



14 October 2026

Dear Friends,

Peace be with You.

I write in recognition of your dedication and commitment to dialogue and peace and with reference to the 40th anniversary of the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi that was convened by Pope John Paul II. It was an unprecedented event that took place on 27 October 1986 that brought together representatives of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Shinto, and African and American traditional religions. Its message was clear and compelling: prayer, non-violence, and mutual respect are essential paths to peace. As a public sign, it gave witness that peace has a spiritual and moral foundation, and that religious communities and their leaders can stand together against violence while remaining faithful to their own traditions.

Subsequent gatherings in the “Spirit of Assisi” have become lasting symbols of the Catholic Church's commitment to promoting interreligious dialogue, social justice, ethical well-being, peace and freedom for the benefit of all humanity.

On 27 October 2026 in Assisi, His Holiness Pope Leo XIV will commemorate this anniversary with the theme of ‘Unarmed and Disarming Peace’.¹ This event will take place amid a global backdrop of ongoing wars, rising ethno-religious nationalism with humanity risking falling into an ever-dangerous cycle of suspicion and hostility.² Faith communities, in such a climate, have a particular responsibility not to deepen divisions, but to heal them. We are reminded of the inspiring words of the Holy Father:

*“In order to overcome the darkness, it is necessary to see the light and believe in it. Peace exists; it wants to dwell within us. It has the gentle power to enlighten and expand our understanding; it resists and overcomes violence. Peace is a breath of the eternal: while to evil we cry out ‘Enough’ to peace we whisper ‘Forever’.”*³

¹ A livestream of the anniversary ceremony on 27 October 2026 is expected and may be watched on various sites, including Vatican News (bit.ly/4731dOR) as well as the Community of Sant’ Egidio (bit.ly/4xhhpGX).

² Cf. Vatican News, 11 May 2026, “Vatican's Vesak message calls on Buddhists and Christians to become ‘artisans of peace’.”

³ Message of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV for the LIX World Day of Peace, 1 January 2026.



Let us welcome this peace and recognize it, rather than believing it to be impossible and beyond our reach. Peace is more than just a goal; it is a presence and a shared journey. May our prayer and reflection renew a shared bold commitment to be artisans of peace to stand together in mutual respect, seeking new paths and initiatives for an unarmed and disarming peace—one that heals wounds, restores relationships, and opens new horizons for humanity.⁴

I am sure you will agree on the crucial importance of men and women of all faith traditions to gather and together proclaim that “peace cannot be reduced to political strategies alone, but must be rooted in prayer, conversion of heart, sincere dialogue and a concrete commitment to justice.”⁵

We are called to offer our contemporaries a bold, prophetic and united counter-narrative to the polarization and hatred being experienced across the globe. As leaders of faith communities, we are bound to promote those relations which engender a culture of life, peace, harmony and good will. Animated by mutual respect, true dialogue, authentic listening and a spirit of brotherhood, we will be able to contribute in a substantial manner to the healing of our world.

Yours Sincerely,

Frank Cardinal Leo
Metropolitan Archbishop
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Message from the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue, *World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi (27 October 1986-2026) 40th Anniversary*.