

Message on Human Rights Day

Catholic Church in Thailand

Genuine Development

Leads To Sufficiency and Love



Sunday 19 November 2006

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Dear Christians with Good Will

Sunday 19 November 2006 is dedicated as the Human Rights Day of the Catholic Church in Thailand. It aims at launching campaign to raise awareness of Christians on the value and equal dignity of fellow human being according to the teaching of the Gospel, so that they will take part in the promotion of human rights and peace in society.

In 2006, there were two important events occurring to the Church and Thai society that moved the Church to issue this message under the theme related to development. The first event is the forthcoming 40th anniversary of Papal encyclical 'Populorum Progressio'. The second event is the 60th anniversary of accession of the King, who is widely acknowledged as 'Developer King'. The teachings of the Church and the King on development are challenges to modern development, which widely affects society.

It is well known that development focusing on economic and technological growth, development aiming at creating material benefits is dehumanising people and destroying relationship among the people. The value and common good, friendship and mutual aid have been changed into competition. It changes human beings into consumers, manipulated them for trade, attracted them with marketing tactics to consume products made by business enterprises for benefits of some groups of people who make profits without giving due consideration to social ethics. Furthermore, human beings are made into cheap commodities in labour market for profit in production process and market. This kind of development is moving towards liberal capitalism. Finally, it leads to total accumulation and monopoly. It builds up mechanisms to manipulate others, violate human dignity and rights. It prevents human beings from equally enjoying their basic legitimate rights. People are dominated by artificial happiness with inadequacy. Loan is available and people have credit, but they cannot be self-supporting and have sustainable living.

The teaching of Jesus challenging development at present that "Human being cannot live on food alone, but with all the words coming from the mouth of God." (*Mt. 4:4*) is still valid that we have to be aware of and put into practice. The Church calls upon all members of society to turn back and consider proper direction of development with a focus on helping all human

beings to live their life fully. In this, apart from physical or material aspects, full development must give the utmost importance on spiritual development. It should raise awareness on sufficiency, a simplistic, deep sufficiency and content in one's self alongside with going out from self and have concern on others, which leads to sharing and supports human beings to live peacefully together. This is a sustainable development. It is a development that considers human values. It is not a development that destroys others' life. It is a development that holds on ethics, virtues and respects human life as the most important element. It is not a development that holds money as the ultimate goal and dehumanises people as materials and a production factor.

On the occasion of the Human Rights Day of the Church in Thailand this year, the Church invites all Christians and people of good will to pay attention to different phenomena resulted from modern development aiming towards capitalism, which is affecting human life at all levels. She calls for each and everyone and each organisation to apply their capacity and potential, and co-operate in correction and recovery of human development along the teachings of Jesus and the Church, which holds human being as the ultimate goal.

Catholic Church in Thailand reaffirms human values and dignity, and is conscious of her task to gear her development work to achieve full human development, which helps people to be fuller in all aspects based on religious and cultural values. She also defines the meaning of "having" in economic dimension so that having would be towards a sustainable living with dignity, respect to dignity, mutual aid and unity in society.

Finally, I would like to invite Christians to lead their life according to the teachings of God and along the way Jesus has chosen to walk. It is the way that human being treats one another with love and mutually searches for practical guidelines that would lead to the way of life of sufficiency, living with sharing and mutual aid, which would help build permanent peaceful society.

May Christ bless all people of good will.



(Bishop Michael Bunluen Mansap)

Chairperson

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