



Parish of Greencastle, Co. Tyrone (Diocese of Derry)

St. Patrick's, Greencastle Our Lady of the Wayside, Broughderg

Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph [Year A] (29th December, 2013)

The Parochial House, 164, Greencastle Road, Sheskinshule, Omagh, BT79 7RU

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| Liturgy Schedule for Octave of Christmas [Year A] (30 th December, 2013 – 5 th January, 2014) | | | |
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| Saturday Evening (28 th December) | | St. Patrick's | 5.30pm Confessions 6:00pm Vigil Mass |
| Sunday 29 th December | Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph [Year A] | St. Patrick's Our Lady of the Wayside | 9.00am Mass (Missa Pro Populo) 10.30am Confessions 11.00am Mass |
| Monday 30 th December 6 th Day of the Christmas Octave | | St. Patrick's | 10.00am Mass |
| Tuesday 31 st December St. Sylvester (pope) | | St. Patrick's | 10.00am Mass |
| Wednesday 1 st January Mary the Mother of God • World Day of Prayer for Peace • New Year's Day | | St. Patrick's | 11.00am Mass |
| Thursday 2 nd January St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen (bishops and doctors of the Church) | | St. Patrick's | 10.00am Mass |
| Friday 3 rd January | St. Munchin (bishop) | St. Patrick's First Friday of Month | 7.30pm Confessions 8.00pm Mass: Nellie Tracey (1 st Anniversary) |
| Saturday Morning (4 th January) St. Elizabeth | | St. Patrick's | 10.00am Mass |
| Saturday Evening (4 th January) | | St. Patrick's | 5.30pm Confessions 6:00pm Vigil Mass: Maureen Morris (2 nd Anniversary) |
| Sunday 5 th January | Second Sunday of Christmas [Year A] | St. Patrick's Our Lady of the Wayside | 9.00am Mass (Missa Pro Populo) 10.30am Confessions 11.00am Mass |
| Weekly Offerings: Thank you for your generosity to last week's collection which amounted to £960 . | | | |
| Christmas Day Priest's Collection: We would like to extend a special thank you for your generosity. | | | |
| Remembering Our Dead: We pray for Nellie Tracey and Maureen Morris , whose anniversaries occur now. | | | |
| Baptisms: As a parish community we welcome into our Christian family Michael Francis Clarke and Cillian Francis Tuohey who were baptised recently. May our adult community offer our newly baptised and their parents and godparents prayerful support and good example in our commitment to Christian living. | | | |
| Birthday Congratulations: As a parish faith community we send out prayerful congratulations and best wishes to Mrs. Maura Gormley (Craigbane, Claudy) who will celebrate her 100 th birthday on Friday 3rd January . Maura once taught in Broughderg Primary School when she was known as Maura McGurk. She cycled from Swatragh on a Sunday night and returned home on a Friday evening during her tenure at the school. We wish her health and happiness into the future. | | | |
| Pope Francis' Intentions for January (please remember these in your personal prayer) | | | |
| Universal – Economic Development: That all may promote authentic economic development that respects the dignity of all peoples. | | | |
| For Evangelisation – Christian Unity: That Christians of diverse denominations may walk toward the unity desired by Christ. | | | |
| Greencastle Community Centre – Upcoming Event | | Sunday 29th December | Card playing from 7.00pm. |
| Broughderg Community Centre Upcoming Events: | Sunday 29th December | PTAA family disco from 3.00pm to 5.00pm. | |
| | Friday 3rd January | Card playing at 8.00pm. Refreshments served | |
| Next Sunday's Readings: Ecclesiastes (Sirach) 24:1-2, 8-12; Psalm 147; Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-18; John 1:3-18; Lectionary 1 (page 141) Sunday: Year A • Weekday: Year 1 | | | |
| True peace - we know this well - is not a balance of opposing forces. It is not a lovely 'facade' which conceals conflicts and divisions. Peace calls for daily commitment, but making peace is an art, starting from God's gift, from the grace which he has given us in Jesus Christ. <i>Pope Francis, (Urbi et Orbi)</i> | | | |

