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LETTERA DEL SANTO PADRE AL PRESIDENTE DELLA CONFERENZA EPISCOPALE DEL KENYA

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In considerazione degli eventi che in questi giorni passati hanno profondamente turbato la civile convivenza in Kenya, il Santo Padre, tramite lettera a firma del Cardinale Segretario di Stato, ha fatto pervenire al Presidente della Conferenza Episcopale del Kenya, Arcivescovo di Nairobi, Em.mo Card. John Njue, la propria solidarietà alle vittime e l'accorato invito alla pace e al dialogo.

Pubblichiamo di seguito il testo della Lettera del Santo Padre a firma del Cardinale Segretario di Stato:

• LETTERA DEL SANTO PADRE

His Eminence Cardinal John Njue
Archbishop of Nairobi
President of the Kenya Episcopal Conference
Your Eminence,

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI has followed with deep sorrow and concern the violence which has broken out in your country, and he has asked me to address this letter to you, in your capacity as the President of the Kenya Episcopal Conference, in order to express his unity and solidarity with your Brother Bishops and all your countrymen, and to assure you of his prayers that this great tragedy will soon come to an end.

The Pope is close in spirit to all the victims of this violence: the many persons who have lost their lives, often atrociously, the grieving members of their families, the wounded, those who are dispossessed or had to abandon their homes, and all those who are threatened and living in fear. Entrusting those who have died to the Lord's mercy, he invites you to reach out generously to all those in distress and need.

It is His Holiness's heartfelt hope that this beloved Nation, whose experience of social tranquility and development represents an element of stability in the entire troubled region, will banish as quickly as possible the threat of ethnic conflict which continues to result in so many crimes in certain parts of Africa.

His Holiness therefore associates himself with the Message *My Peace I Give You*, which the Bishops of the

Catholic Church in Kenya addressed to Christians and to all the people of your country. He pleads for an immediate end to acts of violence and fratricidal conflict. Violence is futile as a means of resolving problems; it only exacerbates them and leads to unprecedented suffering!

The Pope also appeals to political leaders, who are responsible for the common good, and invites them to embark resolutely on the path of peace and justice, since the country needs peace that is based on justice and brotherhood. He encourages them to resolve the present difficulties through dialogue and democratic debate, heeding the practical suggestions which you offered in your Message.

Just a few days ago, at the beginning of the new year, the World Day of Peace was celebrated with the theme: "The Human Family, a Community of Peace". In this context the Holy Father expresses his hope that all Kenyans will work to make their country ever more like a family in which all see themselves as brothers and sisters whose relationships are marked by justice and love. He likewise asks believers to pray tirelessly to God for the great gift of peace. For these intentions he cordially imparts to you, Venerable Brothers, and to all the priests, men and women religious and the faithful a special Apostolic Blessing.

Joining His Holiness in expressing these sentiments, I take this occasion to offer you my warm and respectful greetings.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Card. Tarcisio Bertone
Secretary of State

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