

# The Holy Father's World Peace Day Message

From NC News reports  
The following was excerpted from the Pope John Paul II's message for World Day of Peace, Jan. 1. The text is entitled: "Peace is a Value With No Frontiers: North-South, East-West: Only One Peace."

## 1. Peace as a universal value

At the beginning of the new year, taking my inspiration from Christ, the Prince of peace, I renew my commitment and that of the whole Catholic Church to the cause of peace.

At the same time, I extend to every individual and to all peoples of the Earth my earnest greeting and my good wishes: Peace to all of you. Peace to all hearts.

Peace is a value of such importance that it must be proclaimed anew and promoted by all. There is no human being who does not benefit from peace ... All the nations of the world can fully realize their interlinked destinies only if, together, they pursue peace as a universal value.

On the occasion of this 19th World Day of Peace, in the International Year of Peace proclaimed by the United Nations, I offer to everyone as a message of hope my profound conviction: Peace is a value with no frontiers. It is a value that responds to the hopes and aspirations of all people and all nations, of young and old, and of all men and women of good will. This is what I proclaim to everyone, and especially to the leaders of the world.

The question of peace as a universal value needs to be faced with extreme intellectual honesty, sincerity of spirit and an acute sense of responsibility to oneself and to the nations of the Earth. I would ask those responsible for political decisions affecting the relationships between North and South, between East and West, to be convinced that there can be only one peace. Those upon whom the future of the world depends — regardless of their political philosophy, economic system or religious commitment — are all called to help construct a single peace on the basis of social justice and the dignity and rights of every human person.

This task requires a radical openness to all humanity and a conviction of the interrelatedness of all the nations of the world. This interrelatedness is expressed in an interdependence that can prove either profoundly advantageous or profoundly destructive. Hence, worldwide solidarity and cooperation constitute ethical imperatives that appeal to the consciences of individuals and to the responsibilities of all nations. And it is in this context of ethical imperatives that I address the whole world for Jan. 1, 1986, proclaiming the universal value of peace.

## 2. Threats to peace

In putting forward this vision of peace at the dawn of a new year, we are deeply aware that in the present situation peace is also a value that rests on foundations that are very fragile. At first glance, our goal to make peace an absolute imperative may seem to be Utopian, since our world gives such ample evidence of excessive self-interest in the context of opposed political, ideological and economic groups. Caught in the grip of these systems, leaders and various groups are led to pursue their particular aims and their ambitions of power, progress and wealth, without taking sufficiently into account the necessity and duty of international solidarity and cooperation for the benefit of the common good of all peoples who make up the human family.

In this situation, blocs are formed and maintained. These blocs divide and oppose peoples, groups and individuals, making peace precarious and setting up grave obstacles to development. Positions harden, and the excessive desire to maintain one's advantage or to increase one's share often becomes the overriding rationale for action. This leads to exploitation of others, and the spiral grows toward a polarization that feeds on the fruits of self-interest and the increasing mistrust of others. In such a situation, it is the small and the weak, the poor and the voiceless who suffer most.

The spectre of nuclear weapons originating in the opposition of East and West, remains the most dramatic and compelling example of this. Nuclear weapons are so powerful in their destructive capacities and nuclear strategies so inclusive in their designs, that the popular imagination is often paralyzed by fear.

The only way to respond to this legitimate fear of ... nuclear destruction is progress in

negotiation for the reduction of nuclear weapons and for mutually agreed-upon measures that will lessen the likelihood of nuclear warfare. I would ask the nuclear powers once again to reflect on their very grave moral and political responsibility in this matter. It is an obligation that some have also juridically accepted in international agreements; for all it is an obligation by reason of a basic co-responsibility for peace and development.

But the threat of nuclear weapons is not the only way that conflict is made permanent and increased. The increasing sale and

purchase of arms — conventional but very sophisticated — is causing dire results. While the major powers have avoided direct conflict, their rivalries have often been acted out in other parts of the world. Local problems and regional differences are aggravated and perpetuated through armaments supplied by wealthier countries and by the ideologizing of local conflicts by powers that seek regional advantage by exploiting the condition of the poor and defenseless.

Between the countries that form the "North bloc" and those of the "South bloc" there is a social and economic abyss that



separates rich from poor ... Added to this is the unpredictable and fluctuating financial situation with its direct impact on countries that have large debts and are struggling to achieve some positive development.

In this situation, peace as a universal value is in great danger. Even if there is no actual armed conflict as such, where injustice exists, it is, in fact, a cause and potential factor of conflict. In any case, a situation of peace in the full sense of its value cannot coexist with injustice. Peace cannot be reduced to the mere absence of conflict; it is the tranquility and completeness of order ... As a value, peace is continually endangered by vested interests, by diverging and opposing interpretations, and even by clever manipulations for the service of ideologies and political systems that have domination as their ultimate aim.

## 3. Overcoming the current situation

There are those who claim the present situation is natural and inevitable. Relations between individuals and between states are said to be characterized by permanent conflict. This doctrinal and political outlook is translated into a model of society and a system of international relations dominated by competition and antagonism, in which the strongest prevails. Peace born from such an outlook can only be an "arrangement," suggested by the principle of Realpolitik. As an "arrangement," it seeks not so much to resolve tensions through justice and equity as to manage differences and conflicts in order to maintain a kind of balance that will preserve whatever is in the interests of the dominating party. It is clear that "peace" built and maintained on social injustices and ideological conflict will never become a true peace for the world.

