Peace, gift and task
Allocution from Monsignor Mario Iceta. Bishop of Bilbao
Hiroshima and Nagasaki 2015

Excellence Reverend, bishop brothers and priests, deserved authorities, dear brothers and sisters.

1. It is an honour and a pleasure for me to visit this noble Japanese lands. I bring you the peaceful and fraternal message from Bilbao's diocese. I had the joy of meeting the archbishop and the pilgrims who visited Gernika three years ago when they came for the 75th anniversary of Gernika's bombing. My family is from Gernika and they were there when this tragic incident occurred. Nowadays my mom and my aunt live both with me. They are, both of them, survivors of Gernika's bombing. Back then, they were 11 and 16 years old, respectively. I was born in Gernika and brother and nephews live there. All of them send you respectful and fraternal greetings.

A new way of looking

2. It is being seventy years from that awful incident that we commemorate today. As Christians, we should learn to look the history with disciple eyes, with Christ's eyes. As the Apocalypse book says, only the beheaded lamb is capable of receiving the book, open his stamps and see the books content (cfr. Ap 5, 7). In this biblical tale, Christ, the beheaded lamb, appears alive and standing. That means the truth with a truthful judgement capacity, because he knows the deepness of the human heart and the history. With him, we can look back on the tale of the history, and, unified with Him, we can prove the humans heart, capable of realise perverse actions. As John Paul II said “harm is not an anonymous force acting in the world by determined and impersonal mechanisms. Harm passes through human freedom.” (John Paul II, World day of peace, 2005) But we have faith. Even in Christ, we are capable of restore justice and open ourselves for mercy and reconciliation.

Prayer and gratitude to the victims of the bombing.

3. The first day of the week, the disciples closed the doors because they were scared, and Jesus appeared, showed them his wounds, his hands and his side-back. Also today, the Lord wants to show us his wounds to fill us with peace and faith. Your wounds cured us! On Christ's sores we can see, in a particular way, the people who suffered the wounds and deaths caused by the atomic bomb. Christ is the Paschal Victim, and in Him, the victims are hugged by Christ's love and associated for ever to his own love delivery, making that his blood won't be useless. They live with Him for ever. And Jesus invites us to watch: “You can see, He was dead, but now ia alive.” (Ap 1, 18). Death, in Jesus, it's transformed into live. It's the true faith that can fill of peace and serenity to those who have suffered the deeply unfair wounds of war and violence.

Forgiveness, the highway to peace
4. And Jesus told them: “I leave you my peace, I give you my peace, and I don't give it as the world does” (Jn 14 17). The peace that God offers us, it’s greeted, for those who open their hearts to the joy of the conversion. The peace, as Christ's gift, seconded by human work, raises from a new heart, transformed by the Spirit. “He blowed upon them and said: receive the Holy Spirit, the sins you forgive will stay forgiven”. The Holy Spirit makes a change in the heart, which makes "peace construction" possible. Peace proceeds originally from God, but it needs our collaboration to make it work.

God is peace and a source of peace

5. As the social doctrine says, peace is an essential attribute from God, rather than a gift of God to man and a human project according to the divine plan: «Yahveh- Peace» (Jc,6 24). The creation, which is a reflection of the divine glory, absorbs peace. As a result of the voluntary act by which man altered the divine order, the world knows blood shed and world's division: violence is manifested on the interpersonal relations (cf. Gn 4, 1-16) and in the social relations (cf. Gn 11,1-9). Peace and violence can't live together, were violence is, God is not (cf. 1 Cro 22, 8-9) On the biblical revelation, peace is much more than war absence: peace represents life fullness (cf. Mi 2,5); rather than a human construction, peace is a divine gift offered to all humans (Catholic's church doctrine Compendium, 488-489).

6. Benedict XVI states that “peace has to be built on God's and man's truth stone to be real. Only this truth can create a sensitivity to justice and open it to a love and solidarity, while encouraging everyone to work for a truly free and harmonious humanity. Certainly, the authentic peace foundations are built over God's and man's truth." (Benedict XVI, World's peace day 2006)

The God's gift, peace

7. The promise of peace, which runs the whole Old Testament, find its fulfilment in Jesus. Jesus is aware that the profound renewal of humanity to love in a new way, is necessary. And so, He humiliated himself and stooped to death, a death in a cross. Christ wants to move down to the human suffering and pain to, from there, renew radically our humanity, bringing forth life from the abyss of death: “He supported our suffering and our pain” (Is 52, 4). This astonishing description in which, Isaiah the prophet refers to Yahveh’s serf and shows us the way in which the Son of God, assumes our body, and receives every pain and injustice. He isn't a foreign to darkness and world's pain, in an extreme solidarity, to a next level, from all suffering and even death.

