
DEAR GRADUATES, BE PEACEMAKERS!



I extend my best wishes to all the graduates and I ask them instantly to be peacemakers in their milieu.

“WHEN MEN FINALLY LIVE IN LOVE...”

The composer-songwriter Raymond Lévesque spoke for all of us when he wrote his wonderful song about finally experiencing peace in the world; however, this still appears to be far in the future, and uncertain, even. “When men finally live in love, there will be no more affliction, and beautiful days shall be ours, but then we shall long be dead, O brother. When men finally live in love, there will be peace on earth, soldiers will turn into singers, but then we shall long be dead, O brother. In the long chain of life we’ve had to follow, where we had to be, we shall have had the worst of it. But when men finally live in love, there will no longer be affliction among us; then shall they perhaps remember us, but we shall long be dead, O brother, we who sought, in the bad days, in hatred and in war, the peace and love they now enjoy, my brother. In the long chain of life, let there be better times, but there must always be a few losers: this is the wisdom here below, the price to pay. When men finally live in love, there shall no longer be affliction and the dawn of a beautiful day shall come, but then we shall be long dead, my brother.”

“THERE SHALL BE PEACE ON EARTH...”

The poet perhaps painfully describes a fleeting and uncertain peace which no one will truly experience, because by then we shall all be taken from this world: we shall all be dead. Three times the poet thus describes an uncertain, inhuman, future, as if peace were impossible today, as if we who are alive today could never have a taste of lasting peace. He really challenges us, he wants us to work at being peacemakers, so that peace is truly ours. Still, I am certain that peace is not only a distant goal, it is also close to us. And we are urged and exhorted to become the outstanding peacemakers the world of today yearns for. In the name of the life coursing through your veins, I invite you to take up this mission in the name of the fellowship which unites you to all your brothers and sisters, in the name of all the years of study you have already had to prepare you for service to society, in the name, finally, of your baptism which unites you to Jesus who came to bring peace on earth. I repeat the words of the prophet Micah: “You have been told what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: only to do right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). During all your years of schooling you learned what was good and excellent. Today, as a living summary of what you were taught, I say: Do justice, love tenderly, walk humbly with your God. This is the fantastic path to the greatest heights.

JUSTICE, TRUTH, FREEDOM, AND LOVE

Peace is established on four basic foundations : justice, truth, freedom, and love. If you accept being peacemakers, you shall have to pursue justice, truth, freedom, and love. When people live in love and truth, when they live in freedom and justice, there shall really be peace on earth. These are four great areas where you have much room to manoeuvre. Justice is the power in you which incites you to defend the rights of everyone: the right to life of every human, the right to housing, the right to food, to education, health care, freedom of speech and expression, etc. This is a difficult and demanding endeavour, but it is indispensable.

We can thank the Lord for having sent us at times prophets of justice to make us respect the rights and duties of both the rich and the poor. We live in a society which is always propounding all sorts of charters of rights: rights of the child, students' rights, rights of the sick, professional rights, charter of official languages. There are many things that could be changed, in the world, if we only had the courage to do justice.

WHEN MEN SHALL LIVE IN TRUTH AND FREEDOM...

Truth is what drives us to speak objectively about things and persons. Jesus gave witness to the truth, he knew what was in the human being. He knew of the human's noble heart, and he also knew of the ugliness and rot within. He knew that man and woman were created in the image and likeness of God, he knew that man and woman could also cover up this image, that they could betray the most obvious truths and misrepresent human relationships. Do justice, walk humbly and in truth towards the Lord. Love is the power in you which incites you to love God with all your heart and soul, and with all the strength which prompts you to love your neighbour as yourself, to love him as he is, with all his strengths and weaknesses, his highs and lows, his fire and his fears. To love her not only for a short time but day after day, in joy and in sorrow, in giving and in forgiveness. Freedom is the power in you which helps you choose what is best for you and your neighbour. This is one of the most precious gifts the Lord has given us, after life itself. To walk humbly but in freedom before the Lord, this is what we are called to. We have to constantly choose what can help us grow and develop day after day. Happy is the free man! Happy is the free woman! Both witness to God's love. God freely created heaven and earth and filled them with a life we have hardly started exploring! By sending His Son Jesus, God wanted to free us from all that is opposed to us, especially sin and its consequences. God wanted us to walk in His sight in all holiness, because holy people are the freest people on earth.

HAPPY THE PEACEMAKERS!

Dear graduates, let me repeat once again: be peacemakers in justice, truth, love, and freedom. Just go back to Jesus' teaching of the Beatitudes, and he shall lead you to the peace you are seeking, to the peace that every man, woman, and child so much desire. Blessed are the poor, the sorrowful, the merciful, those who seek justice, and the peacemakers.

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« From A Bishop's Journal » (494) (25 June 2003)