

Pope at Palm Sunday Mass: ‘Jesus does not listen to prayers of those who wage war’

Pope Leo XIV presides at Mass on Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion, and reflects on Jesus as the King of Peace who rejects war and refuses to listen to the prayers of those who wage war.

On Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion, Pope Leo XIV celebrated Mass for the faithful gathered in St. Peter’s Square. In his homily, the Pope reflected on Jesus’ revelation of Himself as the King of Peace, even as violence loomed around Him.

As Jesus walked the Way of the Cross, we walk with Him and contemplate His passion which He bore for the sake of humanity as a gift of love.

“He remains steadfast in meekness, while others are stirring up violence,” said the Pope. “He offers Himself to embrace humanity, even as others raise swords and clubs.”

Jesus, he added, came to bring life and light to the world, even as darkness and death was about to engulf Him. Pope Leo pointed out that Jesus desired to bring the world to the Father’s arms and to tear down every barrier that keeps us from God and our neighbor.

Repeating “King of Peace” several times, the Pope highlighted Jesus’ actions in His Passion that bear witness to His desire to bring peace.

When one of His disciples struck the high priest’s servant and cut off his ear, Jesus commanded the disciple to put away his sword, recalling that those who live by the sword die by the sword. As He was crucified and put to death, Jesus did not arm or defend Himself but allowed Himself to be led like a lamb to the slaughter.

“He revealed the gentle face of God, who always rejects violence,” he said. “Rather than

saving Himself, He allowed Himself to be nailed to the cross, embracing every cross borne in every time and place throughout human history.”

Pope Leo XIV went on to recall the prophet Isaiah’s words: “Even though you make many prayers, I will not listen: your hands are full of blood” (Is 1:15).

“Jesus is the King of Peace, who rejects war, whom no one can use to justify war,” said the Pope. “He does not listen to the prayers of those who wage war, but rejects them.”

He lamented the many wounds of the human family in our world today, as people cry out to God with the “painful groans of all those who are oppressed by violence and are victims of war.”

“Christ, King of Peace, cries out again from His cross: God is love! Have mercy! Lay down your weapons! Remember that you are brothers and sisters!” said the Pope.

In conclusion, Pope Leo highlighted the words of Servant of God Bishop Tonino Bello, reflecting on the Blessed Virgin Mary who stood at the foot of her Son’s cross.

“Holy Mary, woman of the third day, grant us the certainty that, in spite of all, death will no longer hold sway over us; that the injustices of peoples are numbered; that the flashes of war are fading into the twilight; that the sufferings of the poor are breathing their last,” he said. “And grant, finally, that the tears of all the victims of violence and pain will soon be dried up like frost beneath the spring sun.”

(Picture@VATICAN MEDIA)

Devin Watkins

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

BOLPER: Moving Forward in Mission

The Office of Oblate Mission Sustainability joins the BOLPER Delegation to strengthen strategic planning and celebrate the shared history of our religious family.

Strengthening the Foundations of Mission

During the first week of February, the co-directors of the Office of Oblate Mission Sustainability visited the BOLPER Delegation. Rafal CHILIMONIUK and Graciela Etchart traveled to Magdalena del Mar, Lima, to participate in the local assembly. They offered a workshop on strategic planning, project preparation, and the implementation of internal control systems. This was to help BOLPER ensure the future of our missionary work. The participants learned how to make use of the Reserved Area of the Omiworld Website and how Artificial Intelligence might help their projects. Overall, this was an opportunity to help the Delegation Superiors and their teams to access documents more efficiently in order to advance the mission.

A Celebration of Our Common Identity

On the last day of the seminar, the participants gathered at the Parish of Nuestra Señora de La Paz to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the

approval of the Constitutions and Rules. The parishioners offered a special Mass and a musical show to honor this bicentennial. It was a moment to reflect on our charism that helps us walk forward as pilgrims of hope in communion. This celebration reminded us that we are bound together by a shared rule of life. That rule continues to guide our missionary efforts today.

Building the Future Together

The visit concluded with an encounter at the St. John Paul II Community. This is a group where the Oblates serve through youth ministry and social work. The members of this community are currently finishing their own building through their own efforts. They are raising the funds themselves, providing the labor themselves, and animating the liturgy through their children's choirs. It is a beautiful example of working together as a Christian community. This local effort mirrors the restructuring we see in the wider Oblate world. As we return to our daily tasks, we remember that we do not just build structures, but we build the living Church through our shared work.

Graciela Etchart

FROM THE REGIONS

AFRICA AND MADAGASCAR

Témento: Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Peace

Thousands of pilgrims from Senegal, The Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau joined Oblate Missionaries for the 37th interdiocesan pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Peace in Témento, entrusting their desire for peace to the Virgin Mary.