| Parish Liturgy for January, 2014 | St. Patrick's (6.00pm Vigil Mass) | St. Patrick's (9.00am Mass) | Our Lady of the Wayside (11.00am Mass) |
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| Readers | Aisling Donaghy | Monica Coyle | Sean Clarke |
| Eucharistic Ministry | Brigid Keenan | Eugene McCullagh | Patricia Donnelly |
| Prayers of Intercession | Aileen Tuohey | TBC | Grace Conneely |
| Collectors | Gary McDermott Noel McElhatton | Patrick Tuohey Michael Bradley | Pat McGuigan Perry McCrory |
| Altar Society | Eileen McKenna, Anne McAleer and Maria Bradley | | Anne McDermott Mary Bradley |
| New choir members will always be welcomed – contact Sinead | | | |
| 6.00pm Saturday Vigil | Offertory Gifts Rota | 9.00am Sunday Morning | |
| Saturday 28 th December The family of Molly McCullagh | Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph | Sunday 29 th December The family of Meaghan Clarke | |
| Saturday 4 th January The family of Ronan Coyle | Second Sunday of Christmas | Sunday 5 th January The family of Aine Lucas | |
| Saturday 11 th January The family of Ryan McGlinchey | Feast of the Baptism of the Lord | Sunday 12 th January The family of Micael McCann | |
| Saturday 18 th January The family of Orla Morris | Second Sunday in Ordinary Time | Sunday 19 th January The family of Daniel McCrory | |
| Saturday 25 th January* The family of Caelum Tracey | Third Sunday in Ordinary Time | Sunday 26 th January The family of Leah McGuigan | |
| As a wider parish community we thank these young people and their families for this valued task of leadership. What can you volunteer to do in your parish? Thanks to all who participates in the life and work of our parish faith-community. <i>*Do This In Memory Week 4</i> <i>We need new volunteers in every aspect of life</i> | | | |
| Children in Crossfire – Advent Appeal: Thank you so much for supporting our Advent Appeal. Please return your Advent box / donation by next weekend. With your support we can continue to tackle the problem of malnutrition; in the three regions where we work child mortality has decreased by almost a third. We have achieved our three year goal within 2 years. With your help we can continue this vital work. (028) 7126 9898 • childrenincrossfire.org | | | |
| This Week's Calendar of Feasts and Saints: | | | |
| Sunday 29th December – The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph The Holy Family is seen as the model for the human family, the religious community and the Church. | | | |
| Tuesday 31st December – St. Sylvester (pope) Died in 335 after being Pope for 21 years. Being elected in the year after the Edict of Milan he was free to build many churches in Rome. | | | |
| Wednesday 1st January – Mary the Mother of God At the message of the angel, the Virgin Mary received the Word of God in her heart and in her body, and gave life to the world. Hence she is acknowledged and honoured as being truly the Mother of God and Mother of the Redeemer. <i>Lumen Gentium (52)</i> | | | |
| Thursday 2nd January – St. Basil the Great (bishop and Doctor of the Church) [330-379] Bishop of Caesarea, a brilliant preacher who lived an ascetic life, establishing norms for Monastic life. Implemented the decrees of the Council of Nicaea. Patron Saint of Russia. St. Gregory Nazianzen (bishop and Doctor of the Church) [330-379] Bishop of Constantinople. He was known as the 'Theologian' because of his wisdom and skill in defending orthodox doctrine. | | | |
| Friday 3rd January – St. Munchin (Mainchin) (bishop) Patron Saint of the diocese of Limerick. His traditional birthplace is Dai Cais where a parish and old graveyard, Cell Mainchin (Kilmanaheen) existed. In the 7 th century he was granted Inis Sibthann (Ibton) in the tidal waters of Limerick, in the region of which he funded a church and had a thriving religious community. | | | |
| Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage (1st to 6th July, 2014) – Gift Vouchers: Now available at The Diocesan Pastoral Centre, 164 Bishop Street, Derry. Tel: (028) 71362475 <i>Vouchers can be obtained for any amount</i> | | | |

Tuesday's Child – All Ireland Christmas Art Competition: Children and young people (aged 3-21) are invited to get creative and sign up. Great prizes to be won across all age categories including 1,000 euro family voucher kindly donated from Marian pilgrimages for trip to Rome, Fatima, Medjugorje, Lourdes, Holy Land, hand-made cribs from Bethlehem and painting sets. Proceeds to Tuesday's Child's Christmas Appeal for children in Gaza, Syria and Kenya. Beautiful Christmas cards of the Holy Family, 100% to catholic missionaries helping families in Tacloban, Philippines. **Online:** tuesdayschild.ie **Email:** info@tuesdayschild.ie **Text Orla or Patricia:** 07545 452 362

Guidelines on Use of Modern Technology when Working with Children: - Use of photography and video
The use of photography and video is an issue of great concern among those working with children. The Diocese recognises that every parish has their own arrangements in relation to its use in schools, youth groups and for the sacraments however the guidelines have been devised below to aid parishes and diocesan groups:

- It is always good practice to seek *written* permission from a parent or guardian before taking any photographs or video footage of children. This written permission must be sought from the parent/guardian or the person who owns the photograph before it can be displayed on promotional materials or websites. This can be incorporated in the registration form when a child joins a group (template permission Resource 10);
- Neither names nor any personal information should be displayed alongside any photographs;
- Special consideration should be given where taking photographs or video footage might be misinterpreted, or the images could be seen as provocative (e.g. beach trip or gymnastics display etc.). It is not to say, however, that with the right planning, these events cannot be recorded and enjoyed.
- Photography and video recording are important methods of recording social activity and providing an historic record – illustrating and validating important moments in people's lives. This process is a powerful and personal one, and therefore we must respect the rights of everyone to make the choice whether or not to be photographed.

