

PRAYING AND LIVING PEACEFULLY WHILE WORKING FOR JUSTICE

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."

When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side.

The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. (Jesus) said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so I send you." -John 20

As we continue to revel in the joyful Alleluias and remember the wondrous Easter event, we recall that the Risen Lord Jesus is in our midst. The Lord is risen. Christ is risen indeed and is here with us. Alleluia!

All too often in the exuberance of our Easter celebration we sometimes forget that there are people in places around the world and even here in our own country that cannot celebrate because of conditions which oppress them and keep them from being free and at peace with themselves and one another.

Let us remember in prayer the people who are
the victims of abuse
the victims of war
the victims of torture
the victims of starvation
the victims of hatred
the victims of prejudice
the victims of discrimination
the victims of oppression
the victims of injustice
the victims of the powerful
the victims of poverty
The victims of addiction
The victims of crime
The victims of,,
The victims of...
The victims of...



**“The thought of Jesus being stripped, beaten and derided
until His final agony on the cross
should always prompt us as Christians
to protest against similar treatment of our fellow human beings.
Of our own accord,
as disciples of Christ, we will reject torture,
which nothing can justify, which causes humiliation
and suffering to the victim
and degrades the tormentor.”**

Pope John Paul II

If we consider how we as individuals and as nations treat one another and the reasons we have for doing so, how do they measure up to these words found in Sacred Scripture?

Matthew 25:31-46

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit upon His glorious throne and all the nations will be assembled before Him. And He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

He will place the sheep on His right and the goats on His left.

Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by My Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink, a stranger and you welcomed Me, naked and you clothed Me, ill and you cared for Me, in prison and you visited Me.’

Then the righteous will answer Him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and welcome You, or naked and clothe You? When did we see You ill or in prison, and visit You?’

And the King will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of Mine, you did for Me.’

Then He will say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

For I was hungry and you gave Me no food, I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink, a stranger and you gave Me no welcome, naked and you gave Me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for Me.’

Then they will answer and say, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to Your needs?’

He will answer them, ‘Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for Me.’

And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”



Luke 6: 27-37

“But to you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well, and from the person who takes your cloak, do not withhold even your tunic. Give to everyone who asks of you, and from the one who takes what is yours do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

For if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them.

And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same.

If you lend money to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit (is) that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, and get back the same amount.

But rather, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend expecting nothing back; then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for He Himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

Be merciful, just as (also) your Father is merciful.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven.”



Romans 12: 10-21

Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.

Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer.

Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality.

Bless those who persecute (you), bless and do not curse them.

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

Have the same regard for one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all.

If possible, on your part, live at peace with all.

Beloved, do not look for revenge but leave room for the wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”

Rather, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.”

Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good.



What If:

We fully realized we are daughters and sons of God?

We really trusted one another as true brothers and sisters?

We truly cared about the physical, psychological and spiritual needs of one another?

We gave up our superiority and smugness?

We realized that might does not always make right?

We realized that the almighty dollar, yen, franc, euro, peso is not our God?

We did make our war machines into farm machines?

We did use our scientific technology for the betterment of humankind rather than its destruction?

We had Departments of Peace rather than Departments of War?

We really treated one another as if they were the Christ?

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“Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God.” You’re blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That’s when you discover who you really are, and your place in God’s family.

- Matthew 5:9

Can you remember taking part in a three-legged race at school? How about an egg and spoon race? What about a three-legged race with egg and spoon? That was certainly a way to get egg on your face! If ever you can imagine a time where you and your partner must cooperate instead of compete or fight, that must be it! Imagine if all our body parts started fighting against each other. We wouldn’t function very well would we? Perhaps some of us have experienced something like that. It’s no wonder then that the enemy tries to bring an unhealthy competitive spirit into the body of Christ, His church, to render it ineffective in doing God’s important kingdom business here on this Earth, worshipping corporately to glorify God, and in doing so usher in His presence,

reaching out to the lost, praying for the sick, and encouraging and uplifting each other so we can all fulfill our potential in Christ individually, and collectively as a Church. In the world of dolphins, the importance of cooperation is not lost on them. According to the Dolphin Research Center in the Florida Keys, “Dolphins are altruistic and work cooperatively in hunting for food. Males often assist one another in obtaining a mate, they will support an injured dolphin at the surface so it can breathe and entire pods will put themselves in jeopardy to come to the aid of a mother and her calf.” If it’s instinctive for them, how much as Christian believers should it be instinctive for us to do similar!

The key to the beatitudes that Jesus enunciates in Matthew 5 is surely that He gives us the perfect example of how to be humble, righteous, merciful, pure in heart, and a peacemaker. In order to be a peacemaker, we need to not just know about peace, but have peace in our lives, and that peace comes from within, from Jesus living in us, the rivers of living water that we can draw upon when circumstances conspire to tempt us into discouragement, depression, and doubt, and the enemy tries to replace our faith with fear. Ephesians 2 verse 14 says, “ He Himself is our peace.”

