

Peace and the Progress of People

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From the beginning the theme of Peace has always been present in the thought of the social doctrine of the church. However it has assumed particular importance, when John XXIII has dedicated to it a specific encyclical *Pacem in Terris* which recently (in 2003) commemorated its 40th anniversary.

Such consideration is at the base of the choice to propose in this article a reading of the theme in question that beginning from this encyclical, has been successively amplified through consecutive proclamation of the pontifical magisterium that in various ways has shaped as resumption and development of the teaching originally contained in the Johanine encyclical.

All succeeding pontiffs were interested in the theme of peace and the progress of the people, framing it time and again in a fuller prospective, although already John XXIII had considered it in a global outlook. Maybe it is convenient to remember that *Pacem in Terris* was born in an historical context of profound international crises: the conflicts in Algeria and in Congo in 1962, the annexation of New Guinea to Indonesia, the struggle in Laos, the new massacre in Algeria, the second crises in Congo, the conflict between the Soviet Union and the allied forces for Berlin, the sparking high tension between the United States and the Soviet Union over the question of Cuba putting World Peace in danger.

The *Pacem in Terris*

Already Pius XII has made the object of his personal concern the theme of peace in his radio message stressing the strict relationship that interlinks peace and social order. However, it was John XXIII who put together in a systematic way his predecessor's idea in the encyclical *Pacem in Terris*.

From the moment of its appearance (11 April 1963), the Johanine encyclical has raised huge interest because of the importance of the question treated. It can be said that it must be considered as the

evangelical proclamation of the conditions of peace.¹ In this encyclical it is evident that Peace is nothing if it is not the global development of every person and every people. It is not the absence of war or the military balance between opposite arrays, but a choral work that involves the entire human family in the realization of a social order based on four cornerstones: truth, justice, solidarity and freedom.

a) From the point of view of truth the encyclical affirms, “all political communities are equal by natural dignity being the same body of which the members are human being themselves.” If “political communities could differ among themselves at the level of culture and civilization or economic development” it does not justify “the fact that one does value unjustly their superiority over others”; instead it constitutes “a motive since they feel more occupied in the work for common luminosity” (PT 33).

b) From the point of view of justice in an international environment, every political community has the responsibility to recognize and respect the rights of other communities. This implies that, “as in the relationship between single human beings to one another, it is not appropriate to pursue one’s interest to the damage of others. The same way in the relationship between political communities to its own, it is not proper to develop oneself compromising and oppressing others” (PT 34).

c) From the point of view of solidarity, internationally it is necessary that political communities would move on a persuasive wave that particular common good “understood and promoted as a component of the common good of the entire human family” (PT 36). This is one of the major point of the newness of the encyclical, since it presupposes the existence of the universal common good. In this context according to the encyclical then, it would deal with particular problems: those of the minority; balance among populations, earth and capital; political exiles and disarmament.

d) From the point of view of freedom, in the end no stronger community has the right to exercise an oppressive action on others or devour species who are weaker or in need of help. In this regard apart from an exceptional case of “humanitarian ingest” (on this John Paul II continuously insists in clamorous situational occasions of human rights violated) it is necessary to empower the other nations, make them sustainable, more self-sufficient, more auto-

¹ Cf. COLOMBO C., *La dottrina del bene comune*, in AA.VV., *Commento all'enciclica "Pacem in Terris"*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 1963, p. 48.

mous through cooperation. One must not in any way put in temptation a type of help which is paternalistic and irresponsible. Nevertheless all communities must offer “to contribute because everyone must develop the sense of responsibility, the spirit of initiative, the duty to be first in the leading role in realizing one’s own way in all fields” (PT 40).

The theme of universal community was not at all new in the tradition of the social thinking of the church. Already the old scholastic put into theory the existence of a natural community between people and a correlative natural Christian right.

Leo XIII and Pius XI, although sensible to the problems of international order, seem to have accepted without much perplexity, the pluralistic system of the national states.

The first Pontiff who recommenced in a significant way the idea of institutions of the global political communities was Pius XII. But it is above all with John XXIII who, in this question, achieved a peak that would not be overtaken by successive Pontiffs.

