

IN THESE PANDEMIC TIMES...

We heed the pope's new year message...

The Associated Press



VATICAN CITY -- In his New Year's wishes to the world, [Pope Francis](#) encouraged people Saturday to focus on the good which unites them and decried violence against women while acknowledging that the coronavirus pandemic has left many scared and struggling amid economic inequality.

"We are still living in uncertain and difficult times due to the pandemic," Francis said. "Many are frightened about the future and burdened by social problems, personal problems, dangers

stemming from the ecological crisis, injustices and by global economic imbalances."

Thousands of Rome residents and tourists, wearing face masks as protection against the spread of the coronavirus, gathered in St. Peter's Square on a sunny, mild day to hear Francis lay out his recipe for world peace, cheering his appearance.

Peace, the pope said, "demands concrete actions. It is built by being attentive to the least, by promoting justice, with the courage to forgive, thus extinguishing the fire of hatred."

Francis also championed embracing a positive attitude, "one that always sees, in the Church as well as in society, not the evil which divides us, but the good that unites us."

Earlier Saturday, in his homily during a Mass at St. Peter's Basilica, Francis publicly ushered in 2022 by praising the skills which women bring to promoting peace in the world, and he equated violence against women to an offense against God.

The Roman Catholic Church marks Jan. 1 as a day dedicated to world peace, and the basilica ceremony a paid tribute to the Virgin Mary's special place in the faith as the mother of Jesus.

Mothers "know how to overcome obstacles and disagreements, and to instill peace," Francis said. "In this way, they transform problems into opportunities for rebirth and growth. They can do this because they know how to 'keep,' to hold together the various threads of life," the pontiff said.

"We need such people, capable of weaving the threads of communion in place of the barbed wire of conflict and division." He called for efforts to protect women. "How much violence is directed against women! Enough! To hurt a woman is to insult God, who from a woman took on our humanity," the pope said, referring to the Christian belief that Jesus was the son of God.

He said women, including mothers, "look at the world not to exploit it but so that it can have life. Women who, seeing with the heart, can combine dreams and aspirations with concrete reality, without drifting into abstraction and sterile pragmatism."

While pledging during his papacy to give women greater roles in the church, Francis has also made clear that the priesthood is reserved for men.

Except for the Pope and members of a chorus made up of boys and adults, participants in the Mass wore face as part of COVID-19 precautions.

Francis, who is 85 and vaccinated against the coronavirus, wore a surgical mask during a New Year's Eve prayer service which a Vatican cardinal presided over at the basilica. It was a rare departure from his shunning of masks during public ceremonies throughout the two-year pandemic.

In a tweet early Saturday morning, Francis elaborated on his hope and strategy for peace.

"All can work together to build a more peaceful world, starting from the hearts of individuals and relationships in the family, then within society and with the environment, and all the way up to relationships between peoples and nations," Francis tweeted.

...and have a new year get together virtually

High School 1964 New Year zoom



CONDOLENCES

The Paulinian Family condoles with the family of Angelina Javier-Malabanan (HS 64).

