

**TELESPHORE P. CARDINAL TOPPO**  
**ARCHBISHOP OF RANCHI**

WELCOME SPEECH

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Life is a great pilgrimage and all of us are pilgrims in the journey of life. I am also one of the pilgrims in your affectionate company and it gives me great joy that you have asked me to welcome this august gathering, the pilgrims of peace. Yes, I accord a very warm welcome to all of you to this pilgrim convention as well as inviting you to have a deep reflection on the theme of this pilgrimage. “How to bridge our divisions and bring peace to the world”. In fact, I wish to welcome you to this great mission of healing love that bridges divisions and brings peace to each of us and to the world. Moscow derives its name from the Moskva River, which has been flowing for ages and to this day. Generations and generations have lived around this River as pilgrims in this journey of life. The River itself is a beautiful symbol of our pilgrimage to God as the River flows towards its destination. In fact, in the case of the Moskva River, it flows into the Oka River which in turn flows into the Volga in its journey towards the Caspian Sea. The spring of love that wells up in our hearts and mingles with the springs in the hearts of others make the journey towards our destination much more joyous and beautiful. Welcome to each of you, the Moskva, the Oka and the Volga. Yes, welcome to you my brothers and sisters in this ancient city of Moscow.

The world needs peacemakers, the children of God. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God”, said Jesus in His famous Sermon on the Mount. The unfortunate reality is that divisions are multiplying in the world. We are divided in so many ways and on so many issues. A simple analysis of the prevailing divisions in the world would reveal to us that love in our hearts has been replaced by greed, violence, arrogance and, as Pope Francis says: “the use and throw culture” prevalent in society. Respect and reverence for the other is paramount in bridging divisions and bringing peace to the world. Everyone born on this earth deserves a dignified life. Every creature has an

inherent purpose and nothing can be destroyed to satiate one's greed, or to establish false supremacy. The world needs to understand this inalienable truth and we have a great mission here as pilgrims of peace.

Pope Francis in his message for World Peace Day 2014 said: "Fraternity is an essential human quality, for we are relational beings. A lively awareness of our relatedness helps us to look upon and to treat each person as a true sister or brother; without fraternity it is impossible to build a just society and a solid lasting peace". Yes, fraternity is the foundation and pathway to peace.

Fraternity is a living bond that unifies hearts and minds and makes us peacemakers in the world. Pride builds walls between people while humility, the very essence of fraternity, builds bridges and quietly births peace. We have a call, therewith, to transform the society through our acts of goodness flowing forth to the other and to the whole of creation from the divine spring within each of us. This is life in God and this is life from God.

I am extremely happy that we have gathered from different faiths as brothers and sisters bound together by the same love of God. In Him we are one and in Him we will remain is the message manifested in and through this august gathering. I pray that our togetherness and the open reflections will make us the real instruments of peace to this world torn apart for various reasons. Peace is a gift as well as a task and responsibility. Peace is not a tranquilizer but the greatest energizer to be always alive, vibrant and passionate to the a cause of peace. We are the sons and daughters of God and therefore we are implicitly the peacemakers. Once again, welcome to all f you and let us be vibrant peacemakers.

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