Among the facts that initiate peoples to global political unification, *Pacem in Terris* places particular emphasis on the following: growing interdependence and types of economical levels between political communities; the consequence and clear insufficiency of this to resolve alone the global problems that become always more complex; the normative of inadequacy; and the political regulation and jurisdiction of international relations.

Gaudium et Spes

In chapter five of the second section of the *Gaudium et Spes* the question of the social world is taken up and well explained: the entire human society “has reached in a moment of decisive finality in its progress of its maturation” (GS 77). Its destiny is tied strictly with the realization of world peace: the progress of people depends on the promotion between human society and peace. In its own time peace depends on the construction of a true “people’s community.”

The global political community urged by *Gaudium et Spes* is to come out of one’s limited confinement and get involved in an activity of a greater level that is essential to one’s growth and one’s future. Such greater activity is an involvement for peace in the world. Obviously peace is not intended as “the simple absence of war” or as “a stable balance of conflicting force” and yet it is “a work of Justice” (Is 32:7). Daring it is “the future order of enterprise in the human society from its founder and that must be actualized by humans who aspire ardently for more perfect justice” (GS 78, 1).

However peace is not only the work of justice, moreover it is also the “work of Love” that surpasses understanding; again, in itself it is the work of justice. *Gaudium et Spes* explains that “peace is also the fruit of love, which goes beyond what simple justice can guarantee” (GS 78, 2).

Such peace, understood as the work of justice and again more as a work of love, has not only its own meaning but also its source in the “peace of Christ radiates from the Father” (GS 78, 2). Such peace is a human good as well as a divine good.

Among the political ways that the states should follow with the aim of constructing world peace, *Gaudium et Spes* signals:

- a courageous and strong entitlement of the rights of the people that bans mass destruction or ethnic minorities;
- more decisive tasks and convictions to the preference of international conventions;
- war only in legitimate cases, after all peaceful means have been exhausted.

Among the ways political communities must however absolutely avoid, *Gaudium et Spes* puts the followings:

- the way to all-out war (GS 80);
- unrestrained arms race (GS 91).

Moreover “building peace requires first of all beginning with injustice, it must avoid the causes of disagreement among people that instigate war” (GS 83). Most of these causes come from a very disproportionate economy and lagging behind with that which would bring the necessary remedy. It is necessary therefore, that national communities must give an order that responds to the need of universal common good, “taking into consideration particularly the numerous regions that still today find themselves in conditions of intolerable misery” (GS 84).

Peace in the world depends, therefore, on a new global order that gives full shape to universal solidarity; in the final analysis the solution to the problem depends of the development of the poorer countries.

According to *Gaudium et Spes* it is not about helping in any way. It is necessary to pass from the perspective of assistance that does not split the scheme of action and the relationship of the old and the new colonialism, to the perspective of solidarity, which has as its precise aim to liberate from need and dependency, raising in a particular way the resources of the people that aspire to emancipation and to integral development.

According to *Gaudium et Spes*, such work of solidarity needs to favor the self-development of the people which implies mutuality between poor countries or those on the way to development and those that are putting at service their human richness, technique, science and economy.

“The developing nations above all tend to seek as the object for progress to express and secure the fullest human expansion of their citizens. It is to be remembered that progress primarily find its origin and its dynamism in the work and ingenuity of the population itself, therefore they must rely not only on external help, but first of all on the full utilization of their own resource, and in this way on the development of their own culture and the tradition” (GS 86, 2).

As in the rich countries it must also proceed to “internal revisions, spiritual and material” (GS 86, 7), indispensable for authentic organization and effective cooperation.

Finally *Gaudium et Spes* seems to propose a radical reform of the global economic order agreeing in the first place to the values of solidarity and social justice without degrading the values of profit, efficient production, scientific development and technique, beyond the economic growth.

Populorum Progressio

The encyclical *Populorum Progressio* was published 26 March 1967. This is the fruit of Vatican Council II, the thinking and the action of Paul VI, considering his numerous journeys in Latin America (1960), in Africa (1962) and in India (1964).

The key writing of this encyclical will be found in its conclusive beat “development and the new name of peace” (PP 87). This affirmation makes clearly understandable how the encyclical is in line with the teaching of John XXIII regarding the theme of peace.

