

# BAPTISTINE PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Bulletin

January 2019

Focus: Pope Francis Message—January 1, 2019 “Good politics is at the service of peace “

Scripture: “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” - Philippians 4:7,

**Reflection** Good politics is at the service of peace" was the theme of Pope Francis' Message for the World Day of Peace, celebrated on January 1, 2019. In the text Pope Francis maintains, "politics can become truly an eminent form of charity, "" if it is implemented with a fundamental respect for people's life, liberty and dignity."

The Holy Father enumerates a set of "human virtues that underline good political action" and which can be recognized in "all politicians of any cultural or religious affiliation who wish to work for the good of the human family," which are "justice, fairness, mutual respect, sincerity, honesty, fidelity".

Along with the virtues, Francis also speaks of the "vices of political life", which "weaken the ideal of an authentic democratic life, the shame of public life and endanger social peace." These vices according to him are corruption, misappropriation of public goods, disrespect for human life, denial of lawful protection, xenophobia, racism, refusal to care for the earth exploitation of natural resources for immediate profit, etc.

In the Message, Francis condemns war, the uncontrolled proliferation of weapons and the strategy of fear, noting that "keeping the other under threat means reducing it to the state of object and denying its dignity."

"The political discourses that tend to accuse migrants of all evils and deprive the poor of hope are not sustainable," says the Holy Father, noting that "peace is based on respect for the whole person, regardless of their history, respect for the law and the common good, for the creation entrusted to us and for the moral wealth transmitted by past generations. "

Furthermore, Pope Francis defends that "peace is the fruit of a great political project, based on mutual responsibility and the interdependence of human beings", but also "a challenge that needs to be embraced day by day", of soul and heart, for each human being. (you can read the full message at the Vatican.va website—52nd WORLD DAY OF PEACE)\_

In his message Pope Francis's points out three inseparable dimensions of this inner and communal peace, which we encourage you to put into action in your own lives:

- **peace with oneself:** rejecting intransigence, anger and impatience, and - as St. Francis de Sales advised - cultivating "a little sweetness towards oneself" in order to offer "a little sweetness to others";
- **peace with the other:** the sister, the family member, the friend, the foreigner, the poor, the afflicted ..., daring to listen to the message he/she brings with him/her;
- **peace with creation:** discovering the greatness of the gift of God and the part of responsibility that belongs to each of us, as an inhabitant of this world, citizen and actor of the future.

## Action:

– **Pray** - for the grace to approach all political and social issues from a starting point of faith, love, and a spirit of generosity. You may also try one of the prayer practices at [bit.ly/9WaysPray](http://bit.ly/9WaysPray) to enrich your experience of prayer for peace.

– **Learn** - Civic participation and faithful citizenship require us to understand the political and social issues that affect our brothers and sisters throughout the world. Visit USCCB resources on Catholic Social Teaching and civic engagement to further your knowledge. Read stories of hope to learn how faith communities are answering the call to work for peace and justice.

- **Act** - Join tens of thousands of Catholics to advocate for policies that support justice and peace in our country and those experiencing poverty or conflict around the world. Take action today by visiting [confrontglobalpoverty.org](http://confrontglobalpoverty.org).

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus Christ, who are called the Prince of Peace, who are yourself our peace and reconciliation, who so often said, "Peace to you," grant us peace. Make all men and women witnesses of truth, justice, and brotherly and sisterly love. Banish from their hearts whatever might endanger peace. Enlighten our rulers that they may guarantee and defend the great gift of peace. May all peoples of the earth becomes as brothers and sisters. May longed-for peace blossom forth and reign always over us all. Amen. (St. John XXIII)

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