

**Pastoral Message
of the Catholic Church in
Thailand
On Human Rights Day**

**“Vocation of Love,
Truth and
Justice”**



Sunday, November 21, 2010

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To All Christians

Sunday, November 21, 2010, on **the feast of Jesus Christ, King of Universe**, Catholic Church in Thailand also dedicated this day as the **Vocation Day** and **Human Rights Day**. The term ‘vocation’ reminds us about young men and women responding to God’s call to institutions for formation as priests and religious so as to carry on the mission of love and service to fellow human beings. Yet, we should not forget that Christian life is also a response to the call of God to be children of the Father, to know, love and have faith in Jesus, and to live His teachings in our daily life.

The recent conflict in Thai society and political gathering in the past 4-5 years, especially the incident in April and May this year, led to fighting of ideas and political affiliation until it has turned into conflict and violence, which resulted in wounds, loss of lives and psychological impacts on those who have lost their love ones. We cannot deny that this political conflict affects relationship among family members, communities and society from their different perceptions and political stands. This is a grave challenge to our vocation to be Christian.

In this present time of social restoration, we, as Christian, are required to reflect how we live our virtues of **love, truth and justice**, which are our Christian vocation.

How we can live the virtue of **love** one another. Love should start with respect to equal dignity of human person, to the right to live, to differences in opinions without looking others as enemies, because actually human beings are not enemies. Our enemies are anger, hatred, etc. It is trust for one another and true, sincere and serious listening with no prejudice and non-prejudgment, to understand impression and needs of others even if we do not agree with them, that definitely help promote love.

Truth is the second virtue. We should not ignore the reality of a person or opponent as black or white, and look at problem as personal affair of an individual. We should look deeper at the root of the structure of social and cultural problems, and help bring out the truth on the cause and who created these problems. We need to exercise tolerance and maturity in accepting the truth, because it is only truth that could help cure the spirit of the painful.

The third virtue is **justice**. We need to help resolve or reduce structural violence that lead to economic exploitation and corruption

in politics that create gaps in society. Furthermore, we need to adapt our attitude toward justice that is based on the love of others, and not the love of one's self (vested interest).


The encyclical '**Deus Caritas Est**' of Pope Benedict XVI reaffirms the role of the Church in promoting justice that the Church must not stand in the route of struggle for justice, but She has the mission to purify the reason for political justice that it is the justice based on ethics and charity.

It is a good opportunity on this Human Rights Day for Christians who are 'called' to discern our heart to see if we are still the temple of God that Jesus, our King of Peace, has redeemed with His suffering on the cross, which is His throne. If it is so, we have to witness the power of love, kindness, charity and good wish for fellow human being, and let this power to shine around us. On the contrary, if we still have anger, hatred, or are trapped that our ideas and belief are correct, and are ready to argue or make judgment that those who have different ideas from ours are not our friends anymore, let us spend moment of silence in the face of God and listen the voice from within to reflect if these emotion and actions would bring peace to us.

The sermon of Jesus on the mount on the true happiness (Mt. 5:1-10) and the teachings of St. Paul give practical guidelines to lead our life with vocation and respect to the principles of human rights. 'Never pay back evil with evil, but bear in mind the ideals that all regard with respect. As much as possible, and to the utmost of your ability, be at peace with everyone. Never try to get revenge; leave that, my dear friends, to the Retribution. ... Do not be mastered by evil, but master evil with good. (Rm 12:17-19, 21)

Let us invite all Christians to build peace in their families by listen and understand needs of all family members. Treat your friends, colleagues and all with whom we relate to with virtues, love, truth and justice, including those who we do not know, because all have equal humanity like us, and they are also children of the Father, brothers and sisters in Jesus as us.

I implore Jesus to grant blessing upon all those who building peace.



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Note: Parts of the content of this letter is from the sharing of Venerable Phra Paisarn Wisalo, abbot of Sugato Forest Temple/network of non-violence given at a seminar on 'Love, Truth and Justice: in Time of Social Rehabilitation' on July 7, 2010 at Assumption Personnel Development Center, Soi Tonglor.

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