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Pope Francis Calls for Debt Forgiveness and Ending Sanctions

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13/04/2020



Pope Francis, offering his Easter message on Sunday, called for the international sanctions that weigh on some countries to be lifted and also called for debt forgiveness.

During his prayer at the Easter mass offered in the Basilica of St. Peter without parishioners, the pontiff declared that the cancellation of debt would allow poor countries to better attend to the crisis caused by the coronavirus outbreak.

The Pope expressed his hope to "reduce global sanctions that prevent the countries that suffer from them from providing adequate support to their citizens."

The pontiff also called for the end to the wars and the suspension of the arms trade. "This is not the time to manufacture and smuggle weapons, which costs a lot of money that would rather have been used to treat patients and save their lives."

"This is not a time for forgetting. The crisis we are facing makes us put aside so many other emergency situations that carry with them the suffering of many people," he said.

He pleaded for "the hearts of so many refugees and displaced people due to wars, droughts and famines to be comforted. Protect the many migrants and refugees - many of them children - living in unbearable conditions, especially in Libya and the border between Greece and Turkey."

He also prayed that "Jesus grant strength and hope to the doctors and nurses, who everywhere offer a testimony of care and love of neighbor until the exhaustion of their strength and, not infrequently, until the sacrifice of their own health."