As in *Pacem in Terris*, also in *Populorum Progressio* the background is worldwide, global: “Today the most important fact which everyone must take into consideration,” affirms the encyclical in n. 3, “is the social question that has taken global dimension.” Referring to the previous document of Paul VI, on which it insists profoundly, it is the quality of the development help. Beginning from the qualitative angle of development, the indication and suggestions of the *Populorum Progressio* can be understood. In other words the development desired by the encyclical has some precise characteristic.

The first is a development that is concerned with *the moral, the humanistic and the universal*. The development that is at the center of

global social questions is not only the question of economic, but of development that concerns justice, solidarity, single individuals and the entire world community. It is a human growth by humanity. Coherently with such vision of the social question, Paul VI instead of speaking to political states and societies, prefers to speak to people, poor and rich, in this underscoring that the integral development of people depends on the collaboration and cooperation of all individuals, rich and poor.

In order to be more precise on the quality of development Paul VI, a pontiff sensible to the cultural dimensions of problems as it appears clearly also from the apostolic letter *Octogesima Adveniens* (1997 1), makes explicit reference to the wholeness of humanity (cf. PP 42), thus humanity is open harmonically and hierarchically to the totality of divine values, human and cosmic, in a horizontal eternity and historicity.

The concept of *wholeness* development, which is considered according to the characteristic of the development desired by *Populorum Progressio*, brings two strictly joined aspects; the whole development of man and the development of every man. In the first case it addresses the understanding that the economic growth of man as a people is not the central human problem. True human development brings primarily ethical and spiritual values over economic values. According to Paul VI such values are friendship, love, prayer, contemplation, culture, the spirit of poverty, faith (cf. PP 20-21).

With regard to the development of every man, the encyclical emphasizes that it should not be thought of as one's own growth without being interested about the growth of others, in as much as "in the plan of God, every man is called to develop because every life is a vocation. From the time of birth a human being possesses certain aptitudes and abilities in germinal form, and these qualities are to be cultivated so that they may bear fruit. Developing these traits through formal education and personal effort permits everyone to be directed towards the destiny proposed to him by his creator" (PP 15).

Besides, according to this encyclical, what was said about the individual applies also to every person: each person is first responsible for his own growth, having recognized his proper dependence on other people and the influences positive and negative of the environment on him.

The third characteristic is a development of solidarity and community. There cannot be a full development of oneself or of all people if there is no solidarity with others as the encyclical strongly affirms: "The integral development of man cannot take place without

the solid development of humanity” (PP 43). Such development is therefore a moral obligation for all, individuals and peoples.

The fourth characteristic is a wholeness development, the development of the whole man and of every man, every people, open to the values of the spirit and to God. Apart from God they will be directed against each other.

Practically, for *Populorum Progressio* the realization of human development, total, solid and whole goes from less human to more human. “Less human: material poverty of those who lack the bare necessities of life; moral poverty of those crushed under the weight of their own self-love. More human: being unfettered from misery towards the possession of what is necessary, victory over social fragility, enhancement of knowledge and cultural acquisition. More human further, is the increasing consideration of the rights and dignity of others, being oriented towards the spirit of poverty, cooperation for common good, the desire for peace” (PP 21).

In this regard after having proposed some lines about the internal life of people in view of their global development, *Populorum Progressio* in its second part deals with and offers some practical orientations about the engagement of people at international and transnational levels. It is necessary to note the fundamental morals of the action centered and programmed for all people, that the encyclical proposes for the realization of the development of all of humanity: these are solidarity, social justice and universal charity.

Paul VI is convinced that charity, if it is authentic, goes after those who are in need, bringing about the emergence of the betterment of self, regarding moral resources, potentiality and capacity. This enables people to be available and efficient in the service of one’s country and the entire world. Charity from the ethical and professional point of view, animates technical assistance, commercial relations, the welcome of foreign workers, international collaboration and peace among people.

Finally, for Paul VI universal charity, sustained by solidarity and fraternal love, is the moral strength and project of peoples’ community that requires a corresponding translation into the plan of politics. Solidarity and universal charity are not in antithesis to progress and social development, rather they are going to be thought of and programmed as indispensable conditions of them and with the conviction that without them every progress and every development would be inadequate.

