



**Statement by the Most Rev. William T. McGrattan,
Bishop of Calgary and CCCB President,
to the Catholic Faithful in Canada,
inviting them to pray and fast for peace**

During this month of October dedicated to Mary, and especially today on the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, at a time when there continues to be so much violence between peoples and nations in the Middle East (and elsewhere), I invite all Catholics in Canada to take up Pope Francis' invitation to pray and fast for peace.

Prayer is a most powerful instrument, capable of healing division, changing hearts, opening minds, and bringing new beginnings to situations which seem impossible. Mary, who bears the title Queen of Peace, is a powerful intercessor who, likewise desiring peace among all peoples and nations, brings our prayers and petitions to God and makes them more effective.

Fasting, in this context, provides a special way by which to join ourselves to the suffering of others, in solidarity with them, as well as to the sufferings endured by Christ during his Passion and Crucifixion. We may think, as we fast, of the many forms of human suffering that are associated with war and all forms of violence, and thereby strengthen the earnestness and concreteness of our prayers.

As we pray and fast for peace, let us also seek in our own lives to become instruments of peace wherever we live, taking inspiration from the beautiful and famous poem of Saint Francis of Assisi, "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace." It is in welcoming dialogue, embracing forgiveness, and supporting efforts to foster justice and reconciliation, that such steps help to create a society where all people can flourish in the way that God intended.

7 October 2024