everything possible “to ensure that the conditions of peace exist, not only within their own territory but throughout the world”.[1051] It is important to remember that “it is one thing to wage a war of self-defence; it is quite another to seek to impose domination on another nation. The possession of war potential does not justify the use of force for political or military objectives. Nor does the mere fact that war has unfortunately broken out mean that all is fair between the warring parties”.[1052]

501. *The Charter of the United Nations, born from the tragedy of the Second World War with the intention of preserving future generations from the scourge of war, is based on a generalized prohibition of a recourse to force to resolve disputes between States, with the exception of two cases: legitimate defence and measures taken by the Security Council within the area of its responsibilities for maintaining peace.* In every case, exercising the right to self-defence must respect “the traditional limits of *necessity* and *proportionality*”. [1053] *Therefore, engaging in a preventive war without clear proof that an attack is imminent cannot fail to raise serious moral and juridical questions.* International legitimacy for the use of armed force, on the basis of rigorous assessment and with well-founded motivations, can only be given by the decision of a competent body that identifies specific situations as threats to peace and authorizes an intrusion into the sphere of autonomy usually reserved to a State.

b. Defending peace

502. *The requirements of legitimate defence justify the existence in States of armed forces, the activity of which should be at the service of peace. Those who defend the security and freedom of a country, in such a spirit, make an authentic contribution to peace.* [1054] Everyone who serves in the armed forces is concretely called to defend good, truth and justice in the world. Many are those who, in such circumstances, have sacrificed their lives for these values and in defence of innocent lives. Very significant in this regard is the increasing number of military personnel serving in multinational forces on humanitarian or peace-keeping missions promoted by the United Nations. [1055]

503. *Every member of the armed forces is morally obliged to resist orders that call for perpetrating crimes against the law of nations and the universal principles of this law.* [1056] Military personnel remain fully responsible for the acts they commit in violation of the rights of individuals and peoples, or of the norms of international humanitarian law. Such acts cannot be justified by claiming obedience to the orders of superiors.

Conscientious objectors who, out of principle, refuse military service in those cases where it is obligatory because their conscience rejects any kind of recourse to the use of force or because they are opposed to the participation in a particular conflict, must be open to accepting alternative forms of service. “It seems just that laws should make humane provision for the case of conscientious objectors who refuse to carry arms, provided they accept some other form of community service”. [1057]

c. The duty to protect the innocent

504. *The right to use force for purposes of legitimate defence is associated with the duty to protect and help innocent victims who are not able to defend themselves from acts of aggression.* In modern conflicts, which are often within a State, *the precepts of international humanitarian law must be fully respected.* Far too often, the civilian population is hit and at times even becomes a target of war. In some cases, they are brutally massacred or taken from their homes and land by forced transfers, under the guise of “ethnic cleansing”, [1058] which is always unacceptable. In such tragic circumstances, humanitarian aid must reach the civilian population and must never be used to influence those receiving it; the good of the human person must take precedence over the interests of the parties to the conflict.

505. *The principle of humanity inscribed in the conscience of every person and all peoples includes the obligation to protect civil populations from the effects of war.* “That minimum protection of the dignity of every person, guaranteed by international humanitarian law, is all too often violated in the name of military or political demands which should never prevail over the value of the human person. Today we are aware of the need to find a new consensus on humanitarian principles and to reinforce their foundation to prevent the recurrence of atrocities and abuse”. [1059]

A particular category of war victim is formed by *refugees*, forced by combat to flee the places where they habitually live and to seek refuge in foreign countries. The Church is close to them not only with her pastoral presence and material

support, but also with her commitment to defend their human dignity: “Concern for refugees must lead us to reaffirm and highlight universally recognized human rights, and to ask that the effective recognition of these rights be guaranteed to refugees”.[1060]