*The notice comes from the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and is published on behalf of the **Diocesan Safeguarding Committee***

Prayer for the Diocese of Derry at this time

Fr. Kieran Devlin P. Em (Badoney Lower, 2012)

God our Father, we your people of the diocese of Derry, turn to you in prayer, as our ancestors have done, In good times and bad, since the days of Saint Columba and Saint Eugene, Saint Lurach and Saint Mura.

Although aware that we are unworthy of your grace, with confidence in your love we ask your help.

Support and care for our bishops in their retirement, give courage and vision to those who are called on to administer the diocese at this time.

Grant your wisdom and discernment to those charged with the task of choosing your next bishop.

We ask you this in the name of Jesus, your Son, our Lord.

Mary Mother of the Church, pray for us, Saint Columba, pray for us, Saint Eugene, pray for us, Saint Lurach pray for us, Saint Mura pray for us, all you saints of the diocese pray for us.

Knock Marriage Introduction Bureau: The aim of the Bureau is to introduce people considering marriage to a suitable marriage partner. Over 800 marriages have taken place as a result of these introductions. If you are searching for a suitable partner, why not consider applying?

For further information contact the Bureau at Knock, Co. Mayo on 00353 94937 5960 or visit our website at knockmarriagebureau.com and read about the workings of the Bureau

Appeal on behalf of Family Care Society: Family Care Society is a voluntary adoption agency with its roots in the Catholic Church and we provide an adoption service throughout all of Northern Ireland.

A core part of our work is to place children with new adoptive families. These children are often from the care system and may have had a difficult start in life. We are experienced in finding families for these children but given the number of children being referred and their specific needs we are always looking for families to come forward. We would like to thank you for the support you have provided to date. It has proved to be a very successful way of finding adoptive families. Given however our urgent need presently to find families for more young children, we are again respectfully asking for your help.

Adoption: Family Care Society is presently seeking adoptive families who would be interested in parenting children aged between 2 to 6 years and need the love and attention of a caring and understanding family. Could this be you?

Tel: (028) 9069 1133 [Belfast] // (028) 7136 8592 [Derry] • **Email:** email@familycaresociety.org • **Web:** familycaresociety.co.uk

The Deep End – Time Out:

Triona Doherty, Athlone, Co. Roscommon (trionad@gmail.com)

We're almost there! The run-up to Christmas can sometimes feel like exactly that – a run, or even a marathon. No matter how much we try every year to pay attention to Advent and focus on the important things in our Christmas preparation, the last few days can pass in a bit of a blur. We want our Christmas dinner to be just right. We like to put a lot of thought and preparation into our gifts for loved ones. Many of us are on the move over these few days, perhaps visiting friends with cards and gifts and Christmas wishes, or preparing to return home to our families. There are parties, concerts and carol services. This fourth Sunday of Advent is the perfect time for a time out.

Today we find ourselves at the heart of the Christmas story. 'This how Jesus Christ came to be born,' the Gospel tells us. In the midst of the festive frenzy, it can be easy to lose sight of how our Advent preparation is going. Why not take the time for some quiet prayer today? Spend a few moments in silence reflecting on today's readings, get away from it all with a walk in the great outdoors, or take the younger members of the family to your local church to visit the crib. A pre-Christmas break can help focus your heart and mind. Perhaps it is a good time to remember the wise words of Max Ehrmann's Desiderata: 'Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.'

Musings

Salvador Ryan (St. Patrick's College, Maynooth)

Today's beautiful entrance antiphon 'Let the clouds rain down the Just One and the earth bring forth a Saviour' (traditionally known as the Rorate Caeli) has a special significance in Central Europe, and especially Poland, where there emerged the tradition of celebrating an Advent weekday Rorate Mass in honour of Mary under candlelight just before dawn. Originating with King Boleslaw V (d.1279), the king customarily lit the first candle on a menorah, followed by a cardinal, a senator, a nobleman, a knight, a townsman and a peasant. Upon lighting it, each would say 'I am ready for Judgment Day'.

Children in Crossfire – Barcelona Half Marathon: Friday 14th February to Monday 17th February, 2014.

Please contact Eileen at events@childrenincrossfire.org or call (028) 7126 9898 / 07840 182 004

Omagh Volunteering Centre: Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, learn new skills and make a real difference within your local community. There are a wide range of volunteering opportunities currently available across the Omagh District area. Volunteer Befrienders, Coaches and Mentors are required by organisations including Mencap, Guide Dogs NI and Action on Hearing Loss, to enable them to deliver vital services for people with a learning or sensory disability. Organisations such as RNIB and NI Hospice need local volunteers to help set up local Support Groups, raise vital funds and awareness of their work in the Omagh area. Training and support is provided for all of the Volunteer roles.

