
Message from Br. Álvaro Rodríguez Echeverría, Superior General of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

PEACE IS POSSIBLE

Once again the International Young Lasallians Movement invites us to reflect, pray and commit ourselves to the cause of Peace. This year we will celebrate the event on September 21st. The theme chosen is truly inspiring: Peace is Possible. Yes, peace is possible if each one of us gets involved in seeking it out and in creating fraternal relationships. It is possible when we place persons, all persons, above things. It is possible if we make our own God's plan for humankind.

This year there is another reason for being invited to make this commitment. We are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Encyclical Pacem in Terris by John XXIII, the first encyclical that was written not only for Catholics or believers but also for all people of good will. It was published on April 11, 1963. At a time in history when the world was being torn apart by tensions between capitalists and the Soviet bloc with the construction of the Berlin Wall and the Cuban missile crisis, the Pope opted for peace by inviting us to a peace that is not limited to peaceful coexistence but one that should be built day after day starting from the four core values: truth, justice, charity and freedom, while always taking into account human rights.

As Young Lasallians when we speak about possible peace we have to think about children and the world that they are going to inherit. It we want peace to be possible we need to begin through them. Gandhi said: If we want to achieve true peace in this world and if we want to wage a true war against war, we must start with the children. If they grow up united in their natural innocence we will no longer have to fight but we will move from love to love and from peace to peace.
It is a very sad thing to know that since the beginning of the war in Syria more than 6,500 children have died because of it, according to data from the United Nations. It is also very sad to know that today in the world there are about 300,000 child soldiers according to a report from Amnesty International. These children are used as loaders, spies, messengers, bodyguards, sex slaves, human mine detectors...

It is important to know and to make known this fact, to pray for these children and, as far as our possibilities allow, to be part of associations that fight against this plight, which is an embarrassment for humankind. I remember admiring a Lasallian work in Mannar, Sri Lanka, where the Brothers have a ministry in favor of children who were enlisted in the war recently ended. Certainly we can all do something, beginning in our own local area. Responding as Lasallians to the needs of the most vulnerable was one of the propositions made to us by the International Assembly for the Lasallian Educational Mission which was held this past May.

Peace is possible, yet if we look at the current situation, it seems to be a dream and a utopia. But we need to trust in the ability we all have to build a more just world that is inspired in Gospel values in dialogue with all religions and with men and women of good will.

Hopefully, peace will be a reality and hopefully we will make possible this beautiful view of our future:

*May the day come when some words will be difficult for children to understand.*  
The children of India will ask: What is hunger?  
The children of Alabama will ask: What is racial segregation?  
The children of Hiroshima will ask: What is an atomic bomb?  
And all kids in all the schools will ask: What is war?  
And you will have to say to them: They are the names of things that have fallen into disuse such as stagecoaches, galleys or slavery. These words no longer mean anything and for that reason we have removed them from the dictionary. (Jean Debruyne)

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Superior General