

“Peace in the Middle of the Storm”

Formation reflection for State Council

by Fr Julian Belich

Brothers,

I would like to begin with a little story.

A man once went to a wise old priest and said, “Father, I am tired. Every time I turn on the news there are wars, scandals, disasters. My heart is restless and afraid.” The priest smiled gently and said, “My son, the news has not changed that much in 2,000 years. What you are really hearing is not just the noise of the world, but the noise inside your own heart. If you want peace, do not start with the television. Start with your heart.”

This simple answer points to something very important for us as Christians: peace is not what happens when the world finally calms down; peace is what happens when the heart discovers the presence of God in the middle of the noise.

1. “You will hear of wars...” – honesty of Jesus

In today’s world we do hear of “wars and rumours of wars.” Jesus told his disciples: “You will hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet.” (Matthew 24:6)

The Lord is very honest with us. He does not promise a smooth history or a quiet news cycle. He says clearly that nations will rise against nations, and that there will be troubles. (Matthew 24:7–8) But in the same breath he says, “See that you are not alarmed.” The first invitation of Christ is not to panic. It is to trust.

The Catechism reminds us that peace is not simply the absence of war. “Peace is not merely the absence of war,” it says, but “the tranquillity of order... the work of justice and the effect of charity.” (CCC 2304) So even when the world is not calm, God can still give a deep inner order, a quiet trust, a courage that does not run away.

2. “My peace I give to you” – gift, not achievement

Jesus goes further: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.” (John 14:27)

There is a big difference between the peace the world offers and the peace Christ offers. The peace of the world often means distraction: if I can just keep busy, keep entertained, keep numb, then I will feel better for a while. Christ’s peace goes much deeper. The Catechism says that earthly peace is “the image and fruit of the peace of Christ,” who is the “Prince of Peace.” (CCC 2305) He made peace “by the blood of his Cross,” reconciling us to the Father. (Colossians 1:20) His peace is born on Calvary, not in comfort.

Saint Paul writes from prison – not from a comfortable armchair – “Do not worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6–7) The image is beautiful: God’s peace stands guard over our hearts like a sentry at the door.

3. How do we receive this peace?

So how do we receive this peace of Christ in practice? Let me suggest three very simple “steps” – simple enough for a child, but deep enough for a theologian.

1. Name the fear before God.

- Take the concrete worry – about family, about health, about the Church, about the world – and simply say to the Lord, “Jesus, this is what I am afraid of.”

- The Psalms are full of this honesty: “When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.” (Psalm 56:3)

2. Hand it over, again and again.

- Say with faith, even if weakly, “Jesus, I trust in you.”
- The Catechism teaches that trust in God’s providence does not remove our effort, but it frees us from excessive anxiety and “restores peace of heart,” because God can draw good even from difficulties (cf. CCC 305, 314).

- This is not a one-time act. It is something we repeat, sometimes many times a day.

3. Stay close to Christ in the sacraments.

- The Catechism teaches that Christ “is our peace,” and that by the blood of his Cross he reconciles us to the Father and makes the Church “the sacrament of the unity of the human race.” (CCC 2305)
- At every Mass the Risen Lord stands before us and says, as he said to the apostles in the upper room, “Peace be with you.” (John 20:19–21)
- The Eucharist is not just a ritual; it is the living source of that peace.

4. Your vocation as Knights: peacemakers

Brothers, the Catechism says very simply: “Respect for and development of human life require peace.” (CCC 2304) As Knights, you are already committed to service, fraternity, and faith. That means your very vocation is to be men who carry Christ’s peace into your families, parishes, and communities.

Jesus declares in the Beatitudes: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.” (Matthew 5:9) Notice he does not say “peace-lovers,” but “peacemakers.” A peacemaker is someone who:

- Refuses to spread fear or bitterness in conversation.
- Chooses to speak words of hope, not just words of complaint.
- Prays before reacting, especially when emotions run high.

The Catechism adds that peace “cannot be attained without safeguarding the goods of persons... and the assiduous practice of fraternity.” (CCC 2304) In other words, peace begins in the way we treat the person sitting next to us, in council meetings, at home, and in parish life.

5. A closing story: the storm and the painting

Let me finish with another little story.

A king once announced a contest: artists were to paint a picture of perfect peace. Many beautiful paintings were brought in. One showed a lake, still as glass, reflecting snowy mountains under a blue sky. Another showed a golden field at sunset. Everyone thought one of these would win.

But the king chose a very different picture. It showed a wild waterfall crashing down a rocky cliff. Dark clouds filled the sky. Lightning seemed to split the heavens. In a corner of the painting, however, the king pointed to a small bush growing in a crack of the rock. In that bush, a little bird had built its nest. There, under the spray and the thunder, the mother bird sat calmly on her eggs. That, said the king, was perfect peace: not the absence of storm, but a heart at rest in the middle of it.

Brothers, the Lord does not promise us a world without storms. He promises us something greater: his own peace, given to us in the middle of the storm. “You will hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that you are not alarmed.” (Matthew 24:6) “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you... Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.” (John 14:27)

May that peace guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, today and always. (Philippians 4:7)