

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II
FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE
WORLD DAY OF PEACE**

1 JANUARY 1987

DEVELOPMENT AND SOLIDARITY: TWO KEYS TO PEACE

1. *An Appeal to All ...*

My predecessor Pope Paul VI issued an appeal to all people of good will to celebrate a World Day of Peace on the first day of each civil year, as both a hope and promise that peace "would dominate the development of events to come" (AAS 59, 1967, p. 1098). Twenty years later, I repeat this appeal, addressing myself to every member of the human family. I invite you to join with me in reflecting on peace and in celebrating peace. To celebrate peace in the midst of difficulties - such as those of today - is to *proclaim our trust* in humanity.

Because of this trust, I address my appeal to everyone, confident that together we can learn to celebrate peace as the universal desire of all peoples everywhere. All of us who share that desire can thus become one in our thoughts and in our efforts to make peace a goal that can be attained by all for all.

The theme I have chosen for this year's Message takes its inspiration from that deep truth about humanity: *we are one human family*. By simply being born into this world, we are of one inheritance and one stock with every other human being. This oneness expresses itself in all the richness and diversity of the human family: in different races, cultures, languages and histories. And we are called to recognize the *basic solidarity* of the human family as the fundamental condition of our life together on this earth.

1987 also marks the twentieth anniversary of the publication of *Populorum Progressio*. This celebrated Encyclical of Paul VI was a solemn appeal for concerted action in favour of the integral development of peoples (cf. *Populorum Progressio*, 5). Paul VI's phrase - "Development is the new name for peace" (*ibid.*, 76, 87) - specifies one of the keys in our search for peace. Can true peace exist when men, women and children cannot live in full human dignity? Can there be a lasting peace in a world ruled by relations - social, economic and political - that favour one group or nation at the expense of another? Can genuine peace be established without an effective recognition of that wonderful truth that we are all equal in dignity, equal because we have been formed in the image of God who is our Father?

2. *... to Reflect on Solidarity ...*

This Message for the Twentieth World Day of Peace is closely linked to the Message I addressed to the world last year on the theme *North-South, East-West: Only One Peace*. In that Message, I said: " ... the unity of the human family has very real repercussions for our life and for our commitment to peace ... It means that we commit ourselves to a *new solidarity*, the solidarity of the human family ... a *new relationship*, the social solidarity of all" (No. 4).

To recognize the social solidarity of the human family brings with it the responsibility to build on what makes us one. This means promoting effectively and without exception the equal dignity of all as human beings endowed with certain fundamental and inalienable human rights. This touches all aspects of our individual life, as well as our life in the family, in the community in which we live, and in the world. Once we truly grasp that we are *brothers and sisters in a common humanity*, then we can shape our attitudes towards life in the light of the solidarity which makes us one. This is especially true in all that relates to the basic universal project: *peace*.

In the lifetime of all of us, there have been moments and events that have bound us together in a conscious recognition of the oneness of humanity. From the time that we were first able to see pictures of the world from space, a perceptible change has taken place in our understanding of our planet and of its immense beauty and fragility. Helped by the accomplishments of space exploration, we found that the expression "the common heritage of all mankind" has taken on a new meaning from that date. The more we share in the artistic and cultural riches of one another, the more we discover our common humanity. Young people especially have deepened their sense of oneness through regional and worldwide sports events and similar activities, deepening their bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood.

3. ... as Put into Practice ...

At the same time, how often in recent years have we had occasion to reach out as brothers and sisters to help those struck by natural disaster or subjected to war and famine. We are witnessing a growing collective desire - across political, geographical or ideological boundaries - to help the less fortunate members of the human family. The suffering, still so tragic and protracted, of our brothers and sisters in Sub-Saharan Africa is giving rise to forms and concrete expressions of this solidarity of human beings everywhere. Two of the reasons why I was pleased in 1986 to confer the Pope John XXIII International Peace Prize on the Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR) of Thailand were first, to be able to call the attention of the world to the continuing plight of those who are forced from their homelands; and secondly to highlight the spirit of cooperation and collaboration that so many groups - Catholic and otherwise - have displayed in responding to the need of these sorely tried homeless people. Yes, the human spirit can and does respond with great generosity to the suffering of others. In these responses we can find a growing realization of the social solidarity that proclaims in word and deed that we are one, that we must recognize that oneness, and that it is an essential element for the common good of all individuals and nations.

