

# The most powerful peacekeeping center

Igino Giordani

*"The Papacy, especially since Pope Pius X, has been the most powerful peacekeeping center for peace.", wrote the Servant of God, Igino Giordani, in 1964 during the Cold War era. There was the fear of a third world war and flashpoints were taking place across the planet. His analysis of a few salient points of John XXIII's encyclical, Pacem in Terris, was astute and tragically timely. This excerpt, edited by Elena Merli, is taken from: I. Giordani, Disarmament, war and hunger, in «Città Nuova» magazine, n. 7 (1964), pg. 2.*

Today war contains the refutation and condemnation of itself in the very means and the very ways that it is conducted: unleashing ruin and death against the young and the old, men and women, healthy and sick, innocent and guilty...: an indiscriminate destruction of that work of God, which is life; a furious offense inflicted on the Giver of life, the Creator.

Peace, therefore, is not a problem," says Cardinal Feltrin. It is *the* problem of our time. Either we as humanity solve it or we will be destroyed.

With the state of today's economy and technology, it can be said that there is misery in the world. Two out of three men go hungry because wealth is thrown into ever more costly weapons. One arms oneself because one is afraid, and one is afraid - the Church teaches - because one does not love. "Love casts out fear." Thus war does not solve problems: it creates problems. "War, itself, is a useless slaughter", as Pope Benedict XV called it. And Pope Pius XII pointed out, "now less than ever, is it a means for settling conflicts."

The Papacy, especially from Pius X onward, has been the most powerful powerhouse of peace. The Papacy has never ceased to offer understanding as an alternative to war.

[...] According to *Pacem in Terris*, armaments are justified "on the grounds of reason that, if a peace today is possible, it can only be a peace based on the balancing of powers": If one (country) arms itself, then the other must also arm itself. One forgets the truth spoken by Napoleon: that at a certain moment the guns fire themselves. All it takes is for a

madman - and this was seen with Hitler - wanting to wage war. In a moment of intoxication, with an insane gesture, he unleashes the most unreasonable conflict, and that is without even talking about today's nuclear experimentation and the radiation of thermonuclear waste already disseminating death.

Therefore, *Pacem in Terris* concludes, "justice, right reason and the recognition of man's dignity cry out insistently for a cessation to the arms race."

[...] John XXIII, echoed the sentiments of Pius XII, who had asked that "the misfortune of a world war bearing economic and social ruination and its moral aberrations and disturbances should not take place for a third time on humanity." Of course, complete disarmament presupposes that the 'spirits' promoting war be dismantled. As the encyclical says: *Se vis pacem para pacem* [If you want peace, prepare peace].

- And how is dispute resolution achieved? It is achieved through negotiations. It is better to have three years of table discussions than to press the atomic button for three seconds. The alternative is simple now, and simplified by science and conscience. Either peoples collaborate in peace or they finish in suicide. It is either life or death.