



# Nef

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## S U P P L E M E N T



***SHALOM-EIRENE***

***PAX-PAIX-PACE-PEACE-PAZ***

• *P. Pietro Felet scj* •



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**Generalate House**

Via Angelo Brunetti, 27

00186 Roma

Phone +39 06 320 70 96

E-mail [scj.generalate@gmail.com](mailto:scj.generalate@gmail.com)

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# SHALOM – EIRENE

## PAX – PAIX – PACE – PEACE – PAZ

Never before, at every level be it political, social or religious, has there been so much talk about peace, so much prayer for peace, and so much discussion about peace. Pope Leo XIV has intensified appeals for peace, culminating in the vigil of 11 April 2026, recalling the legacy of *Pacem in Terris*. His message for peace is based on the idea of a peace that is “*unarmed and disarming*.” Peace is not founded on fear, threat, or weapons, but on mutual trust and dialogue. It is not a utopia, but a concrete choice that requires the willingness to disarm hearts first, and then the determination to stop wars through concrete gestures of reconciliation. Interreligious and intercultural dialogue is also the path toward a just and stable peace. Hope must not be defeated by a “false realism” that leads to resignation in the face of many conflicts.

As of 2026, there are about 56 active armed conflicts in the world. These centers of violence involve more than 92 countries, causing tens of thousands of deaths and over 100 million displaced people, making the international situation extremely unstable, often described as a “third world war fought in pieces.”

Will we ever succeed in correcting our aim and laying a solid foundation for peace? The Bible can help us move beyond the idea that peace is only the absence of war and recognize it as something much deeper and more vital: intentions, attitudes, and choices for living together. The Bible speaks of peace in many ways. Let us discover some of them and allow space for personal reflection and concrete choices for peace as a way of life.

### **I. Shalom ( שָׁלוֹם ) – Eirene ( εἰρήνη )**

Shalom is the greeting par excellence in Israel, used both to welcome and to take leave. To Shalom aleichem (“Peace be with you”) one replies Aleichem shalom (“Peace be upon you”). The Jewish Sabbath greeting Shabbat shalom wishes for an inner harmony born of prayer and an external harmony lived within the family.

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This fundamental Hebrew word means not only peace and tranquility, but above all wholeness and fullness, well-being and prosperity, harmony and balance, serenity and health. Peace, when offered and received, shows that only together can people enjoy the delights of well-being and security.

Eirene in ancient Greek refers both to the calm of a people and to peace agreements between states: essentially the absence of war and violence. Eirene, the goddess of Peace, was invoked during wars and social conflicts to restore concord, inner calm, and unity of purpose.

Shalom and Eirene are approximately translated in Latin languages as peace. The absence of conflict reflects harmony, justice, and serenity at the social level. Each person, in their small way, has the duty to work for stable balance, to live in respect for others, and to manage inevitable differences. Gandhi said: “There is no way to peace; peace is the way,” underlining that peace is not a distant goal but a daily attitude made of small peaceful actions.

## **II. The Two Poles of Peace: Past and Future**

The Garden of Eden (Gen 1–3) and the Heavenly Jerusalem (Rev 21:9–22:5) are the two poles that show peace as harmony, communion, and fullness of life.

### **A. Peace is Harmony**

God had prepared a habitat worthy of the human being created in His image (cf. Gen. 1:27). In that garden everything was “very good.” Adam and Eve received this earthly garden as a gift not to possess it, but to care for it and make it fruitful as a source of sustenance for themselves and for generations to come. There was great harmony between humanity and creation. Moreover, God walked together with Adam and Eve, establishing a harmonious relationship that knew neither fear nor shame. Their admiration for creation was great, yet Adam and Eve were even more amazed by their participation in God’s harmony. They were called to live life in its fullness, to complement one another, to promote well-being, and to radiate serenity. This is the shalom received as a gift and lived together.

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Adam represents every human being. He receives “dominion” over creatures: “Be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, and all the living creatures that move on the earth” (Gen 1:28). This is not the dominion of someone who exploits recklessly for personal gain, but a dominion that becomes service to the life of every creature. Adam is the guardian of the harmony of creation as long as he lives in harmony with God. Once harmony was lost through sin, Adam and Eve experienced fear and shame. From that moment, peace became, and remains an ideal and a goal toward which we must strive. It is always a journey paved with patience, dialogue, conversion, and reconciliation. Even when overwhelmed by the drums of war, the person who builds peace step by step rediscovers the harmony of the earthly paradise, walking once again with God in the evening breeze.

