

# *On Christmas Day Pope Calls for Peace for Jerusalem*

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Rome, December 25 (RHC-Agencies)-- Pope Francis has used his traditional Christmas Day message to call for "peace for Jerusalem" and dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians.

Acknowledging "growing tensions" between them, he urged a "negotiated solution... that would allow the peaceful co-existence of two states".

US President Donald Trump recently announced that the United States recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

The Roman Catholic leader gave his Urbi et Orbi speech, from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica. "On this festive day let us ask the Lord for peace for Jerusalem and for all the Holy Land," he told the crowd.

The pontiff's speech touched on other pressing international issues, like the migration crisis, the conflicts in Syria and Iraq and North Korea.

During his Christmas Eve Mass on Sunday, attended by about 10,000 people inside and outside of St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Francis strongly defended migrants, comparing them to Mary and Joseph finding no place to stay in Bethlehem, saying that faith demands that foreigners be embraced and calling for a

"new social imagination."

The pope urged the world's more than 1.2 billion Catholics not to ignore the plight of migrants who are "driven from their land" because of leaders' willingness to shed "innocent blood".

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