Being a peacemaker is about putting our faith in God’s ability to work through situations, and letting Him use us to achieve that. It is about being sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in dealing with people at odds with other people. How can we turn sour lemons into lemonade? By first looking at what God is doing in our own lives, or should be doing if we would just soften our hearts and let Him! Let’s imagine Heaven for a moment. No ambitious agendas, no selfishness, no jealousy, no insecurity, just the wonderful enjoyment of God’s love and blessings, as we enjoy God’s presence and love each other.

The issue of forgiveness is perhaps the most important area of conflict for a peacemaker to address. As we noted earlier, God’s love and forgiveness must be flowing through our lives. Many disputes can be settled through forgiveness. David says in Psalm 120:6-7 – “My soul has dwelt too long with one who hates peace.7 I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war.” You cannot be a peacemaker and surrender to evil. The Bible tells us to “resist evil.” But others will be open to the Holy Spirit touching their hearts and allowing them to forgive and release people. We also need to show people that forgiveness should often be active and not passive. It’s easy to say that you’ve forgiven someone, but do you fellowship with that person? Are you praying a blessing over them, and considering how God would have you help them? We need to encourage people to forgive actively in this way.

Peace and love, justice and truth begin in our own lives and then move out for there. Let’s begin the move today.



Leader: You have learned how it is said

All: Love your neighbor and hate your enemy

Leader: But I say this to you, who are listening,

Love your enemies

Do good to those who hate you

Bless those who curse you

Be compassionate

Judge not

Do not condemn

Grant pardon

All: Because the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back

Let everything you do

Be done in love

Leader: Deliver us, O God. Guide our feet in the ways of your peace.

In humility, we ask, Hear our prayer. Grant us peace.

All: In humility, we ask, Hear our prayer. Grant us peace.

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world;

All: Have mercy on us

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world;

All: Free us from the bondage of sin and death

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world;

All: Hear our prayer. Grant us peace.

Leader: For the victims of war,

All: Have mercy

Leader: Women, men and children,

All: Have mercy

Leader: The maimed and the crippled,

All: Have mercy

Leader: The abandoned and the homeless,

All: Have mercy

Leader: The imprisoned and the tortured,

All: Have mercy

Leader: The widowed and the orphaned,

All: Have mercy

Leader: The bleeding and the dying,

All: Have mercy

Leader: The weary and the desperate,

All: Have mercy

Leader: The lost and the forsaken,

All: Have mercy

Leader: For those fleeing in terror,

All: Have mercy

Leader: Deliver us, O God; Guide our feet into the ways of peace

All: In humility, we ask: Hear our prayer. Grant us peace.

Leader: Obedience to God comes before obedience to human authority
Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's

All: Let your will be done, not mine, With the help of God's grace.
Let us resist and confront evil everywhere we find it,
With the help of God's grace.

Leader: With the help of God's grace,	All: We will struggle for justice.
Leader: With the compassion of Christ,	All: We will stand for what is true.
Leader: With God's abiding kindness,	All: We will love even our enemies.
Leader: With the love of Christ,	All: We will resist all evil.
Leader: With God's unending faithfulness,	All: We will work to build the Kingdom of God here on earth.
Leader: With Christ's passionate love,	All: We will reach out to others.
Leader: With God's overwhelming goodness,	All: We will walk as pilgrims of peace.
Leader: With Christ's fervent conviction,	All: We will work for truth
Leader: With God's infinite mercy,	All: We will live in solidarity with all people

All: In the end there are three things that last:
Faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love.
Let us abide in God's love.
Thanks be to God.

Christian Peacemaker Teams from the Mennonite and Church of the Brethren



May we find richness in the harvest of justice
which Christ Jesus has ripened for us.
Bread for the journey, bread for the hungry,
all for the glory and praise of God.

Gather with patience for those who have nothing.
Leave them your riches and you will receive.
Make room for the poor ones; make room for the stranger;
For I am the Lord, the Lord your God.

For to have mercy on those forgotten,
this is My true law, this is My command;
Clothe the naked; be home for the orphan,
be hope for the widow, And welcome the lost.

For to have little is to be in abundance.

**To give what remains, to give all we have,
Is to walk with the poor ones and to become the stranger,
One with the Lord, the Lord our God.**

-David Haas



**Saint John Baptist de La Salle,
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
help us to see the face of Christ in all whom we meet and those who suffer.**

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!



**Turn from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.**

-Psalm 34: 15

TEN WAYS to LIVE JUSTLY

Heather Greenwell

1. Become more familiar with the Church's social teachings.
The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' website has a summary of them.
2. Living justly begins at home. Treat those that you live with in a just manner.
3. Buy justly. Buy from companies who have fair labor practices.
Spend money mindfully.
4. Live simply.
5. Recycle.
6. Practice justice in the workplace.
7. Volunteer at local service organizations.
8. Give generously.
9. Educate others especially the young about living justly.
10. Pray for justice and peace.

SOME GROUPS YOU MIGHT WISH TO KNOW ABOUT:

PAX CHRISTI - www.paxchristiusa.org

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL – www.amnestyusa.org

SOJOURNERS – sojourners@sojo.net

MARYKNOLL – maryknoll.org