

Pastoral Message on Human Rights Day
Of the Catholic Church in Thailand

“Spirit of Justice,
Compassion and
Fraternal Love”



Sunday 18th November 2012

Pastoral Message on Human Rights Day of Catholic Church in Thailand

Sunday 18th November 2012

“Spirit of Justice, Compassion and Fraternal Love”

To All Christians

The Catholic Church in Thailand dedicates every third Sunday of November as the ‘**Human Rights Day**’. On the occasion of this year’s human rights day, the Church invites you all to reflect the three essential spirits of Christian living, namely **Justice, Compassion and Fraternal Love**.

Thailand is a country of peace with no serious conflict on racial or religious ground. Thai people are hospitable and ready to help one another when their compatriots are living in difficulties. They get organized as volunteers to help suffering fellow human beings and animals. Entrepreneurs are concerned with the less-fortunates and make products that are environmental friendly. Farmers raise animals and plants crops with concern on health of consumers, while the latter consume green products living harmoniously with the nature. Yet, we cannot deny the known fact that compassion, fraternal love, perseverance and compromise are ever more disappearing from our society, especially in big urban centers where people are from different cultural background. Although they share the same fences, they almost know nothing about their neighbours. Consideration is ignored, thinking that their neighbours are not their relatives or their friends.

The lack of hospitality resulted from rapid social changes. People are under economic pressures. They have to struggle hard for their survival, while needs of each one are increasing as they are motivated by ads and marketing strategies to consumes more products and services without any pause to think how these products are truly essential to their living. In particular, communication technology, although very truly useful, they are instead used to respond to their entertainment and relaxation needs to relieve their spiritual isolation and loneliness that they always felt they always lacked something, or it helped enforce their image that they were modern and update to the era. These products are, for example, new versions of smart phone and tablet that attract them to possess one. People in the modern era spend most of their time in talking on phone, gazing at their small

square screen to play facebook or twitter sending text messages to their friends, or share photos or play games. This is a dangerous sign of individualism that ignores relationship with people around and other people, even their own family members.

On the occasion of this 'Year of Faith', which has already started on 11th October 2012 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), it is a good opportunity to retreat and reflect on social teachings of the Church, which are the results of this Council especially '**Gaudium et Spes**' with its valid contemporary contents reaffirming the stand of the Church that every human being is member of one family with the same Father. *"God, Who has fatherly concern for everyone, has willed that all men should constitute one family and treat one another in a spirit of brotherhood"* (GS, 24). It also gives practical guideline to us that *"Everyone must consider his every neighbour without exception as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary to living it with dignity, so as not to imitate the rich man who had no concern for the poor man Lazarus. ... make ourselves the neighbour of every person without exception, and of actively helping him when he comes across our path, whether he be an old person abandoned by all, a foreign labourer unjustly looked down upon, a refugee, a child born of an unlawful union and wrongly suffering for a sin he did not commit, or a hungry person who disturbs our conscience by recalling the voice of the Lord "As long as you did it for one of these the least of my brethren, you did it for me" (Mt 25:40, GS 27)*

At this junction, the Church asks us to open to those who have different opinions and action from ours, *"Respect and love ought to be extended also to those who think or act differently than we do in social, political and even religious matters. In fact, the more deeply we come to understand their ways of thinking through such courtesy and love, the more easily will we be able to enter into dialogue with them."* (GS 28)

On the occasion of the Human Rights Day of the Church, we would to invite Christians who are followers of Christ to find time of silence and indifference to all materials and concerns. Raise your eyes to God, reflecting on justice, compassion and fraternal love in the Bible and social teachings of the Church to see how these teachings mean to us in our daily living. Then, start building

atmosphere of love and extend it further to all areas in each home as taught by St. Paul who gave moral principles in family that *“let every one of you in particular love his wife as himself: and let the wife fear her husband”* (Eph 33). In this sense, Christian family will help peace in society with the spirit *“A firm determination to respect other men and peoples and their dignity, as well as the studied practice of brotherhood is absolutely necessary for the establishment of peace. Hence peace is likewise the fruit of love.”* (GS 78)

May Jesus our Lord bless all those who contribute to the building of justice and peace.

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a small cross symbol at the top left and a stylized, cursive script that appears to read 'Philip Banchong Chaiyara'.

Bishop Philip Banchong Chaiyara

Chairperson of Caritas Thailand

Catholic Bishops' Conference of Thailand

Published and distributed by

Justice and Peace Desk (CCJP) of Caritas Thailand

2492 Soi Prachasongkroh 24, Prachasongkroh Road, Dindaeng, Bangkok 10400

Tel. (+66) 2 277 4625, (+66) 2 275 7783, Fax. (+66) 2 692 4150

www.jpthai.org // jpthai@jpthai.org // facebook: ยศ. (ยุติธรรมและสันติ)