

And you God, where are you?...

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Dear Brothers,

In this time of pandemic, this question appeared on the spiritual path of many men and women who are believers in God. The question becomes even more pressing when we see the disastrous consequences of the Russian invasion in Ukraine. No one is indifferent to the horror of the destruction of human lives and cities. And what is once again dramatically evident is that the lives and destiny of vast swathes of humanity are in the hands of the decisions made by a few people. I often ask myself: What kind of world are we building, or worse, destroying? And then, rather than the question of where is God, I ask myself where are we, men and women, confronted by such a world?

In fact, seeing the difficulties that arise in and from human coexistence and in fraternal relationships, God himself appears addressing and questioning the human being: "Where are you? God asks Adam and Eve. (Gen. 3,9). To Cain, God asks: "Where is your brother Abel? (Gen 4,9). The question about God often leads to the question about the kind of human beings we are and about the world we are (un)building. God's silence in response to the question about Him and His action often acts as a sounding board for that other, equally urgent question: "And you, human being, where are you, where is your brother?"

Both questions refer to a single reality: the relationship between God and the human being that unfolds in the chiaroscuro of our history. This is what the Archbishop of Berlin, Monsignor

Heiner Koch shared with us a few days ago in a conversation Derek and I had with him. In a city like Berlin where only 34% of the population claim to believe in God (10% Catholic, 16% Evangelical and 8% Muslim) and two thirds of the population claim to be non-denominational, there is a common meeting point for all: it is the question or doubt about God and his action in the world. Such questions are posed in the first person and point-blank to the disciples of Jesus: "Who is God for me? What relevance does God have in my decisions? What does the faith, the Church, signify for me?"

On Friday, 25 March, on the feast of the Annunciation of the Lord, Pope Francis invited Catholics all over the world, as well as believing and non-believing men and women, to consecrate the world, especially Russia and Ukraine, to the heart of Mary. Many of us ask ourselves: How and can this gesture change the dramatic course of events that we are seeing in our world? Of course, God takes seriously the gift of freedom that He has placed in every human being. Neither God nor Mary is a substitute for our heart and the decisions that flow from it.

But our human heart can open itself to Mary, who is one like us. And from within this relationship we can share with her the weight of our decisions, and also their consequences. Moreover, prayer is the space, where we let the questions that Mary may be addressing to each one of us resonate in us.

"That is why we turn to you, we knock at the door of your Heart, we, your beloved children whom you never tire of visiting and inviting to conversion. In this dark hour, come to our aid and comfort us. Repeat to each one of us: 'Am I not here, who am your Mother? You know how to untie the tangles of our hearts and the knots of our time. We place our trust in you. We are sure that you, especially in these times of trial, do not despise our supplications and come to our aid".

Let us join in this prayer to Mary and remain vigilant: in our relationship with Mary, may she may help us to ensure that our decisions conform to that joint work between God and humankind, which is the establishing of peace.

Faternally,

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