



UNIVERSAL PRAYER INTENTION

APRIL

“We pray for those who risk their lives while fighting for fundamental rights under dictatorships, authoritarian regimes and even in democracies in crisis.”



PRAYER INTENTION COMMENTARY

MESSAGE TO PARTICIPANTS AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

"HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD: ACHIEVEMENTS, OMISSIONS, NEGATIONS"⁵

Francis

10 December 2018

[...] By closely observing our contemporary societies, one observes numerous contradictions that lead one to wonder whether the equal dignity of all human beings, solemnly proclaimed 70 years ago, is truly recognized, respected, protected and promoted in every circumstance. In the world today numerous forms of injustice persist, fed by reductive anthropological visions and by a profit-based economic model, which does not hesitate to exploit, discard and even kill human beings.^[4] While one part of humanity lives in opulence, another part sees its own dignity denied, scorned or trampled upon, and its fundamental rights disregarded or violated. [...]

Faced with these grave phenomena, we are all accountable. Indeed, when fundamental rights are violated, or when some are favoured to the detriment of others, or when they are guaranteed only to specified groups, then serious injustices occur, which in their turn feed conflicts with heavy consequences both within single Nations and in relations among them.

Therefore, each person is called to contribute with courage and determination, in line with the specificity of his or her proper role, to the respect of the fundamental rights of every person, especially of those who are 'invisible': of the many who are hungry and thirsty, who are naked, sick, strangers or prisoners (cf. Mt 25:35-35), who live at the margins of society or who are discarded from it.

⁵ See full message:

http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2018/documents/papa-francesco_20181210_messaggio-diritti-umani.html

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This demand for justice and solidarity assumes a special significance for us Christians, because the Gospel itself invites us to direct our gaze toward the least of our brothers and sisters, to be moved with compassion (cf. Mt 14:14) and to commit ourselves concretely in order to alleviate their suffering.

I would like, on this occasion, to address a heartfelt appeal to those who have institutional responsibilities, asking them to place human rights at the centre of all policies, including those of cooperating in development, even when this means going against the current.