These examples illustrate that we can and do cooperate in many ways, and that we can and do work together to advance the common good. However, we must do more. We need *to adopt a basic attitude towards* humanity and the relationships we have with every person and every group in the world. Here we can begin to see how the commitment to the solidarity of the whole human family is a key to peace. Projects that foster the good of humanity or good will among peoples are one step in the realization of solidarity. The bond of sympathy and charity that compels us to help those who suffer brings our oneness to the fore in another way. But the underlying challenge to all of us is to adopt *an attitude of social solidarity with the whole human family* and to face all social and political situations with this attitude.

Thus, for example, the United Nations Organization has designated 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. By so doing it is calling attention to a matter

of great concern, and supporting an attitude of solidarity - human, political and economic - towards millions of families deprived of the environment essential for proper family life.

4. ... and as Obstructed

Examples unfortunately abound of obstacles to solidarity, of political and ideological positions which do in fact affect the achievement of solidarity. These are positions or policies that ignore or deny the fundamental equality and dignity of the human person. Among these, I am thinking in particular of:

- *a xenophobia* that closes nations in on themselves or which leads governments to enact discriminatory laws against people in their own countries;

- *the closing of borders* in an arbitrary and unjustifiable way so that people are effectively deprived of the ability to move and to better their lot, to be reunited with their loved ones, or simply to visit their family or reach out in care and understanding to others;

- *ideologies* that preach hatred or distrust, systems that set up artificial barriers. Racial hatred, religious intolerance, class divisions are all too present in many societies, both openly and covertly. When political leaders erect such divisions into internal systems or into policies regarding relationships with other nations, then these prejudices strike at the core of human dignity. They become a powerful source of counteractions that further foster division, enmity, repression and warfare. Another evil, which in this past year brought so much suffering to people and havoc to society, is terrorism.

To all of these, *effective solidarity* offers an antidote. For if the essential note of solidarity is to be found in the radical equality of all men and women, then any and every policy that contradicts the basic dignity and human rights of any person or group of persons is a policy that is to be rejected. On the contrary, policies and programmes that build open and honest relationships among peoples, that forge just alliances, that unite people in honourable cooperation, are to be fostered. Such initiatives do not ignore the real linguistic, racial, religious, social or cultural differences among peoples; nor do they deny the great difficulties in overcoming long-standing divisions and injustice. But they do give pride of place to the elements that unite, however small they may appear to be.

This spirit of solidarity is a spirit that is open to dialogue. It finds its roots in truth, and needs truth to develop. It is a spirit that seeks to build up rather than to destroy, to unite rather than to divide. Since solidarity is universal in its aspiration, it can take many forms. Regional agreements to promote the common good and encourage bilateral negotiations can serve to lessen tensions. The sharing of technology or information to avert disasters or to improve the quality of life of people in a particular area will contribute to solidarity and facilitate further measures on a wider level.

5. To Reflect on Development ...

Perhaps in no other sector of human endeavour is there greater need of social solidarity than *in the area of development*. Much of what Paul VI said twenty years ago in his now celebrated Encyclical is especially applicable today. He saw with great clarity that the social question had become worldwide (cf. *Populorum Progressio*, 3). He was among the first to call attention to the fact that economic progress in itself is insufficient, that it

demands social progress (cf. *ibid.*, 35). Above all, he insisted that development must be integral, that is, the development of every person and of the whole person (cf. *ibid.*, 14-21). This was, for him, a complete humanism: the fully-rounded development of the person in all his or her dimensions and open to the Absolute, which "gives human life its true meaning" (*ibid.*, 42). Such a humanism is the common goal that must be sought for everyone. "There can be no progress towards the complete development of man", he said, "without the simultaneous development of all humanity in the spirit of solidarity" (*ibid.*, 43).

Now, twenty years later, I wish to pay tribute to this teaching of Paul VI. In the changed circumstances of today, these profound insights, especially regarding the importance of a spirit of solidarity for development, are still valid and shed great light on new challenges.

