



From A Bishop's Journal (699)

Blessed Are the Peacemakers

Day after day, all we seem to hear in the media is news of wars and atrocities that point to a “culture of war,” and this, especially since September 11, 2001. Each day, also, as bishop I make my own these words of Jesus, “Peace be with you,” and I beseech him to give us this day his gift of peace. I felt myself challenged, in reading the wonderful message of the Catholic Organization for Life and Family, titled *World Peace: A Family Recipe!*

Peace be with You!

It is very seldom that I use one of the liturgical greetings other than the peace greeting. We all cling to this peace, and several of us would be ready, if not to give one's life, then to collaborate in creating peace. Yes, may peace be always with you, with your family, with all those who share their life and work and daily concerns with you. It is not only on Remembrance Day, on November 11, or again on January 1, the World Day of Peace, that we must think about peacemaking, but throughout the year. The example of our brothers and sisters in the armed forces of yesterday and today stirs our courage and generosity towards our country – we must remember everything they have done and are still doing. They are witnesses of history's most tragic moments, as they are, also, witnesses of humankind's desire for peace. “God who revealed to the world that peacemakers are your sons and daughters, help us to always search for the justice which alone can bring a strong and lasting peace.”

ABC of Peace

I would like to point out four attitudes that can contribute to creating peace in our own lives, in our milieus, our country, and at the international level. The first attitude is respect for life at every stage, respect for each person's dignity, whether that person be young or old, healthy or handicapped. Respect of property, respect of differences, respect of basic human rights, a search for common values and objectives, the rejection of prejudice, and a culture of honesty. To respect oneself and others, this is the ABC of peace.

Self-Awareness

Another attitude – a not so popular one – is humility, learning to recognise one's strengths and weaknesses, admitting one's mistakes and asking forgiveness, developing the desire to improve oneself, and have the courage to correct one's mistakes, avoiding showing off and sarcasm, and not judging or condemning others. Being humble isn't easy, but it is so necessary!

A Strong Weapon

A third attitude is self-control, a powerful weapon in waging peace. It allows one to master one's spontaneous reactions and not to surrender to one's whims. It helps one wait before speaking, correct others without getting angry, avoid criticising, make choices that respect life and the dignity of all people by avoiding violent films and reading material.

Tolerance

A fourth attitude is patience and tolerance that lead us to bear without complaint the suffering, difficulties and vexations that are part of life, and to accept others as they are, to understand them, bear with them, be lenient, and forgiving. It seems to me that these four attitudes – respect, humility, self-control, and tolerance – spring from an inner strength that gives the capacity to meet life's difficulties head-on and with perseverance. This inner strength helps one forget oneself and give oneself freely to others, overcome impatience, and develop a spirit of service and sacrifice, and to always seek to do good.

Serving Others

The more we develop these four attitudes, the more we place our strengths and talents in serving others and for the common good, then the more we shall be generous and spend time and resources with others – especially with the most vulnerable, the poor, the sick, and the elderly. Our kindness and goodness, steeped as they are in unconditional and warm welcome, attentiveness to the other, and consideration, as well as openness to dialogue, understanding and compassion, lead us to be peacemakers around us, as we begin by rendering small, disinterested services, speaking words of encouragement, and accomplishing gestures of reconciliation.

A Hope That is Contagious

A deep joy will flow from these attitudes and gestures of peace. We shall be bearers of contagious optimism and hope. We shall then be ready to fight against every form of injustice and inequality, poverty and exclusion; we shall be concerned with the just distribution of wealth in the world, and we shall support those organisations that contribute to creating a more just and fraternal world.

Plan of Peace

The struggle for peace through respect, humility, self-control, and tolerance requires prayer, a life of prayer. That is why I congratulate you for taking the time to pray for peace. May a prayer for peace

rise up in us during the day as we pray the Lord's Prayer, for example, remembering that God is the Father of all our brothers and sisters on earth, that the Kingdom He wants to establish is a kingdom of peace, love, justice, and holiness, and that the best bread for each day of our lives is the bread of peace for all the nations. Building peace is collaborating with God for the happiness of humankind.

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