A sanctuary for peace in Casamance

Témento is a small town located in southern Senegal on the banks of the Casamance River. Despite its remarkable natural beauty, this region has endured an armed conflict that lasted more than three decades. Each year, Catholic faithful from the dioceses of Ziguinchor and Kolda, as well as from The Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, come to the shrine to

invoke Our Lady of Peace and entrust to her their ardent desire for peace.

Since 1999, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate have been running the Shrine of Our Lady of Peace in Témento. They also look after the Shrine of Our Lady of the Mission in the Diocese of Ziguinchor. This responsibility is a true prophetic call in the heart of Casamance. With Mary, they are called to be missionaries and messengers of peace in the region. The Oblates have played an important role in the region's peace process. Through Caritas, pastoral outreach, and liturgical celebrations, they have welcomed and accompanied many refugees affected by the war, bearing witness to the Church's compassion and solidarity.

The Cross and the mission

As the Oblates in Senegal celebrated their 50th anniversary and the Congregation gave thanks for 200 years since the papal approbation of the Constitutions and Rules, the missionaries offered a strong witness in full habit, present

both as Oblates and as missionaries. At the entrance of the shrine, where three large crosses stand, the Oblates and the Bishop welcomed many young pilgrims. The prayer vigil with the Marian procession was a time of deep prayer. Bruno FAVERO, rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of the Mission, led the vigil. He presented St. Eugene de Mazenod to the pilgrims and invited them to conversion and holiness.

On Sunday, at the solemn Mass attended by state and local authorities, the bishop thanked the Oblates for their missionary commitment and for their collaboration in the dioceses of Kolda and Ziguinchor. He concluded with the words, "Oblate one day, Oblate every day, Oblate forever." The delegation superior, Fr. Vincent DIOUF, encouraged the Oblates to renew their missionary vocation and serve the Church and the people with faith, communion, and hope.

Jules Joseph DIEDHIOU, OMI

ASIA AND OCEANIA

Sri Lanka: CODESEP Sanitation Initiative Completed

Patrick PRASANTH, OMI

A new water and sanitation project on Sri Lanka's Hanford Estate is now complete, giving plantation families cleaner water access and safer facilities at home.

Addressing a Need

On January 27, 2026, CODESEP, the social arm of the Diocese of Galle opened the new Water and Sanitation Project at the Hanford Estate in Deniyaya, Sri Lanka. The Ceremony marked the completion of an infrastructure project that gives the plantation community reliable access to clean water and modern sanitation facilities.

For families residing on the Hanford Estate, access to clean water has remained a persistent challenge. The plantation communities of Sri Lanka often face disparities in infrastructure development when compared to urban centers across the country. This project responded directly by installing indoor plumbing and dependable access to clean water. The new facility reduces health risks linked to water-borne diseases and improves hygiene standards for the community. Fr. Patrick PRASANTH, OMI, Director of COSEP, led this initiative. Under his leadership, the project focused on practical, long-lasting solutions that fit the needs of families living on the Estate. Fr. Prasanth verified that the new installations met the technical standards to serve families for years to come.

International Solidarity

This facility became possible through a partnership with the “Initiation 3.0 Foundation—France,” which fully funded the construction. Representatives from France attended the inauguration in Deniyaya as a sign of transparency and solidarity. The Missionary Oblates of

Mary Immaculate and the Diocese of Galle express their gratitude to the foundation for its generosity. This partnership highlights how global support can translate into practical help for communities that live with daily needs and limited resources.

EUROPE

Czech Republic: Oblates in Kyje, Prague

The Missionary Oblates lead a week of renewal in the Czech Republic to celebrate the eight-hundredth anniversary of a historic parish in Prague.

The tradition of popular missions

The parish of Kyje in Prague has seen 800 years of life pass through its ancient stone walls. To celebrate this long history, the parish priest Edward Walczyk invited the Oblate family to lead a parish mission for the local community. A team of 4 missionaries arrived to bring the charism to these neighborhoods. Günther ECKLBAUER, Martin SEDLON, Andry MAMY, and Janith FERNANDO worked together to share the Gospel. Preaching parish missions is one of the oldest traditions of the congregation and remains one of the primary ways that the Oblate charism reaches out to the modern world. The presence of the Oblates reminds the parish that the poor are evangelized and that hope remains a living reality in the common journey of the Church.

Outreach in the secular square

The vision of the founder involves helping people to live first as human persons and then as Christians. The missionary team did not stay only within the church walls during their time in Prague. They visited local schools, they offered their time at the cultural center, and they sat with the residents of a retirement community. These encounters were opportunit-

ies for genuine human connection and listening that reached beyond the sanctuary. The Oblates also walked alongside the homeless in the city, offering simple companionship and conversation. This was a genuine way of doing liturgy outside the church walls, allowing the missionaries to encounter Christ in the neighbor. The evenings featured film screenings for young people, which facilitated honest discussions about the search for God in a secular world. This broad approach allowed the mission to touch the lives of those who find themselves on the margins.