Tel (Michelle): (078) 5444 6821 or (028) 8224 0772 **Email:** omatghvc2@yahoo.co.uk **Office:** First Floor of Community House

Seeing your life through the lens of the gospels – Matthew 1:18-24:

John Byrne OSA (john@orlagh.ie)

As we move into prayer on the passage, we move from consideration of the mystery of how 'God with us' was revealed to the world in the person of Jesus 2,000 years ago, to a reflection on how we become aware of 'God with us' now in our daily lives.

1. It took some time for Joseph to accept the fact that in Mary there truly was Emmanuel – God with us. God is with us now, but at times we struggle to perceive God's presence. Where have you unexpectedly discovered the presence of 'God with you'? Recall those experiences and give thanks.
2. Joseph was confused and uncertain about what he should do. It took time, and outside help, for him to discern what his next step should be. Perhaps you have also had difficulties on the way to some decisions or commitments. Recall that journey and the moments when it became clear to you what was being asked of you. Give thanks for the angels who helped you along the way.
3. Mary bore Jesus within her, unseen to all, and unacknowledged by most. In Joseph she found one who believed in the treasure that she bore. We can be bearers of Jesus to others, and they to us. When have you been that kind of a bearer of Jesus to another? Who have been that to you?

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| Engaged Encounter – Rules for Arguing: Couples who discover they have a disagreement are invited by Engaged Encounter to share their opinions in the following manner. The sentences following the rules are Jay Keenan's comments from his perspective as an Engaged Encounter leader with his wife Suzanne. | |
| NO NAME CALLING | This includes using affectionate names sarcastically |
| NO THIRD PARTIES | The argument is between the two of you |
| NO PAST HISTORY | If it's already been settled, don't bring it up again |
| STICK TO THE SUBJECT | Identify the real problem — don't go to other issues |
| NO CHEAP SHOTS | Don't use the other's weakness to gain advantage; you may win the argument, but injure your relationship |
| DON'T GO TO BED ANGRY | Finish the argument or call a truce and agree on a time to continue |
| MAINTAIN A SENSE OF HUMOUR | Don't take yourselves too seriously; laughter can be the best medicine |
| HOLD HANDS WHILE ARGUING | This helps to keep your focus where it belongs — on the person who means more to you than anyone in the world |

Message of his Holiness Francis for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace (Wednesday 1st January):

Fraternity, the Foundation and Pathway to Peace

1. In this, my first Message for the World Day of Peace, I wish to offer to everyone, individuals and peoples, my best wishes for a life filled with joy and hope. In the heart of every man and woman is the desire for a full life, including that irrepressible longing for fraternity which draws us to fellowship with others and enables us to see them not as enemies or rivals, but as brothers and sisters to be accepted and embraced.

Fraternity is an essential human quality, for we are relational beings. A lively awareness of our relatedness helps us to look upon and to treat each person as a true sister or brother; without fraternity it is impossible to build a just society and a solid and lasting peace. We should remember that fraternity is generally first learned in the family, thanks above all to the responsible and complementary roles of each of its members, particularly the father and the mother. The family is the wellspring of all fraternity, and as such it is the foundation and the first pathway to peace, since, by its vocation, it is meant to spread its love to the world around it.

The ever-increasing number of interconnections and communications in today's world makes us powerfully aware of the unity and common destiny of the nations. In the dynamics of history, and in the diversity of ethnic groups, societies and cultures, we see the seeds of a vocation to form a community composed of brothers and sisters who accept and care for one another. But this vocation is still frequently denied and ignored in a world marked by a "globalisation of indifference" which makes us slowly inured to the suffering of others and closed in on ourselves.

In many parts of the world, there seems to be no end to grave offences against fundamental human rights, especially the right to life and the right to religious freedom. The tragic phenomenon of human trafficking, in which the unscrupulous prey on the lives and the desperation of others, is but one unsettling example of this. Alongside overt armed conflicts are the less visible but no less cruel wars fought in the economic and financial sectors with means which are equally destructive of lives, families and businesses.

Globalisation, as Benedict XVI pointed out, makes us neighbours, but does not make us brothers. The many situations of inequality, poverty and injustice, are signs not only of a profound lack of fraternity, but also of the absence of a culture of solidarity. New ideologies, characterised by rampant individualism, egocentrism and materialistic consumerism, weaken social bonds, fuelling that "throw away" mentality which leads to contempt for, and the abandonment of, the weakest and those considered "useless". In this way human coexistence increasingly tends to resemble a mere *do ut des* which is both pragmatic and selfish.

