



ORDO FRANCISCANUS SAECULARIS

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To All my Secular Franciscan Brothers and Sisters
in every National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order

Yet it is a great affliction for man that he is ignorant of what is to come; for who will make known to him how it will be? There is no man who is master of the breath of life so as to retain it, and none has mastery of the day of death. There is no exemption from the struggle, nor are the wicked saved by their wickedness. All these things I considered and I applied my mind to every work that is done under the sun, while one man tyrannizes over another to his hurt.¹

Dear Brothers and sisters,

May the Lord grant you peace!

I wish I didn't have to write this letter, but we cannot keep silent after the tragic events of these days. We couldn't *make known to ourselves how it will be*. To some of us Ukraine is very close, while for others it is a great distance. But we should not think that this may happen only there and cannot happen with us. When we pray for peace in Ukraine, we have to remember that it could happen to us, too. It cannot be taken for granted that we live in peace, just have a look at the history. Peace is not something natural.

Peace is not a ceasefire. Peace is not a silence of the arms. Peace is a gift of God. As such it is given by God for free, but we have to be active to have it.

Peace is when I don't have any intention to offend others and others don't have any intention to offend me. Peace is when I respect others and others respect me. Peace is to have good intentions and to respect the freedom of every child of God. Therefore, I should limit myself to have peace. Peace is what I feel in my heart, because it is God who has set it there. Peace is that I am content with what I have, because I have God in my heart and it is enough.

War hurts not only the victims but everyone being involved. There are no winners in war, because victory belongs only to God and not to us. What a great difference is between defeating the other and the victory of God!

Particularly now, when we will begin the Lent soon, a season of penance and reconciliation, we have to be aware that sin has ruined the original peace created by God. Pope Francis said: Ukraine deserves peace. I would add: every nation deserves peace; every man and woman deserve peace. Let us start doing what is up to us to do. Let us reconcile with God, with ourselves and with our neighbors. Let us

¹ Ecclesiastes 8:6-9

live the penance, and let us continue to pray for everyone being involved in the war, first to those who are being innocently taken in, for our sisters and brothers in Ukraine, for the victims in Ukraine, and then for those who *know not what they do*².

I invite you, dear brothers and sisters, to strengthen our unity with each other, with the whole Franciscan Family and with the Catholic Church by joining the prayer of pope Francis for peace on Ash Wednesday. We can be sure that our prayers will not be unheard.

“May Thou be praised, my Lord, for those who forgive for the sake of Thy love (cf. Mt 6:12), and endure infirmity and tribulation.

Blessed those who endure them in peace (cf. Mt 5:10), because by Thee, Most High, will they be crowned.”³

Your brother



Tibor Kauser
CIOFS General minister

² Lk 23:34

³ St. Francis, The Canticle of the Creatures