The Apostolic Vicar of Southern Arabia, based in Abu Dhabi, Bishop Paolo Martinelli, wrote: “According to the Christian faith, God created all things in order and harmony, as the fruit of distinctions: between heaven and earth, light and darkness, night and day, waters and dry land, plants and animals, and so on. The creation of man and woman is also marked by distinction. Yet all are called to live in harmony. The position of the human person is unique. Human beings are entrusted with the task of caring for and cultivating the harmonious creation. Obedience to God is the condition for living in harmony with all creation, because human beings are not the Creator but one of the creatures. Only by depending on the Creator can they truly safeguard the harmony of the whole of creation.”

## **B. Peace as the Fullness of Life**

If peace was and is harmony from the very beginning of creation, it is also the fullness of life contemplated in the saving plan of Jesus, who came to recapitulate all things. This fullness of life will be attained by humanity on its journey toward the heavenly Jerusalem. The Johannine heavenly Jerusalem (Rev 21:1–22:15) is splendid, “prepared as a bride dressed for her husband” (Rev 21:2). “He will make his home among them; they will be his people, and he will be their God, God-with-them. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes; there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness or pain. The world of the past has gone.” (Rev 21:3–4).

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When God definitively dwells among us, then “Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.” (Pslm 85:11).

In the new Jerusalem that descends from heaven, peace is not simply the absence of conflict; it is the definitive and divine realization of communion between God and humanity, described as the final triumph over evil. The holy city, God’s dwelling among human beings, marks the end of divisions between heaven and earth, bringing about the final reconciliation of all, individuals and peoples, and the complete removal of every tragedy that causes mourning and sorrow.

Definitive peace is centered on the direct presence of God, who will wipe away every tear and transform history into an eternal celebration. Thus, redeemed humanity and renewed creation will live in heavenly peace where there will be no more space for destruction and chaos generated by evil. In summary, in the Book of Revelation, peace, God’s gift, is eschatological salvation, the final fulfillment of history in which the slain Lamb reigns, ensuring a community of the redeemed free from corruption and fully united with God.

### **C. From the Earthly Paradise to the Heavenly Jerusalem**

The prepositions “from” and “to” indicate origin and movement toward a destination. The history of humanity connects these two poles. Within it, human beings can develop their great potential for scientific research and socio-economic progress for the common good, but they can also become hypnotized by their negative limitations and disturb the original harmony.

Harmony is disrupted when human beings consider themselves omnipotent and all-knowing; when Cain kills his brother Abel out of jealousy; when a dictator enslaves a people; when wars are declared and territories are conquered to unjustly expand borders; when someone’s social inferiority is exploited to impose every kind of injustice; when the hoarding of goods (raw materials, oil, gas, precious resources, etc.) belonging to others is planned for personal or limited interests; when domestic animals eat better than the poor person knocking at the door; when a people are suppressed simply because they ask for justice, respect, and dignity. Brutal power,

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indiscriminate domination, the division of humanity into good and bad, wars of conquest and trade wars, and economic colonialism are just some of the examples that fill the ancient and modern history of humanity.

The prophets, including Amos (1–2) and Jeremiah (5), courageously affirmed that political wrongdoing, oppression of the poor, idolatry, and social injustice broke the bonds of harmony with God, within society, and with neighboring peoples, causing rebellions, wars, deportations, and slavery. “They dress the wound of my people lightly, saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ when there is no peace. They should be ashamed of their detestable conduct; but they feel no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush.” (Jer 6:14–15). They fail to hear and do not know how to listen to the cry of those who are victims, wounded, or treated as disposable. Some plead for peace, others demand justice, and still others call for dignity and respect.

#### **D. Peace in the Bible**

- *Peace is a blessing*: “May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” (Num 6:24–26); “The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.” (Pslm 29:11); “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.” (Mt 5:9)

- *Peace is a gift*: “May the Lord of peace himself always give you peace and in every way. The Lord be with you all.” (2 Thess 3:16); “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.” (Jn 14:27)

- *Peace is security*: “You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord is the everlasting rock.” (Isa 26:3); “In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.” (Pslm 4:8)

- *Peace is everyone’s responsibility*: “Be still, and know that I am God.” (Pslm 46:10); “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces

peace, who brings good news and proclaims salvation.” (Isa 52:7); “Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of justice.” (Jas 3:18); “Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy.” (Heb 12:14); “Make every effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” (Eph 4:3); “Seek peace and pursue it.” (1 Pet 3:10-11)

- *Peace is self-mastery*: “Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.” (Prov 16:32); “Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.” (Psalm 34:14); “Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble.” (Pslm 119:165); “It is to one’s honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.” (Prov 20:3); “The wisdom that comes from above is first pure; then peace-loving, considerate, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.” (Jas 3:17)

- *Christ is our peace*: “I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have trouble, but take courage; I have conquered the world.” (Jn 16:33); “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.” (Col 3:15); “The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus... Continue to practice what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you.” (Phil 4:7-9)



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