At the same time, it appears clear that contemporary ethical systems remain incapable of producing authentic bonds of fraternity, since a fraternity devoid of reference to a common Father as its ultimate foundation is unable to endure. True brotherhood among people presupposes and demands a transcendent Fatherhood. Based on the recognition of this fatherhood, human fraternity is consolidated: each person becomes a "neighbour" who cares for others.

"Where is your brother?" (Gen 4:9) →

←2. To understand more fully this human vocation to fraternity, to recognise more clearly the obstacles standing in the way of its realisation and to identify ways of overcoming them, it is of primary importance to let oneself be led by knowledge of God's plan, which is presented in an eminent way in sacred Scripture.

According to the biblical account of creation, all people are descended from common parents, Adam and Eve, the couple created by God in his image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:26), to whom Cain and Abel were born. In the story of this first family, we see the origins of society and the evolution of relations between individuals and peoples.

Abel is a shepherd, Cain is a farmer. Their profound identity and their vocation is to be brothers, albeit in the diversity of their activity and culture, their way of relating to God and to creation. Cain's murder of Abel bears tragic witness to his radical rejection of their vocation to be brothers. Their story (cf. Gen 4:1-16) brings out the difficult task to which all men and women are called, to live as one, each taking care of the other. Cain, incapable of accepting God's preference for Abel who had offered him the best of his flock – "The Lord had regard for Abel and his offering; but for Cain and his offering he had no regard" (Gen 4:4-5) – killed Abel out of jealousy. In this way, he refused to regard Abel as a brother, to relate to him rightly, to live in the presence of God by assuming his responsibility to care for and to protect others. By asking him "Where is your brother?", God holds Cain accountable for what he has done. He answers: "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen 4:9). Then, the Book of Genesis tells us, "Cain went away from the presence of the Lord" (4:16).

We need to ask ourselves what were the real reasons which led Cain to disregard the bond of fraternity and, at the same time, the bond of reciprocity and fellowship which joined him to his brother Abel. God himself condemns and reproves Cain's collusion with evil: "sin is crouching at your door" (Gen 4:7). But Cain refuses to turn against evil and decides instead to raise his "hand against his brother Abel" (Gen 4:8), thus scorning God's plan. In this way, he thwarts his primordial calling to be a child of God and to live in fraternity.

The story of Cain and Abel teaches that we have an inherent calling to fraternity, but also the tragic capacity to betray that calling. This is witnessed by our daily acts of selfishness, which are at the root of so many wars and so much injustice: many men and women die at the hands of their brothers and sisters who are incapable of seeing themselves as such, that is, as beings made for reciprocity, for communion and self-giving.

"And you will all be brothers" (Mt 23:8)

3. The question naturally arises: Can the men and women of this world ever fully respond to the longing for fraternity placed within them by God the Father? Will they ever manage by their power alone to overcome indifference, egoism and hatred, and to accept the legitimate differences typical of brothers and sisters?

By paraphrasing his words, we can summarise the answer given by the Lord Jesus: "For you have only one Father, who is God, and you are all brothers and sisters" (cf. Mt 23:8-9). The basis of fraternity is found in God's fatherhood. We are not speaking of a generic fatherhood, indistinct and historically ineffectual, but rather of the specific and extraordinarily concrete personal love of God for each man and woman (cf. Mt 6:25-30). It is a fatherhood, then, which effectively generates fraternity, because the love of God, once welcomed, becomes the most formidable means of transforming our lives and relationships with others, opening us to solidarity and to genuine sharing.

In a particular way, human fraternity is regenerated in and by Jesus Christ through his death and resurrection. The Cross is the definitive foundational locus of that fraternity which human beings are not capable of generating themselves. Jesus Christ, who assumed human nature in order to redeem it, loving the Father unto death on the Cross (cf. Phil 2:8), has through his resurrection made of us a new humanity, in full communion with the will of God, with his plan, which includes the full realisation of our vocation to fraternity.

From the beginning, Jesus takes up the plan of the Father, acknowledging its primacy over all else. But Christ, with his abandonment to death for love of the Father, becomes the definitive and new principle of us all; we are called to regard ourselves in him as brothers and sisters, inasmuch as we are children of the same Father. He himself is the Covenant; in his person we are reconciled with God and with one another as brothers and sisters. Jesus' death on the Cross also brings an end to the separation between peoples, between the people of the Covenant and the people of the Gentiles, who were bereft of hope until that moment, since they were not party to the pacts of the Promise. →

← As we read in the Letter to the Ephesians, Jesus Christ is the one who reconciles all people in himself. He is peace, for he made one people out of the two, breaking down the wall of separation which divided them, that is, the hostility between them. He created in himself one people, one new man, one new humanity (cf. 2:14- 16).