8. Isaiah claims with admiration: “His wounds have healed us” (Is 53,5). Paschal God's Mystery becomes the wounds into a healing, the suffering into joy, and death into live. From the deepness of the tomb, the shining announcement of the resurrection arises and produces the initiation of the new creation. His wounds accept our injuries and from them, in Christ, reborn a new live full of energy. As in a campaign hospital after a long night of pain, violence and death, there is someone who has bent over to pick us, and receive those who lie death in his lovely lap to give them the eternal live; the good
fellow who, with finesse, puts ointment over the wounds and burns, hugs his fears, solitudes and anguish, appease the hearts, lights the darkness and opens new highways of faith. Jesus, The Lord, is the good fellow who sympathises on us. He receives and hugs in his passion every fear and pain and gives us the possibility of restore all the things that are broken, burned and dispersed, making everything new.

Peace, the Holy Spirit's gift

9. The ointment who resurrects the death people, cure the wounds and restore the broken hearts, is the Holy Spirit who has been spilled in our hearts. Let's receive every day this personal gift, this love and mercy from God which makes us capable for the reconciliation and the peace could flourish between us. Because the peace is an effect of this Spirit's action, its a gift from God that we need to receive and leave it work inside us. Peace is not our first initiative, but is God's initiative: He always "starts us". As John Paul II said, “peace that Jesus gives us, transcends the world's peace, which can be superficial, apparently, compatible with the injustice. Jesus peace has to do with mercy and forgiveness, with God's reconciliation and between the people". (John Paul II, Evangelium vitae, 101)

Peace, a gift and a task for the Church

10. "God reunited himself through Christ and charged us the reconciliation ministry" (2Co5, 18). Effectively, the reconciliation ministry is located in the Church's mission heart. It is a charge that the Lord gives to those who are join Him by the Paschal Mystery. The Church has for primordial duty, to announce that grace which exhorts to the deep conversion and embrace and offer the forgiveness in the highway of the reconciliation and the peace. To accept Jesus during the live produces new human relations.

11. As the Church's Social Thought affirms, “the peace promotion in the world is an important part of the mission that the Church supports and follows God's redemptive work on the Earth. The Church is, in Christ «“sacrament”, a symbol and instrument of peace in the world and for the world». The promotion of the real peace is an expression of the Christian faith in the love that God fills for every human being. Moved, only for this faith, the Church moves the unity of the Christians and a collaboration with the members from other religions. The religious differences can't and shouldn't cause a conflict: the common search for peace is a decisive factor of unity between people. The Church exhorts people, states and nations to be a part of their concern for peace's reestablishment and consolidation highlighting, particularly, the important function of the international right.” (DSI 516)

Tasks and attitudes for being peacemakers

12. The apostle Peter reminds us the necessary attitudes for reaching the peace and the reconciliation, raised by the gift of the Spirit: “have all unified feelings, be merciful, love each other as brothers, be merciful and lowly. Don't give back pain for receiving
pain, or insult for receiving insult; but bless everyone, because you were called inherit the blessing” (1Pe 3, 8-9).

13. These attitudes make possible generate what the Pope classified as the encounter’s culture. The pope Francis affirmed in his first message in the World Peace day that “the fraternity is a fundament and the highway to the peace.” (January 1st 2013). We have to do a memory to a common Father whose fraternity between all proceeds. This fraternity constitutes the roots that are universal relations of respect, solidarity, help and communion.

14. To live in a stable peace is necessary to teach the new generations in the liberty, in the truth, in the justice, in the charity, in forgiveness and in fraternity. And the first ambit of the education is the family, the original cell of the society. The family is the first school of peace. In the family is where the kids learn the human and evangelical values which permit a constructive and pacific coexistence. In the family is where we learn the solidarity between generations, the respect, the forgiveness and the acceptance of the other. It is the first school where we receive education for the justice and the peace.

15. The Pope Benedict XVI affirms that “The peace isn’t only a gift that is received. Is also a task to be built. To be real peace constructors, we have to be polite in the compassion, the solidarity, the collaboration, the fraternity; we have to be active inside the communities and appreciative to make people conscious of the national and international questions, as the importance of searching the correct ways of growth promotion and cooperation to development and the conflict resolution.” (Benedict XVI, World peace day 2012)

Conclusion

16. Today we present ourselves to the Lord Jesus and we pray together. We bring to our heart to the people who went to Father’s home in that horrible bombing over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We ask their intercession over us. And we ask for the gift of the peace over the whole World. In that way, lets us be feel sent by the Lord to be ministers of reconciliation, observers of his love, builders of his peace. The Holy Spirit keeps throwing his gifts for germinate the peace in the world as a God’s gift, which needs our collaboration. Let’s pray the Lord, to make Him strengthen us. And pray the Holy Virgin Mary to come with us in this beautiful and necessary task. As the resurrected Lord announced us: Peace be always with you!

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