506. *Attempts to eliminate entire national, ethnic, religious or linguistic groups are crimes against God and humanity itself, and those responsible for such crimes must answer for them before justice.*[1061] The twentieth century bears the tragic mark of different genocides: from that of the Armenians to that of the Ukrainians, from that of the Cambodians to those perpetrated in Africa and in the Balkans. Among these, the Holocaust of the Jewish people, the Shoah, stands out: “the days of the *Shoah* marked a true night of history, with unimaginable crimes against God and humanity”.[1062]

The international community as a whole has the moral obligation to intervene on behalf of those groups whose very survival is threatened or whose basic human rights are seriously violated. As members of an international community, States cannot remain indifferent; on the contrary, if all other available means should prove ineffective, it is “legitimate and even obligatory to take concrete measures to disarm the aggressor”.[1063] The principle of national sovereignty cannot be claimed as a motive for preventing an intervention in defence of innocent victims.[1064] The measures adopted must be carried out in full respect of international law and the fundamental principle of equality among States. There is also present within the international community an *International Criminal Court* to punish those responsible for particularly serious acts such as genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression. The Magisterium has not failed to encourage this initiative time and again.[1065]

d. Measures against those who threaten peace

507. *Sanctions, in the forms prescribed by the contemporary international order, seek to correct the behaviour of the government of a country that violates the rules of peaceful and ordered international coexistence or that practises serious forms of oppression with regard to its population.* The purpose of these sanctions

must be clearly defined and the measures adopted must from time to time be objectively evaluated by the competent bodies of the international community as to their effectiveness and their real impact on the civilian population. *The true objective of such measures is open to the way to negotiation and dialogue. Sanctions must never be used as a means for the direct punishment of an entire population:* it is not licit that entire populations, and above all their most vulnerable members, be made to suffer because of such sanctions. *Economic sanctions in particular are an instrument to be used with great discernment and must be subjected to strict legal and ethical criteria.*[1066] An economic embargo must be of limited duration and cannot be justified when the resulting effects are indiscriminate.

e. Disarmament

508. *The Church's social teaching proposes the goal of "general, balanced and controlled disarmament".*[1067] *The enormous increase in arms represents a grave threat to stability and peace. The principle of sufficiency, by virtue of which each State may possess only the means necessary for its legitimate defence, must be applied both by States that buy arms and by those that produce and furnish them.*[1068] Any excessive stockpiling or indiscriminate trading in arms cannot be morally justified. Such phenomena must also be evaluated in light of international norms regarding the non-proliferation, production, trade and use of different types of arms. Arms can never be treated like other goods exchanged on international or domestic markets.[1069]

Moreover, the Magisterium has made a moral evaluation of the phenomenon of *deterrence*. "The *accumulation of arms* strikes many as a paradoxically suitable way of deterring potential adversaries from war. They see it as the most effective means of ensuring peace among nations. This method of deterrence gives rise to strong moral reservations. The *arms race* does not ensure peace. Far from eliminating the causes of war, it risks aggravating them".[1070] Policies of nuclear deterrence, typical of the Cold War period, must be replaced with

concrete measures of disarmament based on dialogue and multilateral negotiations.

509. *Arms of mass destruction — whether biological, chemical or nuclear — represent a particularly serious threat. Those who possess them have an enormous responsibility before God and all of humanity.*[1071] The principle of the non-proliferation of nuclear arms, together with measures of nuclear disarmament and the prohibition of nuclear tests, are intimately interconnected objectives that must be met as soon as possible by means of effective controls at the international level.[1072] The ban on the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical and biological weapons as well as the provisions that require their destruction, complete the international regulatory norms aimed at banning such baleful weapons,[1073] the use of which is explicitly condemned by the Magisterium: “Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation”.[1074]

