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Presentation of the 2023 Message for the World Day of Peace

*No one can be saved alone.
Combatting Covid-19 together, embarking together on paths of peace*

In the early days of the pandemic, the world was under enormous stress. The mortality rate quickly became very high, especially among the most vulnerable. Yet we had so little:

- no sound information about the disease
- no treatments
- no strategies for prevention

The world needed a well-supported international plan to deal with the pandemic. That was utterly lacking. Instead, massive misinformation, finger-pointing, false claims and panic-mongering prevailed; while decision-makers gave higher priority to the claims of patent-holders than to people's needs around the world.

In *Fratelli tutti*, issued during the first year of the crisis (October 2020), Pope Francis explained why he established the Vatican's Covid-19 Commission involving the Secretary of State, the Dicastery for Communications and, as coordinator, the Dicastery for Integral Human Development. It was his desire that the Church be of service to the world in the pandemic, to help us all respond "as a single human family, as fellow travelers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, siblings all" (FT 8).

With this 2023 Message, which reflects back on Covid and looks ahead towards peace, the Covid-19 Commission has accomplished its work, and the concerns will be re-assumed by the participating Dicasteries.

Today the 2023 Peace Message invites us to ask:

- What have we learned from Covid?
- What lessons can we learn from this moment of crisis?
- What signs of life and hope can we collect despite this difficult time?
- After all we have suffered, what should be our vision of humanity and of society for the future?
- What are Covid-time's lessons for peace?

“Let our hearts be changed by the emergency that we have lived through” Pope Francis urges, and “put the word *together* back in the centre.”