6. ... and its Applications Today

When we reflect on commitment to solidarity in the field of development, the first and most basic truth is that *development is a question of people*. People are the *subjects* of true development, and the *aim* of true development is people. The integral development of people is the goal and measure of all development projects. That all people are at the centre of development is a consequence of the oneness of the human family; and this is irrespective of any technological or scientific discoveries that the future may hold. People must be the focus of all that is done to improve the conditions of life. People must be active agents, not passive recipients, in any true development process.

Another principle of development as it relates to solidarity is the need *to promote values that truly benefit individuals and society*. It is not enough to reach out and help those in need. We must help them to discover the values which enable them to build a new life and to take their rightful place in society with dignity and justice. All people have the right to pursue and attain what is good and true. All have the right to choose those things that enhance life, and life in society is by no means morally neutral. Social choices have consequences that either promote or debase the true good of the person in society.

In the field of development, and especially of development assistance, programmes have been offered which claim to be "value free" but which in fact are countervalues to life. When one considers government programmes or aid packages that virtually force communities or countries to accept contraception programmes and abortion schemes as the price of economic growth, then one has to say clearly and forcefully that these offers violate the solidarity of the human family because they deny the values of human dignity and human freedom.

What is true of personal development through the choice of values that enhance life applies also to the development of society. Whatever impedes true freedom militates against the development of society and of social institutions. Exploitation, threats, forced subjection, denials of opportunities by one sector of society to another are unacceptable and contradict the very notion of human solidarity. Such activities, both within a society and among nations, may unfortunately seem successful for a while. However, the longer such conditions exist, the more likely they are to be the cause of still further repression and increasing violence. The seeds of destruction are already sown in institutionalized injustice. To deny the means of achieving development to any sector of a given society or to any nation can only lead to insecurity and social unrest. It breeds hatred and division and destroys the hope for peace.

The solidarity that fosters integral development is that which *protects and defends the legitimate freedom of every person and the rightful security of every nation*. Without this freedom and security, the very conditions for development are missing. Not only individuals but also nations must be able to share in the choices which affect them. The freedom that nations must have to ensure their growth and development as equal partners in the family of nations is dependent on reciprocal respect among them. Seeking economic, military or political superiority at the expense of the rights of other nations places in jeopardy any prospects for *true development or true peace*.

7. Solidarity and Development: Two Keys to Peace

For these reasons, I have proposed that we reflect this year on *solidarity* and *development* as *keys to peace*. Each of these realities has its own specific meaning. Both are necessary for the goals we seek. *Solidarity is ethical* in nature because it involves an *affirmation of value* about humanity. For this reason, its implications for human life on this planet and for international relations are also ethical: our common bonds of humanity demand that we live in harmony and that we promote what is good for one another. These ethical implications are the reason why *solidarity is a basic key to peace*.

In this same light, *development* takes on its full meaning. It is no longer a question merely of improving certain situations or economic conditions. Development ultimately becomes a question of *peace*, because it helps to achieve what is good for others and for the human community as a whole.

In the context of true solidarity, there is no danger of exploitation or the misuse of development programmes for the benefit of the few. Rather, development thus becomes a process involving different members of the same human family and enriching them all. As solidarity gives us the ethical basis to act upon, development becomes the offer that brother makes to brother, so that both can live more fully in all the diversity and complementarity that are the hallmarks of human civilization. Out of this dynamic comes the harmonious "tranquillity of order" which is true peace. Yes, solidarity and development are two keys to peace.

8. Some Modern Problems ...

Many of the problems that face the world in this beginning of 1987 are indeed complex, and seem almost insoluble. Yet, if we believe in the oneness of the human family, if we insist that peace is possible, our common reflection on solidarity and development as keys to peace can shed much light on these critical issues.

Certainly the continuing problem of the *external debt* of many of the developing countries could be looked at with new eyes if everyone concerned would consciously include these ethical considerations in the evaluations made and the solutions proposed. Many aspects of this issue - protectionism, prices of raw materials, priorities in investment, respect for obligations contracted as well as consideration of the internal condition of the debtor countries - would benefit from seeking *in solidarity* those solutions that promote stable development.