All who accept the life of Christ and live in him acknowledge God as Father and give themselves completely to him, loving him above all things. The reconciled person sees in God the Father of all, and, as a consequence, is spurred on to live a life of fraternity open to all. In Christ, the other is welcomed and loved as a son or daughter of God, as a brother or sister, not as a stranger, much less as a rival or even an enemy. In God's family, where all are sons and daughters of the same Father, and, because they are grafted to Christ, sons and daughters in the Son, there are no "disposable lives". All men and women enjoy an equal and inviolable dignity. All are loved by God. All have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, who died on the Cross and rose for all. This is the reason why no one can remain indifferent before the lot of our brothers and sisters.

Fraternity, the Foundation and Pathway to Peace

4. This being said, it is easy to realise that fraternity is the foundation and pathway of peace. The social encyclicals written by my predecessors can be very helpful in this regard. It would be sufficient to draw on the definitions of peace found in the encyclicals *Populorum Progressio* by Pope Paul VI and *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* by John Paul II. From the first we learn that the integral development of peoples is the new name of peace. From the second, we conclude that peace is an *opus solidaritatis*.

Paul VI stated that not only individuals but nations too must encounter one another in a spirit of fraternity. As he says: "In this mutual understanding and friendship, in this sacred communion, we must also... work together to build the common future of the human race". In the first place, this duty falls to those who are most privileged. Their obligations are rooted in human and supernatural fraternity and are manifested in three ways: the duty of solidarity, which requires the richer nations to assist the less developed; the duty of social justice, which requires the realignment of relationships between stronger and weaker peoples in terms of greater fairness; and the duty of universal charity, which entails the promotion of a more humane world for all, a world in which each has something to give and to receive, without the progress of the one constituting an obstacle to the development of the other.

If, then, we consider peace as *opus solidaritatis*, we cannot fail to acknowledge that fraternity is its principal foundation. Peace, John Paul II affirmed, is an indivisible good. Either it is the good of all or it is the good of none. It can be truly attained and enjoyed, as the highest quality of life and a more human and sustainable development, only if all are guided by solidarity as "a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good". This means not being guided by a "desire for profit" or a "thirst for power". What is needed is the willingness to "lose ourselves" for the sake of others rather than exploiting them, and to "serve them" instead of oppressing them for our own advantage. "The 'other' – whether a person, people or nation – [is to be seen] not just as some kind of instrument, with a work capacity and physical strength to be exploited at low cost and then discarded when no longer useful, but as our 'neighbour', a 'helper'".

Christian solidarity presumes that our neighbour is loved not only as "a human being with his or her own rights and a fundamental equality with everyone else, but as the living image of God the Father, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and placed under the permanent action of the Holy Spirit", as another brother or sister. As John Paul II noted: "At that point, awareness of the common fatherhood of God, of the brotherhood of all in Christ – 'children in the Son' – and of the presence and life-giving action of the Holy Spirit, will bring to our vision of the world a new criterion for interpreting it", for changing it.

Fraternity, a Prerequisite for Fighting Poverty

5. In his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, my predecessor reminded the world how the lack of fraternity between peoples and men and women is a significant cause of poverty. In many societies, we are experiencing a profound poverty of relationships as a result of the lack of solid family and community relationships. We are concerned by the various types of hardship, marginalisation, isolation and various forms of pathological dependencies which we see increasing. This kind of poverty can be overcome only through the rediscovery and valuing of fraternal relationships in the heart of families and communities, through the sharing of joys and sorrows, of the hardships and triumphs that are a part of human life. →

← Moreover, if on the one hand we are seeing a reduction in absolute poverty, on the other hand we cannot fail to recognise that there is a serious rise in relative poverty, that is, instances of inequality between people and groups who live together in particular regions or in a determined historical-cultural context. In this sense, effective policies are needed to promote the principle of fraternity, securing for people – who are equal in dignity and in fundamental rights – access to capital, services, educational resources, healthcare and technology so that every person has the opportunity to express and realise his or her life project and can develop fully as a person.

One also sees the need for policies which can lighten an excessive imbalance between incomes. We must not forget the Church's teaching on the so-called social mortgage, which holds that although it is lawful, as Saint Thomas Aquinas says, and indeed necessary "that people have ownership of goods", insofar as their use is concerned, "they possess them as not just their own, but common to others as well, in the sense that they can benefit others as well as themselves".

Finally, there is yet another form of promoting fraternity – and thus defeating poverty – which must be at the basis of all the others. It is the detachment of those who choose to live a sober and essential lifestyle, of those who, by sharing their own wealth, thus manage to experience fraternal communion with others. This is fundamental for following Jesus Christ and being truly Christian. It is not only the case of consecrated persons who profess the vow of poverty, but also of the many families and responsible citizens who firmly believe that it is their fraternal relationship with their neighbours which constitutes their most precious good.