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis

During the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of *Populorum Progressio* John Paul II released *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987). For this encyclical the global social question has become first of all the question of social justice, equal distribution of the means of sustenance among peoples of the earth.

The new face of the social question is then connected according to the *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* with other important aspects. The social question is also a question of *interdependence*: sociological, economical, political and above all moral. Interdependence exists (not only dependence) among personal decisions and the government of rich population, among these attitudes and the misery and the underdevelopment of entire population (cf. SRS 9). In other words the underdevelopment of very poor countries does not become only the internal cause but even, the encyclical does not fail to reveal grave omissions from the part of developing nations themselves who hold political and economic power (cf. SRS 16) but also the egoism of rich countries (cf. SRS 23).

Thus, for *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* if the social question is a question of justice, it is also a question of solidarity, the responsibility and reciprocal relationship among very rich countries and very poor countries. The persistence and often the widening gap between rich countries and poor countries (cf. SRS 14), the strict interdependence that ties them (cf. SRS 17), calls the duty to reciprocal solidarity as the duty not only of individuals but it is also collective and universal (cf. SRS 32).

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis points to the need for world solidarity that comes to declare solidarity as “the way to peace and unity for development.” And it adds “peace in the world is not conceivable unless the responsible parties recognize that *interdependence* demands in itself abandonment of political blocs, the sacrifice of every form of economic, military or political imperialism and reciprocal transformation of distrust into collaborative.” “Peace,” concludes *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, “is the fruit of justice — *opus iustitiae pax*; of course it is more so of solidarity: *opus solidaritatis pax*” (SRS 39). If already many times in *Populorum Progressio* Paul VI has appealed to solidarity, with the *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* of John Paul II it become a proponent. In this regard *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* does not keep silent about the lack of justice, solidarity and cooperation in different systems and in international, economic, financial, monetary and political structures (cf. SRS 43).

In the context of a solidarity crisis at the world level, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* attempts to underline the possibility of *new global*

development and new solidarity. In this view solidarity is first of all defined in relation to universal common good, in the framework of social questions at a global and planetary level. In particular, solidarity is not to be confused with charitable aid or with a given superfluous benefit, but may also demand giving out of one's necessities (cf. SRS 31). In any case it is not to be understood only as equal distribution of national income but as a firm determination and engagement for common good, a must for the good of all and each individual because in truth we are all responsible for all (cf. SRS 38).

In this regard John Paul writes "the obligation to be engaged for the development of people is not only the duty of an individual or still less an individualistic one, as if it were possible to implement it with isolated efforts of everyone. This is an obligation by all and by everyone, by the society and by nations, particularly by the Catholic church and by other churches and ecclesial communities" (SRS 32).

At the international level solidarity must be explained as the practical translation of the principle that goods of creation are destined for all, "overcoming every form of imperialism and proposals to conserve one's proper hegemony, nations very strong and very gifted must feel morally responsible for others, until a true international system is built, that relies on fundamentals of equality for all people and on the necessary respect of their legitimate difference. Countries economically weak or remaining at subsistence level, with the help of other people and international communities, must be placed in a position to themselves make a contribution to the common good with their treasures of humanity and culture which otherwise would be lost forever" (SRS 39).

In the *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, always in global perspective, John Paul II affirms also the preferential option for the poor as a point of reference for the praxis of the church and the faithful, but also as a demand of wisdom and authenticity for national and international politics. And thus, at almost hundred years *Rerum Novarum*, the social doctrine of the church, proposed again attention to the very poor as a distinctive sign of the position of human civilization. The poor have changed, they are no longer as in the time of Leo XIII. Now there are poor who are produced and reproduced by post-industrial societies. They are not organized (as at the end of XIX C) therefore they are not strong and powerful. For this reason, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* maintains, the old ideas are not going to be forgotten, but are going to be realized in a new form, in new situations in which poverty instead of disappearing, will be produced under other guises.

