

## To all the families

Dear friends,

Pope Francis' invitation to a day of prayer and fasting for peace in Syria and in all nations affected by the tragedy of war calls to be accepted by all of us with great seriousness and commitment.

The images that have circulated worldwide and the continuing tragic news question our hearts, our minds, and our faith. I invite you, therefore, to accept the Pope's proposal and to make in your own home a gesture of fasting and prayer.

Dear **Parents**, do not be afraid to propose an austere and minimal lunch to your children; it will be an opportunity to explain to them what is happening in the world and how these terrible things cannot leave us indifferent. Together with the harshness of the news, don't forget to communicate the hope of peace offered by the risen Jesus, who has reconciled the world not with violent and vindictive acts but through the gift of Himself.

Don't forget to invite **the grandparents and the elderly** to this meal composed of little food and many words; if anyone has experienced moments of war stories, let him or her tell about it means to live under the bombs and with uncertainty about tomorrow as well as the sense of their pray during days.

And you, **children and young people**, don't complain if, on Saturday, there aren't any big dishes on the table; but rather thank your parents for what they are in fact offering to you, and ask them for explanations and reasons of why it's worth continuing to live in this land, too often marked by mourning and violence.

Together, at the table, pray! For families of Syria, for the children who die every day from hunger and hatred, for the governmental leaders who called to find peaceful and non-violent solutions. Reciting a psalm, reading a Gospel passage, praying a part of the Rosary, prayers freely expressed aloud, a simple hymn; every household can choose the best way to intercede or to place itself between of the mystery of the evil that marks our history and the God of peace who heals and saves it.

Thank you!

+ Vincenzo Paglia

President of the Pontifical Council for the Family

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