

A World desperately in need of Peace and Hope



Thomas Gass, Guest Speaker
JPIC International Meeting
Manila, The Philippines, November 2018

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The path that brought me here..

- *A child who grew in his faith in Jesus Christ*
- *A compassion for people*
- *A historic burden*
- *God's grace and patience, and much Love from others..*
- *One vocation ... Through my private life and my professional life*
- *Finding energy and inspiration in my faith..*
- *Realized that humanity can at times find those same values*

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I. We have what the world needs

II. Our vocation to be salt and light

III. The church and the world - an ambiguous relationship

IV. An opportunity to work together

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We have what the world needs..

*“The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a **concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change.** The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home.” Laudato si’ #13*

*“Yet we are called to be instruments of God our Father, so that our planet might be what he desired when he created it and correspond with **his plan for peace, beauty and fullness.** “
*Laudato si’ #53**

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We have what the world needs..

“Every warrior’s boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace**.*

Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.”

Isaiah 9:5-7 (The Bible - NIV)

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We have what the world needs..

“ If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. **Love** does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, **always hopes**, always perseveres.”*

1 Corinthians 13 (The Bible - NIV)

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Our vocation is to be salt and light to the earth

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ...”

Matthew 5:13-16 (The Bible - NIV)



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***Our vocation is to be salt and light to the earth..
expressed in the four calls of the General
Chapter 2016***

- I. To reach **new frontiers**: To go out, to “set sail” as a Society and go with others to new geographic and existential peripheries.
- II. To live **more humanly**: In the radical style of Jesus of Nazareth!
- III. To **create silence**: To deepen our interior life.
- IV. To **be and to act as one Body**: To revitalize our unity in diversity.



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In order to fulfill Jesus' vocation (and live up to the Four Calls..)

We need to understand how the “world functions”

Allow the Holy Spirit to give us his perspective of “hope” - 1 Cor 13: .. Love always hopes!

We need to understand what it means to be in the world and not of the world.. (ref. John 18:36, “My kingdom is not of this world”)

Which are the circumstances in which God calls us to be “separate” from the world and which are the circumstances in which we can and should “work with” the world.

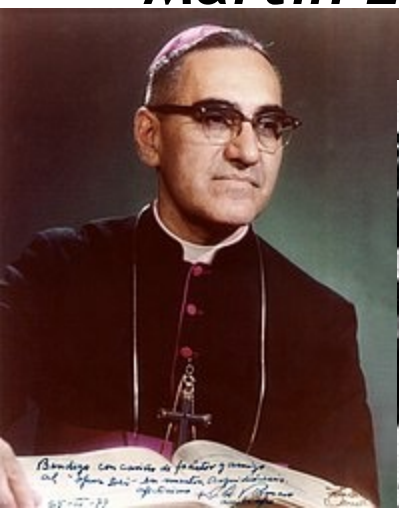


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The church and the world - an ambiguous relationship

The church has gotten involved in wars, revolutions, has supported dictators, has sided with the elite... at times people of faith have given their ultimate in resisting the power of the day (Óscar Romero y Galdámez, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King and many others)



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An opportunity to work together

On the other hand, there are moments in history, when humanity / the international community converges around the values that are fundamental for peace and hope - values that are very close to those promoted by Jesus Christ.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was just one of these moments...

So was the Adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development...



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The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights...

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status...

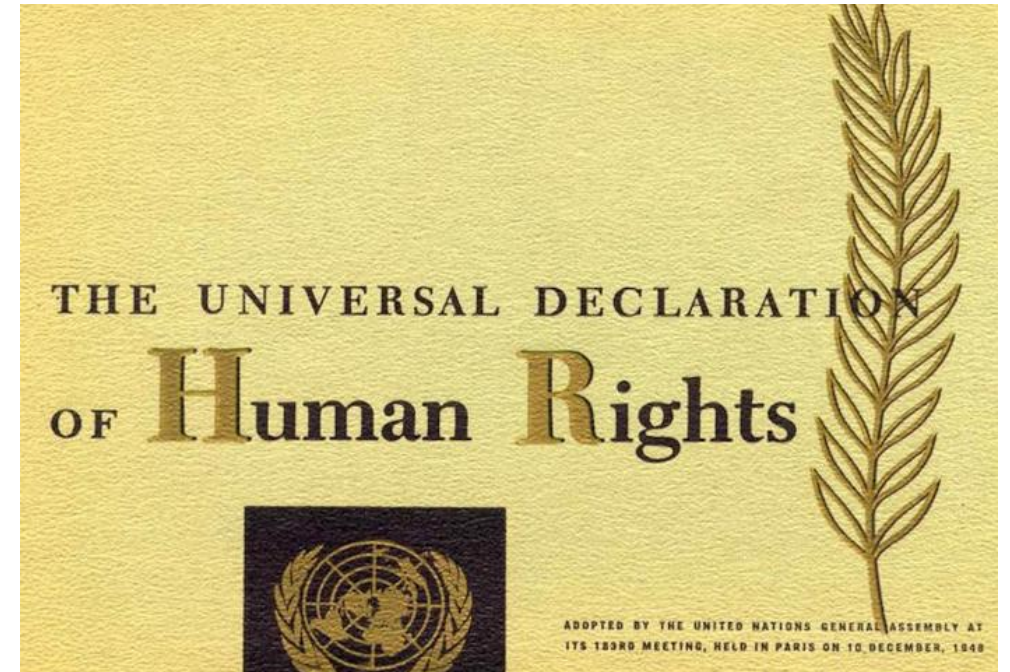
Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person...

Article 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms...

...



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The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>



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The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (...)

Target 1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day

Target 3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes

Target 5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws

Target 10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies

Target 16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration



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What does this mean for us Christians? What does this mean for a community such as the Society of the Sacred Heart?

The values coincide..

This international movement can be leveraged and reinforced

The Community can invest its very relevant experience into the global effort

You can bring to bare your Spirit to this global effort

Hope and Peace is desperately needed..

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But we can also draw lessons and learn from this global effort..

Here are my personal conclusions from the Agenda 2030

I want to see the world in a more connected way

I want to help make the vulnerable more visible

I want to turn the accountability paradigm...

I want to make myself dispensable ...

I want to check that I am strengthening the relationship between duty bearers and rights holders

I want to partner with others beyond my narrow circle of faith..

I want to step out of my comfort zone...

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A prayer for our earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace. “

Laudato si’, #246

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