Centesimus Annus

From a complex view, the central theme of *Centesimus Annus* seems to be, as in *Populorum Progressio* and *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, the development of people but seen from another angle. In particular the development of people is considered from the following points of view: eastern countries, countries left behind and developing countries, the universal destination of goods, unequal distribution of goods among countries and within rich and poor countries, free market, free capitalism, entrepreneurship, the ideology of consumerism, ecological questions, democracy as the state right and common life, the state crises of wealth, the culture of the nations and the international community.

In line with his predecessors John Paul II underlines that, to resolve the problem of the poorer countries, as well as in those that are richer in which old and new poverty are manifested, the logic of equivalent exchange which drives free markets is not enough. The logic of gratitude and generosity must be integrated with the logic of solidarity and social justice.

The theme of peace has not been dealt with expressly. Yet it is a transversal theme, present as a background in all the chapters, as when in the first part of the encyclical, quoting *Rerum Novarum* of Leo XII in which its hundredth year of publication was commemorated, John Paul II reminds us that “peace is built on the foundation of justice” and the essential content of the Leonian encyclical was “to proclaim the fundamental conditions for justice in the social and economic situation of the time” (CA 5).

In the same way in the second part of the encyclical, dedicated to an historical reflection of a hundred years that separated *Rerum Novarum* from *Centesimus Annus*, confirms that “true peace will never be the result of military victory, but it implies overcoming the cause of war and the authentic reconciliation between people. For many years, however, there has been in Europe and in the world a situation of no war rather than authentic peace” (CA 18).

To the question of peace John Paul II emphasizes, in the third chapter of *Centesimus Annus*, dedicated to a writing of a period of change followed by the events of the 1989, such events have placed in full evidence “the reality of the interdependence of people, nonetheless the fact that human labor by its nature is meant to unite people, not to divide them. Peace and prosperity in fact are goods that belong to all human kind. It is not possible to enjoy them correctly and permanently if they are achieved and maintained at the cost of other people and nations, by violating their rights or excluding them from the sources of well-being” (CA 27). However,

according to the *Centesimus Annus* “it is right that the difficulties that existed in formerly communist countries should be aided by solid effort of other nations” it is because “the help of other countries, above all European countries which have were part of that history and which bear responsibility for it, represents a debt in justice. But it relates also to the interest and the general good of Europe as a whole, since Europe cannot live in peace, if various conflicts which have arisen as a consequence of the past, will return more acutely because of a situation of economic disorder, spiritual dissatisfaction and desperation” (CA 28).

In the fourth chapter as well, dedicated to the principles of private property and universal destination of goods, there is an emphasize on the theme of peace. It is found in the final part, in which it says private property by itself is legitimate, and yet becomes illegitimate if it serves to hamper the work of others, in as much as it is the right of all and “a society in which this right is systematically denied, in which economic policies do not allow workers to reach satisfactory levels of employment, cannot be justified from an ethical point of view nor can that society attain social peace” (CA 43). In this passage John Paul II makes reference to one of his encyclical of ten years before expressively dedicated to the theme of labor: *Laborem Exercens* of 1981 (in particular to n. 18).

The fifth chapter of the encyclical is dedicated to the theme of the role of the state and the culture of the nations. The theme of peace is reviewed in a cultural perspective in which the church plays an important role since “the first and most important work is done in the *heart of a man*, and the way in which he is involved in building his future depends on the understanding he has of himself and his own destiny. It is on this level that the *specific and decisive contribution of the church in favor of true culture* is to be found. The Church promotes the aspects of human behavior that favor the true culture of peace as opposed to models in which the individual is lost in the crowd, and which do not recognize the role of his initiative and freedom and place his greatness in the art of conflict and war” (CA 51).

The theme of peace returns also at the last chapter of the encyclical. Here John Paul II suggests again a question of method rather than of content: remembering the fact that John XXIII had directed his encyclical on peace “to all people of good will,” John Paul II maintains that such a perspective must construct a framework between those who confront the mandate to construct peace. In particular he affirms that “religions today and tomorrow will have a preeminent role in the preservation of peace and in the construction of a society worthy of man” (CA 60).

The World Day of Peace

The developmental writing of the documents of the social doctrine of the church on the theme of peace brought us to trace that which we can define as the master road, the magisterium the church proposes to people of good will to really contribute to peace and to the development of people.