The Rediscovery of Fraternity in the Economy

6. The grave financial and economic crises of the present time – which find their origin in the progressive distancing of man from God and from his neighbour, in the greedy pursuit of material goods on the one hand, and in the impoverishment of interpersonal and community relations on the other – have pushed man to seek satisfaction, happiness and security in consumption and earnings out of all proportion to the principles of a sound economy. In 1979 John Paul II had called attention to "a real perceptible danger that, while man's dominion over the world of things is making enormous advances, he should lose the essential threads of his dominion and in various ways let his humanity be subjected to the world and become himself something subject to manipulation in many ways – even if the manipulation is often not perceptible directly – through the whole of the organisation of community life, through the production system and through pressure from the means of social communication."

The succession of economic crises should lead to a timely rethinking of our models of economic development and to a change in lifestyles. Today's crisis, even with its serious implications for people's lives, can also provide us with a fruitful opportunity to rediscover the virtues of prudence, temperance, justice and strength. These virtues can help us to overcome difficult moments and to recover the fraternal bonds which join us one to another, with deep confidence that human beings need and are capable of something greater than maximising their individual interest. Above all, these virtues are necessary for building and preserving a society in accord with human dignity.

Fraternity Extinguishes War

7. In the past year, many of our brothers and sisters have continued to endure the destructive experience of war, which constitutes a grave and deep wound inflicted on fraternity.

Many conflicts are taking place amid general indifference. To all those who live in lands where weapons impose terror and destruction, I assure you of my personal closeness and that of the whole Church, whose mission is to bring Christ's love to the defenceless victims of forgotten wars through her prayers for peace, her service to the wounded, the starving, refugees, the displaced and all those who live in fear. The Church also speaks out in order to make leaders hear the cry of pain of the suffering and to put an end to every form of hostility, abuse and the violation of fundamental human rights.

For this reason, I appeal forcefully to all those who sow violence and death by force of arms: in the person you today see simply as an enemy to be beaten, discover rather your brother or sister, and hold back your hand! Give up the way of arms and go out to meet the other in dialogue, pardon and reconciliation, in order to rebuild justice, trust, and hope around you! "From this standpoint, it is clear that, for the world's peoples, armed conflicts are always a deliberate negation of international harmony, and create profound divisions and →

← deep wounds which require many years to heal. Wars are a concrete refusal to pursue the great economic and social goals that the international community has set itself”.

Nevertheless, as long as so great a quantity of arms are in circulation as at present, new pretexts can always be found for initiating hostilities. For this reason, I make my own the appeal of my predecessors for the non-proliferation of arms and for disarmament of all parties, beginning with nuclear and chemical weapons disarmament.

We cannot however fail to observe that international agreements and national laws – while necessary and greatly to be desired – are not of themselves sufficient to protect humanity from the risk of armed conflict. A conversion of hearts is needed which would permit everyone to recognise in the other a brother or sister to care for, and to work together with, in building a fulfilling life for all. This is the spirit which inspires many initiatives of civil society, including religious organisations, to promote peace. I express my hope that the daily commitment of all will continue to bear fruit and that there will be an effective application in international law of the right to peace, as a fundamental human right and a necessary prerequisite for every other right.

Corruption and Organised Crime Threaten Fraternity

8. The horizon of fraternity also has to do with the need for fulfilment of every man and woman. People's legitimate ambitions, especially in the case of the young, should not be thwarted or offended, nor should people be robbed of their hope of realising them. Nevertheless, ambition must not be confused with the abuse of power. On the contrary, people should compete with one another in mutual esteem (cf. Rm 12:10). In disagreements, which are also an unavoidable part of life, we should always remember that we are brothers and sisters, and therefore teach others and teach ourselves not to consider our neighbour as an enemy or as an adversary to be eliminated.

Fraternity generates social peace because it creates a balance between freedom and justice, between personal responsibility and solidarity, between the good of individuals and the common good. And so a political community must act in a transparent and responsible way to favour all this. Citizens must feel themselves represented by the public authorities in respect for their freedom. Yet frequently a wedge is driven between citizens and institutions by partisan interests which disfigure that relationship, fostering the creation of an enduring climate of conflict.

An authentic spirit of fraternity overcomes the individual selfishness which conflicts with people's ability to live in freedom and in harmony among themselves. Such selfishness develops socially – whether it is in the many forms of corruption, so widespread today, or in the formation of criminal organisations, from small groups to those organised on a global scale. These groups tear down legality and justice, striking at the very heart of the dignity of the person. These organisations gravely offend God, they hurt others and they harm creation, all the more so when they have religious overtones.