A community built at the table

The most natural moments of renewal often happened around the kitchen table in the parish house. Parishioners joined friends from Madagascar and Sri Lanka to prepare meals together as one family. This shared labor in the kitchen created a real sense of fraternity across different cultures. They were chopping vegetables together, sharing stories of their homelands, and building a sense of home through simple acts of service. The week concluded with a meditative Way of the Cross and the placement of a mission cross at the parish site. This cross stands as a lasting sign of the parish's 800 years and the hope shared during the week. It reminds the people of Kyje that the Lord walks with them as they continue their path as pilgrims of hope in communion.

Janith FERNANDO

LATIN AMERICA

Commemorating 200 Years of Our Constitutions and Rules CCRR Online Animation Meeting

The St. Eugene Scholasticate Community in Mexico City warmly invites all Oblates and members of the Oblate Charismatic Family to our Last Online Animation Meeting on Saturday, March 28, 2026, at 14:00 (Rome time).

Over the past year, scholastic communities from across the Oblate world have generously led our monthly online meetings. This upcoming gathering will be the final one in the series. These encounters were designed to help us prepare for our Jubilee Year, both spiritually and communally.

We are deeply grateful for the dedication shown by every Oblate scholasticate community. A heartfelt thanks also goes to all the Oblates from each region who prepared reflections throughout the year. Your contributions

have enriched our journey, and we are truly grateful.

We invite all Oblates and members of the Oblate Charismatic Family to join our final 45-minute Zoom Animation Meeting:

Meeting Details:

Date: March 28th, 2026 Time: 14:00 (Local Time in Rome) Duration: 45 minutes YouTube: OMIWORLD Facebook: OMIWORLD To join the Meeting, Click here

Let us use this gathering as a moment to unite, strengthen our fraternity, and propel our mission forward with zeal and faithfulness. Your participation will be a great blessing. We look forward to praying and reflecting with you.

In Christ Jesus and Mary Immaculate,

St. Eugene Scholasticate Community, Mexico City.

OMIWORLD

CANADA AND UNITED STATES

Notre-Dame-du-Cap: A Wind of Renewal Begins to Rise

With an average age of 85, the Oblates of Notre-Dame-du-Cap might seem like a group nearing the end of their journey. However, during their provincial assembly this week, they discovered that a new wave of renewal is just beginning to sweep through their mission.

A day of listening and discernment

On March 10, 2026, about forty of us gathered in Richelieu for our provincial assembly. These moments are more than just meetings. They are times of grace that allow us to look back on the road we have traveled, to see where we are currently serving, and to discern where the Spirit is leading us next. This year feels especially significant for our community. We are celebrating two centuries since our Consti-

tutions and Rules were approved, and we are also marking 185 years of our presence here in North America. Notre-Dame-du-Cap has a long history because it is the mother province of the whole continent. But we also need to be honest about our present situation when we think about that long history.

An aging province with a living mission

Our province is no longer young after almost 200 years of history. To be honest, neither are we. Today, we have 79 Oblates with perpetual vows and one in formation. Our eldest brother is 101, our youngest is 43, and our average age is about 85. If we only look at these numbers, it would be easy to tell a story of decline. It may appear that we are a province nearing the end of its journey. However, the atmosphere during this first day of the assembly told a much more hopeful story.

A Conversation in the Spirit

We chose to work using a method called Conversation in the Spirit. This is a way of sharing and listening that comes from the synodal way of the Church. It invites us to listen carefully to the experiences of our brothers and to figure out together what the Spirit is saying to our province today. From our very first conversations, it was clear that despite our age, we still believe in the vitality of the mission entrusted to us. In our shared prayers and moments of brotherhood, we felt something real. It felt like a light at the end of the tunnel or a fresh wind of renewal beginning to rise.

A missionary family wider than ourselves

This momentum is not just a feeling. Our provincial report gave us concrete signs of hope. We are starting to realize that the Oblate mission is not just our responsibility. Today, the Oblates, our associates, our youth, and the many laypeople who work with us live it out.

We are learning that our missionary family is much bigger than we thought. No matter how old we are or how many of us there are, everyone is a part of this mission that has always been bigger than us.

Listening to the Spirit

Our current challenge is to understand what the Spirit is communicating to the Oblates of Notre-Dame-du-Cap today. We are thinking about how we can share our mission and spirit with more people who are already walking with us. We want to open up more space for the Spirit to call new young people and other laypeople to join this family. In the next few days, we will discuss these questions further. But even on the first day, a conviction is starting to form. Even in the heart of our fragility, the Spirit is still bringing forth a future for our mission.

Nnaemeka ALI, OMI

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