One fundamental step of this walk is certainly n. 78 of *Gaudium et Spes*, which offers elements of a true and proper theology of peace: it is defined as “the work of justice,” that is, the fruit of an enterprise from God to society, that men are called to recognize and promote; it is also the “gift of the risen Christ” of which the earthly peace is the icon.

It deals with a concept expressed by the council fathers guarding the teaching of the preceding pontiffs. In particular, in *Pacem in Terris* of John XXIII, peace is strictly connected with an established order from God and will be constructed in interpersonal relationship as in those between political communities, on the pillars of truth, justice, love and freedom.

Another significant step is the strict relationship that Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio* instituted between the theme of peace and that of development, until it achieves the affirmation that “development is the new name of peace” (cf. 76-87).

John Paul II, resuming and developing the teaching of his predecessors, brought into light the indissoluble connection between peace and solidarity, that is presented as “solidarity is the way to peace and at the same time to development” (cf. SRS 39).

If this is the main road, it comes extensively enriched and articulated in the annual messages of the world day of peace, which was initiated by Paul VI in 1968. It deals with the messages that from time to time strengthen the duty and responsibility of different persons (government, men and women laborers, economic professionals, mass media, parents, etc.) in the building of peace.

In these, we can first of all see what peace is not: it is not pacifism or naïvetè (cf. GMP 1968); it is not only truce or simple armistice, external order founded on violence or a transitory equilibrium of competitive forces (cf. GMP 1973); it is not an equilibrium between divergent material interests (cf. GMP 1982). Much more telling is positively stating rather what peace is: the primary good (cf. GMP 1968) ideal humanity and universal desire of all people (cf. GMP 1974; 1987), a fundamental demand rooted in the heart of man (cf. GMP 2000), conditions and synthesis of human co-habitation (cf. GMP 1973), perfect expression of civilization (cf. GMP 1977), the supreme finality of ethics and moral necessity (cf. GMP 1974).

Particularly it is a gift of God offered to humans (cf. GMP 1978); since it comes from God it is Light that guarantees life “the fruit of justice” and helps all people to realize it. And yet it is also a gift entrusted to all people to be placed at the summit of their lives, their hopes and their dreams.

About peace, as it emerges from pontifical messages of January 1st of every year, one finds some common characteristics. Peace is necessary (cf. GMP 1971; 1974): “It polarizes the human aspiration, the efforts, the hope. It has a reasonable end; and as such it is at the base and it is the goal of our activities, whether it is individual or collective” (GMP 1972). It is a must: it is a duty in the present time, it is a universal duty and an unbreakable duty (cf. GMP 1069; 1973; 1974; 1977). Peace needs to be desired, it needs to be loved, it needs to be productive. It is a moral result, springing from a free and generous spirit (cf. GMP 1969).

The magisterium of the church underlines also the precariousness and dynamism of peace. In fact it is “still passive, but dynamic, active and progressive in accordance with justice in whose demands of equal rights of all people resides new and better expressions of peace” (GMP 1973); it is a continuous victory, a good to be realized with renewed and unremitting effort (cf. GMP 1981); it is never neither complete nor sure and needs sustenance and conditions that may render it always more stable and durable (cf. GMP 1977). The religious nature of peace is to be underlined: the aspiration for peace is present in all religions, so much that “a religious life if authentically lived can produce the fruit of peace and fraternity, because it is in the nature of religion to promote a firm bond with divinity and to favor an ever more solid relationship among men” (GMP 1992).

Among the fundamentals of peace, emphasis is placed by the magisterium on the innate dignity of the person, from which springs inviolable rights and respective duties (cf. GMP 1974; 1988). The dignity of a person is accompanied, like other fundamentals of peace, with respect for the conscience of every person (cf. GMP 1991) and justice intended as true wisdom and the sense of a sincere person (cf. GMP 1972). Again more radically, the foundation of peace will be found in the truth, which “is the driving power of peace because it reveals and brings about the unity of man with God, with himself and with others” (cf. GMP 1980).

