

**Message from the Apostolic Nuncio to the participants in the Summer School
“Practicing Resilience. Preparing for Recovery”
Dubrovnik, July 10, 2025**

Dear Rector Tanjić,

Dear professors and students participating in the fourth edition of the Summer School “*Practicing Resilience. Preparing for Recovery*”,

I warmly greet you all and express my sincere appreciation for this important and timely initiative, once again promoted by the Catholic University of Croatia, in collaboration with the Nanovic Institute of the University of Notre Dame and the Ukrainian Catholic University of Lviv.

We are living in a world increasingly shaken by suffering and division. The war in Ukraine continues to inflict immense devastation—a special greeting, therefore, to the large group of students from the Ukrainian Catholic University. Sadly, violence and conflict are on the rise in many other places too, spreading in both number and intensity.

A new arms race is often presented as necessary. But will weapons truly bring peace? Will more bombs and tanks, more mines and rifles lead those in power to more wisdom or only to greater ruin? How many more lives must be lost before we say: “*enough!*”?

Look at the tragedy unfolding in Gaza. How long will we continue standing by, silent and disbelieving witnesses, to the annihilation of a people, held hostage by reckless leaders and crushed by occupying forces? How can we claim we have not seen those children torn apart, those women dying while weeping for their husbands and sons?

We cannot expect other conflicts to cease - whether in the Middle East or elsewhere - if we become numb to the horror before our eyes.

These crises, and others too often forgotten, like in Sudan, in Myanmar, in the Great Lakes Region, reveal the deep need for healing, understanding, and hope.

In this context, your Summer School offers more than academic training: it stands as a quiet act of resistance against despair, and a testimony that dialogue, learning, and solidarity remain both possible and necessary.

You come from different countries, cultures, and universities. In doing so, you embody what Pope Francis used to call a “*culture of encounter*”, a space where diversity is not feared but welcomed as a gift, through mutual respect and openness.

The choice of Dubrovnik as the setting for this meeting is no coincidence. A city once scarred by war in the Balkans, it now stands as a living testament to the power of reconciliation and rebirth after devastation. May its stones, which have witnessed both destruction and renewal, remind us that resilience is not passive endurance, but the active choice to rebuild, together.

As academic institutions, your role goes beyond fostering dialogue. You are called to form men and women who can respond to the wounds of the world with both competence and moral principles.

This Summer School, by gathering universities from different nations, some of which marked by conflicts past or recent, embodies that very mission: to transform learning into a tool for healing and justice.

“Blessed are the peacemakers” (Mt 5,9), says the Lord. Peace based on fear will never last. Stopping violence only because we are afraid of our neighbors is not enough.

During his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Pope Francis reminded us that: *“Peacemaking calls for courage - much more so than warfare. It calls for the courage to say yes to encounter and no to conflict; yes, to dialogue and no to violence; yes, to negotiations and no to hostilities”* (May 25, 2014).

From his very first message, Pope Leo XIV has used a bold and counter-cultural expression when speaking of *“disarmed and disarming peace.”* A peace that is not based on military strength or threats, but on humility, nonviolence, and unconditional love.

“Disarmed” signifies the absence of weapons and the refusal of conflict—yet this is not passive naivety, for it must become a *“disarming”* peace, one that overcomes the resistance and hostility of others through its very nature of openness and radical welcome.

This is the peace that extends a hand rather than raises a fist!

To this end, *“we need renewed trust, not only in God but also in humanity's ability to overcome selfishness and isolation, to achieve peaceful and supportive coexistence”* (H.E. Paul Gallagher's speech to the Apostolic Nuncios, the Vatican, 9 June 2025).

Christian resilience is not mere endurance; it is the capacity to let crisis be transformed by love and truth. It means standing firm without hardening our hearts, and rising again not alone, but together, with others, through community, compassion and grace. This, too, is your responsibility.

If the Catholic Universities do not bring this new approach to the conflicts, who will do?

May these days in Dubrovnik enrich your minds and touch your hearts, strengthening you to face the personal and collective challenges ahead as witnesses of hope, builders of peace, and promoters of human dignity. In this way, you will practice your resilience and transform your commitment into hope as you prepare to rebuild the healthy foundations of society.

Entrusting each of you to the Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace, I invoke upon you the light of the Holy Spirit and bless this important initiative with all my heart.

With cordial greetings and blessings,

Msgr. Giorgio Lingua
Apostolic Nuncio to Croatia