With reference to *science and technology*, new and powerful divisions are appearing between the technological haves and have-nots. Such inequalities do not promote peace and harmonious development, but rather compound already existing situations of inequality. If people are the subject of development and the goal to which it tends, a more

open sharing of applicable technological advances with less technologically advanced countries becomes an ethical imperative of solidarity, as does a refusal to make of such countries the testing area for doubtful experiments or a dumping ground for questionable products. International agencies and various States are making notable efforts in these fields. Such efforts are an important contribution to peace.

Recent contributions on the relationship between *disarmament and development* - two of the most crucial problems facing the world today - point to the fact that current East-West tensions and North-South inequalities *present serious threats to world peace*. It is becoming increasingly clear that a peaceful world, one in which the security of peoples and of States is ensured, calls for active solidarity in efforts for both development and disarmament. All States are inevitably affected by the poverty of other States; all States inevitably suffer from the lack of results in disarmament negotiations. Nor can we forget the so-called local wars that take a heavy toll of human life. All States have responsibility for world peace and this peace cannot be ensured until a security based on arms is gradually replaced with a *security based on the solidarity of the human family*. Once again, I appeal for further efforts to reduce arms to the minimum necessary for legitimate defence, and for increased measures to aid the developing countries to become self-reliant. Only thus can the community of States live in true solidarity.

There is yet another threat to peace, one that throughout the world saps the very roots of every society: *the breakdown of the family*. The family is the basic cell of society. The family is the first place where development occurs or does not occur. If it is healthy and wholesome, then the possibilities for the integral development of the whole of society are great. Too often, however, this is not the case.

In too many societies, the family has become a secondary element. It is relativized by various forms of interference and it often fails to find in the State the protection and support that it needs. Not infrequently it is deprived of the just means to which it has a right so that it can grow and provide an atmosphere where its members can flourish. The phenomena of broken families, of family members forced to separate for survival, or unable even to find shelter to begin or to maintain themselves as families, are all signs of moral underdevelopment and of a society that has confused its values. A basic measure of the health of a people or nation is the importance it gives to conditions for the development of families. Conditions that are beneficial to families promote the harmony of the society and nation, and this in turn fosters peace at home and in the world.

Today we see the frightening spectre of young children who are abandoned or forced into the marketplace. We find children and young people in shanty towns and in large impersonal cities where they find meagre sustenance and little or no hope for the future. The breakdown of the family structure, the dispersal of its members, especially the very young, and the consequent ills visited upon them - drug abuse, alcoholism, transient and meaningless sexual relations, exploitation by others - all are countersigns to the development of the whole person that is fostered through the social solidarity of the human family. To look into the eyes of another person and to see the hopes and anxieties of a brother or sister is to discover the meaning of solidarity.

9. ... that Challenge Us All

Peace is at stake: civil peace within nations and world peace among States (cf. *Populorum Progressio*, 55). Paul VI saw this clearly twenty years ago. He saw the intrinsic connection between the demands of justice in the world and the possibility of peace for the world. It is

no mere coincidence that the very year of the publication of *Populorum Progressio* also marked the institution of the annual World Day of Peace, an initiative which I was glad to continue.

Paul VI already expressed the heart of this year's reflection on solidarity and development as keys to peace when he stated: "Peace cannot be limited to a mere absence of war, the result of an ever precarious balance of forces. No, peace is something that is built up day after day in pursuit of an order intended by God, which implies a more perfect form of justice among people" (*ibid.*, 76).

10. The Commitment of Believers and Especially Christians

All of us who believe in God are convinced that this harmonious order for which all peoples long cannot come about solely through human efforts, indispensable though they be. This peace - personal peace and peace for others - must at the same time be sought in prayer and meditation. In saying this, I have before my eyes and in my heart the deep experience of the recent World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi. Religious leaders and representatives of the Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities and the World Religions gave living expression to solidarity in prayer and meditation for peace. It was a visible commitment on the part of every participant - and of the many others who joined with us in spirit - to seek peace, to be peacemakers, to do everything possible, in the deep solidarity of the spirit to work for a society in which justice will flourish and peace abound (cf. *Ps* 72:7).

