

## **PEACE AND REUNIFICATION IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA**

To all of you who seek for peace:

Peace!

I invite you to accompany with a prayer the travel of Pope Francis in the Republic of Korea, from the 13th to the 18th of August. Pope Francis continues his pilgrimage towards the regions in conflict to witness to the Gospel of Peace.

The division of the Korean peninsula was enacted in 1953 at the end of the Korea War, with the creation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in the North, and the Republic of Korea, in the South. The 4th of July 1972, the two parts declared their desire to reunite pacifically, without foreign interference. At the end of the Cold War in 1991, the two Koreas have joined the United Nations together, and signed agreements in favor of reconciliation, non-aggression, exchanges and cooperation.

The issue of the unification of this region also concerns the Christian conscience. The World Council of Churches, an organism that gathers more than 300 Christian churches, celebrated in 2013 in Busan, Republic of Korea, its 10th general assembly on the theme "God of life, lead us towards Justice and Peace!" and has approved a declaration called "Peace and reunification of the Korean peninsula". In this important document, we find guidelines for action such as:

- encouraging the Security Council of the United Nations to take initiatives in favor of peace-building and lift the sanctions imposed on North Korea.

- launching a universal campaign to establish a peace treaty that will replace the Armistice Agreement of 1953, putting thus an end to war.

- calling upon all the foreign powers of the region to cease all military activities and reduce military expenditures.

- ensuring that weapons and nuclear power stations so as to establish a denuclearized zone, joining the initiatives towards a global Prohibition of nuclear weapons

- collaborating with the two governments to suggest an international cooperation so as to maintain a truly demilitarized zone and transform it in a zone of peace.

So that these words become true and that the travel of Pope Francis produces the expected outcome, let us pray the Lord:

*Lord, our God, you sent us Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord, to destroy the walls of separation between the peoples, making one unique people, the one that is agreeable to you and that works for Justice and Peace. To the occasion of the visit of Pope Francis in the Republic of Korea, we supplicate you for peace and reconciliation in that peninsula: may the two nations find common ground, may the families that have been separated get together and the expenditures for weapons be replaced by actions promoting the human dignity. Amen.*

All bests,

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