



# The Holy See

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SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD  
45th WORLD DAY OF PEACE

**BENEDICT XVI**

**ANGELUS**

*St Peter's Square  
Sunday, 1st January 2012*

**[[Video](#)]**

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

The triple biblical blessing rings out in the liturgy on this first day of the year. “The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace” (Num 6:24-26). We can contemplate the Face of God he himself made visible, he revealed himself in Jesus; he is the visible image of the invisible God. And this is also thanks to the Virgin Mary, whose greatest title we celebrate today; the title with which she plays a unique role in the history of salvation, as Mother of God. In her womb the Son of the Most High took our flesh and we can contemplate his glory (cf. Jn 1:14), and feel his presence as God-with-us.

Thus we begin the New Year 2012 by fixing our gaze on the Face of God, who is revealed in the Child of Bethlehem, and on his Mother Mary who accepted the divine plan with humble abandonment. Thanks to her generous “yes”, the true light that enlightens every man appeared in the world (cf. Jn 1:9) and the way of peace was reopened to us.

Dear brothers and sisters, today, by now a felicitous custom, we are celebrating the 45th World Day of Peace. In the [Message](#) I addressed to Heads of State, Representatives of Nations and to

all people of good will whose theme is “Educating Young People in Justice and Peace”, I wished to recall the need to offer the future generations suitable educational curricula for an integral formation of the person which includes the moral and spiritual dimension (cf. n. 3).

I wished to underline in particular the importance of teaching the values of justice and peace. Young people today look to the future with a certain apprehension, drawing attention to certain aspects of their life that need to be addressed, for example: “they want to receive an education which prepares them more fully to deal with the real world, they see how difficult it is to form a family and to find stable employment; they wonder if they can really contribute to political, cultural and economic life in order to build a society with a more human and fraternal face” (n. 1).

I ask you all to have the patience and perseverance to seek justice and peace, to cultivate the taste for what is just and true (cf. n. 5). Peace is never a good fully achieved, but a goal for which we must all strive and for which we must all work.

Let us therefore pray, despite the difficulties that sometimes make our way arduous, that this profound aspiration may be expressed in concrete gestures of reconciliation, justice and peace. Let us also pray that the leaders of nations may renew their readiness and commitment to accept and encourage this irrepressible longing of humanity. Let us entrust these wishes to the intercession of the Mother of the “King of Peace”, so that the year which is beginning may be a time of hope and of peaceful coexistence for the whole world.

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### **After the Angelus:**

Dear Brothers and Sisters, I have received many greetings in these days: I thank everyone with affection, especially for the gift of prayer. I would like to address a respectful greeting to H.E. the President of the Italian Republic, while I offer to the entire Italian people all my best wishes for peace and prosperity in the year that has just begun.

I express my appreciation of the numerous initiatives of prayer for peace and of reflection on the theme I proposed in my Message for today’s World Day. I recall in particular the [Italian] National March that took place in Brescia yesterday evening, as well as those promoted by the Community of Sant’Egidio in Rome this morning and in other cities of the world. I also greet the young people of the *Opera Don Orione* and the families of the *Movimento dell’Amore Familiare* who spent this past night at a prayer vigil in St Peter’s Square.

I offer a warm welcome to the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors present for the Angelus, as we cross the threshold of a new year. As today marks the World Day of Peace, I invite all of you to join me in praying earnestly for peace throughout the world, for reconciliation and forgiveness in areas of conflict, and for a more just and equitable distribution of the world’s resources. May the

Blessed Virgin Mary, whom we honour today as Mother of God, always guide and protect us, helping us to grow in love for her Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. May God bless all of you!

A Happy New Year to everyone!

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