I also think of the heartbreaking drama of drug abuse, which reaps profits in contempt of the moral and civil laws. I think of the devastation of natural resources and ongoing pollution, and the tragedy of the exploitation of labour. I think too of illicit money trafficking and financial speculation, which often prove both predatory and harmful for entire economic and social systems, exposing millions of men and women to poverty. I think of prostitution, which every day reaps innocent victims, especially the young, robbing them of their future. I think of the abomination of human trafficking, crimes and abuses against minors, the horror of slavery still present in many parts of the world; the frequently overlooked tragedy of migrants, who are often victims of disgraceful and illegal manipulation. As John XXIII wrote: “There is nothing human about a society based on relationships of power. Far from encouraging, as it should, the attainment of people's growth and perfection, it proves oppressive and restrictive of their freedom”. Yet human beings can experience conversion; they must never despair of being able to change their lives. I wish this to be a message of hope and confidence for all, even for those who have committed brutal crimes, for God does not wish the death of the sinner, but that he converts and lives (cf. Ez 18:23).

In the broad context of human social relations, when we look to crime and punishment, we cannot help but think of the inhumane conditions in so many prisons, where those in custody are often reduced to a subhuman status in violation of their human dignity and stunted in their hope and desire for rehabilitation. →

← The Church does much in these environments, mostly in silence. I exhort and I encourage everyone to do more, in the hope that the efforts being made in this area by so many courageous men and women will be increasingly supported, fairly and honestly, by the civil authorities as well.

Fraternity Helps to Preserve and Cultivate Nature

9. The human family has received from the Creator a common gift: nature. The Christian view of creation includes a positive judgement about the legitimacy of interventions on nature if these are meant to be beneficial and are performed responsibly, that is to say, by acknowledging the “grammar” inscribed in nature and by wisely using resources for the benefit of all, with respect for the beauty, finality and usefulness of every living being and its place in the ecosystem. Nature, in a word, is at our disposition and we are called to exercise a responsible stewardship over it. Yet so often we are driven by greed and by the arrogance of dominion, possession, manipulation and exploitation; we do not preserve nature; nor do we respect it or consider it a gracious gift which we must care for and set at the service of our brothers and sisters, including future generations.

In a particular way, the agricultural sector is the primary productive sector with the crucial vocation of cultivating and protecting natural resources in order to feed humanity. In this regard the continuing disgrace of hunger in the world moves me to share with you the question: How are we using the earth's resources? Contemporary societies should reflect on the hierarchy of priorities to which production is directed. It is a truly pressing duty to use the earth's resources in such a way that all may be free from hunger. Initiatives and possible solutions are many, and are not limited to an increase in production. It is well known that present production is sufficient, and yet millions of persons continue to suffer and die from hunger, and this is a real scandal. We need, then, to find ways by which all may benefit from the fruits of the earth, not only to avoid the widening gap between those who have more and those who must be content with the crumbs, but above all because it is a question of justice, equality and respect for every human being. In this regard I would like to remind everyone of that necessary universal destination of all goods which is one of the fundamental principles of the Church's social teaching. Respect for this principle is the essential condition for facilitating an effective and fair access to those essential and primary goods which every person needs and to which he or she has a right.

Conclusion

10. Fraternity needs to be discovered, loved, experienced, proclaimed and witnessed to. But only love, bestowed as a gift from God, enables us to accept and fully experience fraternity.

The necessary realism proper to politics and economy cannot be reduced to mere technical know-how bereft of ideals and unconcerned with the transcendent dimension of man. When this openness to God is lacking, every human activity is impoverished and persons are reduced to objects that can be exploited. Only when politics and the economy are open to moving within the wide space ensured by the One who loves each man and each woman, will they achieve an ordering based on a genuine spirit of fraternal charity and become effective instruments of integral human development and peace.

We Christians believe that in the Church we are all members of a single body, all mutually necessary, because each has been given a grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ, for the common good (cf. Eph 4:7,25; 1 Cor 12:7). Christ has come to the world so as to bring us divine grace, that is, the possibility of sharing in his life. This entails weaving a fabric of fraternal relationships marked by reciprocity, forgiveness and complete self-giving, according to the breadth and the depth of the love of God offered to humanity in the One who, crucified and risen, draws all to himself: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:34-35). This is the good news that demands from each one a step forward, a perennial exercise of empathy, of listening to the suffering and the hopes of others, even those furthest away from me, and walking the demanding path of that love which knows how to give and spend itself freely for the good of all our brothers and sisters.

Christ embraces all of humanity and wishes no one to be lost. “For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him” (Jn 3:17). He does it without oppressing or constraining anyone to open to him the doors of heart and mind. “Let the greatest among you become as →

← the youngest, and the leader as one who serves” – Jesus Christ says – “I am among you as one who serves” (Lk 22:26-27). Every activity therefore must be distinguished by an attitude of service to persons, especially those furthest away and less known. Service is the soul of that fraternity that builds up peace.

May Mary, the Mother of Jesus, help us to understand and live every day the fraternity that springs up from the heart of her Son, so as to bring peace to each person on this our beloved Earth.

From the Vatican (Sunday 8th December)