

PEACE, JUSTICE AND FORGIVENESS

John Paul Speaks

*Notable quotations from Pope John Paul II and
official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church*

PEACE, JUSTICE, AND FORGIVENESS

The pillars of true peace are justice and that form of love which is forgiveness. True peace ... is the fruit of justice, that moral virtue and legal guarantee which ensures full respect for rights and responsibilities, and the just distribution of benefits and burdens.

FORGIVENESS HEALS

*Because human justice is always fragile and imperfect, subject as it is to the limitations and egoism of individuals and groups, it must include and be ... completed by the *forgiveness which heals and rebuilds troubled human relations from their foundations.**

FORGIVENESS IS THE FULLNESS OF JUSTICE

Forgiveness is in no way opposed to justice, as if to forgive meant to overlook the need to right the wrong done. It is ... the fullness of justice, leading to that tranquility of order which is much more than a fragile and temporary cessation of hostilities, involving as it does the deepest healing of the wounds which fester in human hearts. Justice and forgiveness are both essential to such healing.

FORGIVENESS IS SUPERNATURAL

Forgiveness is above all a personal choice, a decision of the heart to go against the natural instinct to pay back evil with evil. The measure of such a decision is the love of God Who draws us to Himself in spite of our sin.

FORGIVENESS AND THE FUTURE

The ability to forgive lies at the very basis of a future society marked by justice and solidarity.

THE PARADOX OF FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is not a proposal that can be immediately understood or easily accepted; in many ways it is a paradoxical message. Forgiveness in fact always involves an *apparent* short-term loss for a *real* long-term gain. Violence is the exact opposite; opting as it does for an apparent short-term gain, it involves a real and permanent loss.

ARE YOU STRONG ENOUGH TO FORGIVE?

Forgiveness may seem like weakness, but it demands great spiritual strength and moral courage, both in granting it and in accepting it. It may seem in some way to diminish us, but in fact it leads us to a fuller and richer humanity, more radiant with the splendor of the Gospel.

(Source: Message for World Day of Peace, issued December 8, 2001)

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