

Saunders (Vienna) Last Thursday, at this time, I quoted for you from the recent Peace message of Pope John Paul, as food for thought, for reflection and prayer. The end of his message is largely about prayer, and an appeal for prayer for peace. So I thought today to suggest we listen together to another selection of quotes from the concluding part of message, an appeal to political leaders and those who form public opinion, and an appeal to Christians. Pope John Paul quotes his predecessor Pius XI in a Christmas address he gave in 1930: "There cannot be true external peace between individuals and peoples where the spirit of peace does not possess minds and hearts...: minds, in order to recognise and respect the rights of justice; hearts, in order that justice be linked with charity, and that charity may even prevail over justice, for if peace must be the work and fruit of justice ... it belongs rather to charity than to justice. It is a question of renouncing violence, falsehood and hatred, and of becoming (in intentions, feelings and whole conduct) a fraternal being, someone who recognises the dignity and the needs of the other person, and seeks to co-operate with the other in order to create a world of peace. As it is necessary to acquire a new heart, to promote a new mentality of peace, all men & women, whatever their place in society, must can and must assume their share of responsibility in the construction of a true peace, in the circle where they live, in the family, at school, in business, in the city. In our cases, conversations and actions we must feel concerned for all our brothers & sisters who are part of the same human family, even if they live at the other end of the world. But obviously responsibility has various degrees ---- but everyone must contribute to peace, contributing their particular sensitivities (as the young can do) and playing their particular roles. So

women, who are intimately connected to the rhythms of life, can do much to advance the spirit of peace, in their care to ensure the preservation of life and in their conviction that real love is the only power which can make the world livable for everyone. We Christians, disciples of Jesus, caught up in the tensions of our age, must recall that there is no happiness except for the "peacemakers". Let us allow our lives to be transformed: let us re-discover the power of prayer: for, to pray is to be reconciled with Him whom we invoke, whom we meet, who makes us live. To experience prayer is to accept the grace which changes us: the Spirit, united with our spirit, commits us to conform our life with the Word of God. To pray is to enter into the action of God upon history: He, the Sovereign actor of history, has willed to make his people His collaborators. About Christ St Paul has told us: 'He is our Peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility'. We cannot remain resigned to the divisions and confrontations which set us against one another even tho' we share the same faith: we cannot accept, without reacting, the fact that conflicts are dragging on which are destroying the unity of humanity which is called to become one single body. If we celebrate forgiveness (as we do in the Sacrament of Reconciliation), can we fight one another endlessly? Can we remain enemies while we invoke the same living God? If Christ's law of love is our law, shall we remain silent and inert while the wounded world looks to us to join the front ranks of those who are building peace? — Pope John Paul, in his Peace Day message this year: reflect on that in prayer, while we first hear this prayer, from the Agnus Dei of a Mass by Vienna.

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