

LOVE, WITH HELP FROM THE QUEEN OF THE PEACE



"In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love." Lord Tennyson wrote these words more than a hundred years ago, articulating the behavior we of maturity have observed in young adults immediately as the rains abate and the snows melt.

Nearly 2000 years ago Jesus spoke about another type of love that he expected to observe in all people, young and mature, "This I command you: love one another."

Paul repeats these words – "love one another" – and explains why, "because love is of God." Then in direct and blunt fashion Paul articulates the reason for contrary behavior, "Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love."

We are called as Christians to thoughts and acts of love every season, every day and every hour. Love of neighbor becomes inseparable from our selves as we integrate the unflinching practice of love for all into our core being.

In "God is love" (Deus Caritas Est) Pope Benedict XV I wrote that "everything has its origin in God's love, everything is shaped by it, everything is directed towards it. Love is God's greatest gift to humanity, it is his promise and our hope"

Pope Benedict later wrote that "Charity [love] is at the heart of the Church's social doctrine. [It] is the synthesis of the entire Law (cf. Mt 22:36 - 40)." "If we love others with charity, then first of all we are just towards them. Not only is justice not extraneous to charity, not only is it not an alternative or parallel path to charity: justice is inseparable from charity, and intrinsic to it." Charity in truth (Caritas in Veritate)

The effect of our work of charity is peace. Respect for and development of human life requires peace, which is more than the mere absence of war. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2304*) That is, peace is the fruit of our loving one another.

Pope Paul VI observed that if you want peace, work for justice. The effect of our working for justice is peace.

In a world where the unborn, the unfed, and the unloved are ignored, we show our love for one another by working for justice. By working for justice we intend to achieve peace, a universal peace where all life is respected and all life is shown proper dignity by having opportunities to flourish. When we love one another as Jesus commanded then peace is the result of our efforts. When we work for peace we are manifesting our love for one another.

When people of faith work for justice to achieve peace from no other motivation than to love our neighbors we will come to know God. Though our motivation comes from within, we must rely on the intercession of the saints for our continued strength and for the success of our labor: peace.

Pope Paul VI wrote that peace is not solely the work of man but also, and primarily, a gift from God. Peace comes from heaven. We shall obtain peace by praying particularly for the intercession and protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is the Queen of peace. *Mense Maio*

Almost forty years later Pope John Paul II asked us to pray for peace by using a prayer that he wrote, "To Mary, the Light of Hope." As we work for justice and demonstrate our Christian love for all as Jesus commanded, let us commemorate the month of May, Mary's month, and pray to the Queen of Peace for her help:



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Office of Life, Justice, and Peace

To Mary, the Light of Hope

Immaculate Heart of Mary,
help us to conquer the menace of evil, which so easily takes root
in the hearts of the people of today, and whose immeasurable effects already weigh down upon our
modern world
and seem to block the paths toward the future.

From famine and war, deliver us.
From nuclear war, from incalculable self destruction, from every kind of war, deliver us.
From sins against human life from its very beginning, deliver us.
From hatred and from the demeaning of the dignity
of the children of God, deliver us.
From readiness to trample on the commandments of God, deliver us.
From the loss of awareness of good and evil,
deliver us.
From sins against the Holy Spirit, deliver us.

Accept, O Mother of Christ,
this cry laden with the sufferings of all individual human beings, laden with the sufferings
of whole societies.
Help us with the power of the Holy Spirit conquer all sin:
individual sin and the "sin of the world,"
sin in all its manifestations.

Let there be revealed once more in the history of the world the infinite saving power of the redemption:
the power of the merciful love. May it put a stop to evil.
May it transform consciences.
May your Immaculate Heart reveal for all the light of hope.

Amen.

(Readings for the Sixth Sunday of Easter)