510. *Disarmament must include the banning of weapons that inflict excessively traumatic injury or that strike indiscriminately. This includes anti-personnel landmines, a type of small arm that is inhumanly insidious because it continues to cause harm even long after the cessation of hostilities.* States that produce them, sell them and continue to use them are responsible for seriously delaying the total elimination of these death-dealing weapons.[1075] *The international community must continue its committed efforts aimed at mine-clearance, fostering effective cooperation — including education and technical training — with those countries that do not have adequate means to clear their territory of mines with all due urgency and that are not able to offer the necessary assistance to victims of mines.*

511. *Appropriate measures are needed to control the production, sale, importation and exportation of small arms and light weapons, armaments that facilitate many outbreaks of violence to occur.* The sale and trafficking of such weapons constitute a serious threat to peace: these arms kill and are used for

the most part in internal and regional conflicts; their ready availability increases both the risk of new conflicts and the intensity of those already underway. The position of States that apply severe controls on the international transfer of heavy arms while they never, or only very rarely, restrict the sale and trafficking of small arms and light weapons is an unacceptable contradiction. It is indispensable and urgent that Governments adopt appropriate measures to control the production, stockpiling, sale and trafficking of such arms [1076] in order to stop their growing proliferation, in large part among groups of combatants that are not part of the military forces of a State.

512. *The use of children and adolescents as soldiers in armed conflicts — despite the fact that their young age should bar them from being recruited — must be condemned.* Obligated by force to take part in combat or choosing to do so on their own initiative without being fully aware of the consequences, these children are not only deprived of an education and a normal childhood, they are also trained to kill. This constitutes an intolerable crime. The use of child soldiers in combat forces of any kind must be stopped and, at the same time, every possible assistance must be given to the care, education and rehabilitation of those children who have been involved in combat[1077].

f. The condemnation of terrorism

513. *Terrorism is one of the most brutal forms of violence traumatizing the international community today; it sows hatred, death, and an urge for revenge and reprisal.*[1078] From being a subversive strategy typical of certain extremist organizations, aimed at the destruction of material goods or the killing of people, terrorism has now become a shadowy network of political collusion. It can also make use of sophisticated technology, often has immense financial resources at its disposal and is involved in large- scale planning, striking completely innocent people who become chance victims of terrorist actions.[1079] The targets of terrorist attacks are generally places of daily life and not military objectives in the context of a declared war. Terrorism acts and strikes under the veil of darkness, with no regard for any of the rules by which men have always sought to set limits

to conflicts, for example through international humanitarian law; “in many cases, terrorist methods are regarded as new strategies of war”[1080]. Nor must we overlook the causes that can lead to such unacceptable forms of making demands. The fight against terrorism presupposes the moral duty to help create those conditions that will prevent it from arising or developing.

514. *Terrorism is to be condemned in the most absolute terms. It shows complete contempt for human life and can never be justified, since the human person is always an end and never a means.* Acts of terrorism strike at the heart of human dignity and are an offence against all humanity; “*there exists, therefore, a right to defend oneself from terrorism*”.[1081] However, this right cannot be exercised in the absence of moral and legal norms, because the struggle against terrorists must be carried out with respect for human rights and for the principles of a State ruled by law.[1082] The identification of the guilty party must be duly proven, because criminal responsibility is always personal, and therefore cannot be extended to the religions, nations or ethnic groups to which the terrorists belong. International cooperation in the fight against terrorist activity “cannot be limited solely to repressive and punitive operations. It is essential that the use of force, even when necessary, be accompanied by a *courageous and lucid analysis of the reasons behind terrorist attacks*”.[1083] Also needed is a particular commitment on the “*political and educational levels*” [1084] in order to resolve, with courage and determination, the problems that in certain dramatic circumstances can foster terrorism: “the recruitment of terrorists in fact is easier in situations where rights are trampled and injustices are tolerated over a long period of time”[1085].

