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## Message of the Holy Father for the 101st German Catholic Convention (Münster, 9-13 May 2018)

The following is the Message the Holy Father Francis has sent for the 101st German Catholic Convention ("Katholikentag") starting today in Münster, with the theme: "Search for Peace".

### Message of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters,

I cordially greet all of you on the occasion of the 101th *Katholikentag* taking place in Münster, and I am glad so many of you have come. Your participation is a clear sign of how much you care about the motto of this *Katholikentag*, "Search for peace".

This word is taken from Psalm 34: "Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it". It is an imperative and extremely urgent request for help. Today there is no more important topic in the public debate on religion than the problem of fanaticism and propensity to violence. We observe it in the family sphere, in the workplace, in associations, in our neighbourhoods, in regions and in nations: wherever man as such is not considered a gift from God there is disagreement, resentment and hatred. I am deeply concerned about people, especially children and young people, who are forced to flee because of war and violence in their country, to save their lives. They knock on our doors asking for help and hospitality. In their eyes we see the nostalgia for peace.

Three hundred and seventy years ago, the city of Münster was the scene of a significant peace after a devastating war. It was agreed that the murder of war, committed by man also by abusing the name of a religion, would come to an end. The *Katholikentag* that takes place here in Münster urges us to learn from our history the way of peace for our future. A key tool for achieving this is our Christian commitment in the family, in our schools and training institutions, but also and above all in politics.

Peace continues to grow also when Christians of different confessions manifest themselves publicly united in their witness to Christ and commit themselves together in society, because Christ is our peace (*Eph 2:14*).

Peace requires the respectful coexistence of all people of good will of all religions and of all confessions. All can be precious stones for the construction of a society that loves peace. To seek peace and make it so is the task of all men. Be messengers of peace, responsibility and mercy, especially for the younger generations! In every child, in whatever country he or she is born, it is Christ Who looks at us, Christ Who has come into our world as a helpless child. Children are the future!

The equitable participation of all men and women in the welfare of their society is the foundation of lasting peace. However, the equal participation of all also applies to all men of all societies throughout the world. The great help of the Church, the associations and many parishes makes a valuable contribution in this area. Peace, however, also begins in a simple and modest way in our language, in the choice of the words we use. With words that are like bread, fortifying, appreciative, good, clarifying and reliable: this is how peace begins. Words that love the truth we speak – in society and in the Church, in the family and in our circle of friends, at work or in our free time – serve peace. So do the words of our prayers!

I hope that this *Katholikentag* will be a great feast of faith and a sign of peace visible from afar. The days from Ascension to Pentecost remind us that we must incessantly pray to the Holy Spirit to give us His gifts and make the peace of the Lord grow. We also look to Mary, who as Mother of the Church has prayed together with the apostles for the coming of the Holy Spirit. May Mary accompany and support our search for peace. Let us entrust ourselves to her intercession and her help!

I am joined with you in prayer. Please do not forget to pray for me! I cordially impart my apostolic blessing to those of you who have gathered in Münster, and to all the faithful of God's people in Germany.

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