The annual pontifical messages of the world day of peace insist above all in describing the *conditions* of peace. Among these there is an adequate educational work: it is necessary to educate oneself about peace because it begins in the heart and needs first to know it, to know it again, to desire it and to love it, to be able to explain it in

real life (cf. GMP 1970). One important condition for peace is also to work and maneuver for justice (cf. GMP 1972), “justice walks with peace and stays with it in dynamic and constant relationship...: When it is threatened, both waver, when justice is offended, peace is also put at risk” (cf. GMP 1998). At this level one understands the importance of human rights in their universality: here lies the secret of true peace (cf. GMP 1999), because “where there is no respect, defense, the promotion of human rights... there cannot be true peace (cf. GMP 1969). This also causes the workers to defeat poverty, which instead of being an offense to human dignity, becomes a threat to peace” (cf. GMP 1993).

In this same direction, it is necessary to see solidarity and development as keys for peace: a solidarity that demands the promotion of equal dignity for all and everyone. This causes a rethinking about economy and a reconsideration of models that inspire the choice of development, giving ample space to a new culture of solidarity (cf. GMP 2000) and an engagement in the globalization of solidarity (cf. GMP 1998; 1999).

However to work for justice is not still enough: it is necessary also to bind among people justice and forgiveness, in the conviction that “the capacity of forgiveness stays at the base of every project of a future society that is more just and solid” (cf. GMP 2002); “true peace moreover is the fruit of justice... but since human justice is always fragile and imperfect limited by personal and group egoism, it must then be exercised, and in a certain sense completed, with forgiveness that cures the wound and establish profoundly human relations that were disturbed” and that “forgiveness does not in any way oppose justice but ‘rather aims at the fullness of justice that moves to the tranquility of order’” (ibidem).

Another important condition of peace is respect for freedom: true freedom is jointly the root and the fruit of peace; respect for the freedom of people and nations is so important for peace that without it peace escapes man (cf. GMP 1981).

Defense of life is another of the conditions that build up peace. The recognition of the primacy of life opens the way for authentic peace, in the awareness that life is the apex of peace and any crime against life, beginning with that against unborn life, is an attempt against peace (GMP 1977; 1978; 2001). One must not leave out cultivating dialogue that “assumes the search for all that is true, good and just for every person, for every group and every society... it is a search for what is and which remains common to people, even within tensions, opposition and conflict... it is the search for good with peaceful methods; it is a persistent determination to use all possible methods of negotiations, mediations, arbitration to act in

such a way that the factors which bring people together will be victorious over the factors of division and hate” (GMP 1983).

The building up of peace requires also respect of minorities through the development of a culture that is based on diversity and respect for others, with the conviction that peace “demands a constructive development of what distinguishes us as individuals and peoples, and what constitutes our identity” and “demands from all social groups, whether constituted as State or not, readiness to contribute to the building up of a peaceful world” (GMP 1989).

Among the conditions of peace, also is the responsibility to take care of all that is created, education in ecological responsibility and facing adequately the environmental question, intended as a moral question in the awareness that “world peace is threatened... also from a lack of due respect for nature, a disorderly use of its resources and from deteriorating progress of the quality of life” (GMP 1990).

Besides, at the foundation of the engagement for peace, there is the rediscovery of the unique vocation of all humanity to be a single family “in which the dignity and the rights of individuals, whatever their status, race or religion, are accepted as prior and superior to any kind of difference or distinction” (GMP 2000). One must not fail to assure the children a future of peace by helping them to grow in an environment of authentic peace, fighting all that is making use of them or not respecting them, creating conditions that they may receive as their heritage from the adults a world more united and solid (GMP 1966). One at the end must not fail to give space to prayer for peace: prayer in fact “instills courage and gives support to anyone who loves and wants to promote peace” and “while open to meet with highest, it avails also a meeting with our neighbor, helping to establish it, without any discrimination, with respect, understanding, esteem and love” (GMP 1992) as such “remains at the heart of an effort to build up a peace in harmony, in justice and in freedom” (GMP 2002).

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Abbreviations

- PT *Pacem in Terris* (1963)
- GS *Gaudium et Spes* (1965)
- PP *Populorum Progressio* (1967)
- SRS *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987)
- CA *Centesimus Annus* (1991)
- GMP *Giornata mondiale della pace* (followed by the year to which it refers)

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