515. *It is a profanation and a blasphemy to declare oneself a terrorist in God's name.*[1086] In such cases, God, and not only man, is exploited by a person who claims to possess the totality of God's truth rather than one who seeks to be possessed by the truth. To define as “martyrs” those who die while carrying out terrorist attacks distorts the concept of martyrdom, which is the witness of a

person who gives himself up to death rather than deny God and his love. Martyrdom cannot be the act of a person who kills in the name of God. *No religion may tolerate terrorism and much less preach it.*[1087] Rather, religions must work together to remove the causes of terrorism and promote friendship among peoples[1088].

IV. THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE CHURCH TO PEACE

516. *The promotion of peace in the world is an integral part of the Church's mission of continuing Christ's work of redemption on earth.* In fact, the Church is, in Christ, a “ ‘*sacrament or sign and instrument of peace in the world and for the world*’ .[1089] The promotion of true peace is an expression of Christian faith in the love that God has for every human being. From a liberating faith in God's love there arises a new vision of the world and a new way of approaching others, whether the other is an individual or an entire people. It is a faith that transforms and renews life, inspired by the peace that Christ left to his disciples (cf. *Jn* 14:27). Moved solely by this faith, the Church intends to promote the unity of Christians and a fruitful cooperation with believers of other religions. Differences of religion must not be a cause of conflict; the shared quest for peace on the part of all believers is a vital source of unity among peoples.[1090] The Church calls on individuals, peoples, States and nations to share her concern for re-establishing and consolidating peace, placing particular emphasis on the important role of international law[1091].

517. *The Church teaches that true peace is made possible only through forgiveness and reconciliation.*[1092] It is not easy to forgive when faced with the consequences of war and conflict because violence, especially when it leads “to the very depths of inhumanity and suffering”, [1093] leaves behind a heavy burden of pain. This pain can only be eased by a deep, faithful and courageous reflection on the part of all parties, a reflection capable of facing present difficulties with an attitude that has been purified by repentance. The weight of the past, which cannot be forgotten, can be accepted only when mutual

forgiveness is offered and received; this is a long and difficult process, but one that is not impossible[1094].

518. *Mutual forgiveness must not eliminate the need for justice and still less does it block the path that leads to truth. On the contrary, justice and truth represent the concrete requisites for reconciliation.* Initiatives aimed at establishing international judicial bodies are therefore appropriate. In virtue of the principle of universal jurisdiction and guided by suitable procedural norms that respect the rights of the accused and of the victims, such bodies are able to ascertain the truth about crimes perpetrated during armed conflicts.[1095] However, in order to re-establish relationships of mutual acceptance between divided peoples in the name of reconciliation, it is necessary to go beyond the determination of criminal behaviour, both of commission and omission, and the procedures for seeking reparation.[1096] It is necessary, moreover, to promote respect for *the right to peace*. This right “encourages the building of a society in which structures of power give way to structures of cooperation, with a view to the common good”[1097].

519. *It is through prayer that the Church engages in the battle for peace.* Prayer opens the heart not only to a deep relationship with God but also to an encounter with others marked by respect, understanding, esteem and love.[1098] Prayer instils courage and lends support to all “true friends of peace”,[1099] those who love peace and strive to promote it in the various circumstances in which they live. Liturgical prayer is “the summit towards which the action of the Church tends and, at the same time, the source from which she draws her strength”.[1100] In particular, the Eucharistic celebration, “the source and summit of the Christian life”[1101], is a limitless wellspring for all authentic Christian commitment to peace[1102].

520. The *World Days of Peace* are particularly intense moments of prayer for peace and for the commitment to build a world of peace. Pope Paul VI instituted these Days to dedicate to “thoughts and resolutions of Peace a special observance on the first day of the civil year”.[1103] *The Papal Messages on*

these annual occasions represent a rich source for the renewal and development of the Church's social doctrine and show the Church's constant pastoral activity aimed at the promotion of peace. "Peace expresses itself only in peace, a peace which is not separate from the demands of justice, but which is fostered by personal sacrifice, clemency, mercy and love"[1104].