The Just Ruler whose description the Psalmist sets before us is one who deals out justice to the poor and suffering. " He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life ..." (vv. 13-14). These words are before our eyes today as we pray that the longing for peace which marked the meeting in Assisi may be the moving force for all believers and in a special way for Christians.

For Christians can discern in these inspired words of the Psalms the figure of our Lord Jesus Christ, the One who brought his peace to the world, the One who healed the wounded and afflicted, announced good news to the poor and set at liberty those who were oppressed (cf. *Lk* 4:18). Jesus Christ is the One whom we call "our peace", and who "has broken down the dividing wall of hostility" (*Eph* 2: 14), in order to make peace. Yes. Precisely this wish to make peace, seen at the Assisi meeting, also encourages us to give some thought to the manner of celebrating this World Day in the future.

We too are called to be like Christ, to be peacemakers through reconciliation, to be cooperators with him in the task of bringing peace to this earth by furthering the cause of justice for all peoples and nations. And we must never forget those words of his which summarize every perfect expression of human solidarity: "Treat others the way you would have them treat you" (*Mt* 7:12). When this commandment is broken, Christians should realize that they are causing a division and committing a sin. This sin has serious effects on the community of believers and on the whole of society. It offends God himself, who is the creator of life and the one who keeps it in being.

The grace and wisdom that Jesus shows even from the time of his hidden life in Nazareth with Mary and Joseph (cf. *Lk* 2: 51f) is a model for our own relations with one another in the family, in our nations, in the world. The service of others through word and deed that marks the public life of Jesus is a reminder to us that the solidarity of the human family has

been radically deepened. It has been given a transcendent aim that ennobles all our human efforts for justice and peace. Finally, the ultimate act of solidarity that the world has known - the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross for all - opens up to us Christians the way we are to follow. If our work for peace is to be fully effective, it must share in the transforming power of Christ, whose death gives life to all people born into this world, and whose triumph over death is the final guarantee that the justice which solidarity and development require will lead to lasting peace.

May the acceptance that Christians give to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord direct all their efforts. May their prayers sustain them in their commitment to the cause of peace through the development of peoples in the spirit of social solidarity.

11. *Final Appeal*

And so together we begin another year: 1987. May it be a year in which humanity finally puts aside the divisions of the past, a year in which people seek peace with all their heart. My hope is that this Message may be an occasion for each one to deepen his or her commitment to the oneness of the human family in solidarity. May it be a spur encouraging us all to seek the true good of all our brothers and sisters in an integral development that fosters all values of the human person in society.

At the beginning of this Message I explained that the theme of solidarity impelled me to address this to everyone, to every man and woman in this world. I now repeat this call to every one of you, but I wish to make a special appeal in the following way:

- to all of you, Government leaders and those responsible for international agencies: in order to ensure peace I appeal to you to redouble your efforts for the integral development of individuals and nations;

- to all of you who participated in the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi or who were joined spiritually with us at that time: I appeal to you that we may bear witness together to peace in the world;

- to all of you who travel or who are involved in cultural exchanges: I appeal to you to be conscious instruments of greater mutual understanding, respect and esteem;

- to you, my younger brothers and sisters, the youth of the world: I appeal to you to use every means to forge new bonds of peace in fraternal solidarity with young people everywhere.

And dare I hope to be heard by those who practise violence and terrorism? Those of you who will at least listen to my voice, I beg you again, as I have in the past, to turn away from the violent pursuit of your goals - even if the goals themselves are just. I beg you to turn away from killing and harming the innocent. I beg you to stop undermining the very fabric of society. The way of violence cannot obtain true justice for you or for anyone else. If you want, you can still change. You can profess your own humanity and recognize human solidarity.

I appeal to all of you, wherever you are, whatever you are doing, to see the face of a brother or sister in every human being. What unites us is so much more than what separates and divides us : it is our common humanity.

Peace is always a gift of God, yet it depends on us too. And the keys to peace are within our grasp. It is up to us to use them to unlock all the doors!

From the Vatican, 8 December 1986.

JOANNES PAULUS PP. II