To those who think that blocs are inevitable, we answer that it is possible, indeed necessary, to set up new types of society and of international relations that will ensure justice and peace on stable and universal foundations. Indeed, a healthy realism suggests that such types cannot be simply imposed from above or from outside, or effected only by methods and techniques... It is above all the hearts and the attitudes of people that must be changed, and this needs a renewal, a conversion of individuals... A new international system ... is the path humanity must take if it is to enter into an age of universal peace and integral development.

## 4. The path of solidarity and dialogue

Any new international system capable of overcoming the logic of blocs and opposing forces must be based on the personal commitment of everyone to make the basic and primary needs of humanity the first imperative of international policy. Today, countless human beings in all parts of the world have acquired a vivid sense of their fundamental equality, their human dignity and their inalienable rights. At the same time, there is a growing awareness that humanity has a profound unity of interests, vocation and destiny, and that all peoples, in the variety and richness of their different national characteristics, are called to form a single family.

It is important to note that an awareness is gaining ground ... that reconciliation, justice and peace between individuals and between nations ... are not merely a noble appeal meant for a few idealists, but are a condition for survival of life itself. Consequently, the establishment of an order based on justice and peace is vitally needed today, as a clear moral imperative valid for all people and regimes, above ideologies and systems.

The right path to a world community in which justice and peace will reign without frontiers ... is the path of solidarity, dialogue and universal brotherhood. This is the only path possible. Political, economic, social and cultural relations and systems must be imbued with the values of solidarity and dialogue which, in turn, require an institutional dimension in the form of special

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# Disciples of Christ must ... God's promise

By Bishop Matthew H. Cleary

Peace is something built up day after day, in the pursuit of an order intended by God, which implies a more perfect form of justice among men and women." So wrote Pope

Paul VI in 1967.

On the occasion of January 1, 1986, which John Paul II has designated World Day of Peace, I invite the people of the Church of Rochester to reflect with me on our local peacemaking efforts, and to ask how we might continue them in this new year. It is particularly appropriate that we do this in 1986, the United Nations' "International Year of Peace."

John Paul II has selected as the theme for this day: "Peace is a value with no frontiers." The day's accompanying slogan, "North-South, East-West: Only One Peace," incorporates our basic Catholic understanding of true peace. The slogan connotes the essential integration of justice and peace, and indicates that there can be no peace between the superpowers as long as the vast gulf of injustice separates the rich countries of the northern hemisphere from the poor nations of the south. So as we reflect on our peace making, we must be ever conscious of the tie that binds justice and peace together.

In looking back on diocesan peacemaking efforts in 1985, I remember the Mass for Peace, celebrated on August 9 to commemorate the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On that Friday evening, more than 350 people from all parts of the diocese gathered at St. Francis De Sales Church in Geneva to pray for the victims of those bombings and to renew themselves to working for a world in which such destructive power will never again be unleashed.

More than 20 parishes and representatives to participate in the opening procession for this special liturgy. They came bearing reports of how each parish had committed itself to peace making. The following examples give the flavor of the way parishes in our diocese have incorporated peace making into their parish lives through prayer, education and action.

• St. John's, Clyde, and St. Patrick's, Savannah, reported the integration of peace education into their religious education curriculum, the use of the parish bulletin to print excerpts from the "Challenge of Peace," and ecumenical collaboration on peace efforts.

• St. Peter and Paul, Rochester, offered special prayer, fasting and sacrifice during the week of August 6-9 and provided adult education on peace and justice throughout 1985. The parish also runs a kitchen, a clothes closet, and a day-care center as an outreach directed toward building justice in its neighborhood.

• St. Mary's and Sacred Heart parishes, Auburn, both reported reciting prayers for the victims.

• Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Peter and Paul of Rochester reported participating actively in the World Day of Peace and fasting for peace.

These parishes are just a few of the many ways in which our diocese is responding to the Holy Father's peace making message. The Holy Father's message, "Peace is a value with no frontiers," made concrete a key message of the

disciples of Christ. The Holy Father's message is a challenge to us to be peacemakers and to transform our lives.

• In Tioga County, local church leadership sponsored a conference to consider questions related to the economy and peace. The influence of military industry on peacemaking was a central concern, and a group of conference participants will carry on this work in 1986.

• A group in St. Paul's Parish, Webster, has begun a second round of discussions on our call to be peacemakers and the way that this call challenges us to transform our lives.

• The Finger Lakes Office of Social Ministry has continued to remind us of the probable presence of nuclear weapons within our diocese. The office's continued participation in the Finger Lakes Peace Alliance focuses our attention on the Soviet Army Depot's storage of these arms, and consistently reminds us of the danger that peace making.

In response to all of these activities, I recognize that as a diocese, we are well on the way toward being a diocese of peace makers. I am also reminded of Pope John Paul II's words to the people of Great Britain: "Let us remember that peace must be constructed patiently and with unrelenting faith. It is not something that can be imposed from above or from outside, or effected only by methods and techniques... It is above all the hearts and the attitudes of people that must be changed, and this needs a renewal, a conversion of individuals... A new international system ... is the path humanity must take if it is to enter into an age of universal peace and integral development."

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I encourage you to continue to find ways to respond to the Holy Father's peace making, and I invite you to consider the following:

• Participation in the Lenten discussion series on the Catechism's Ethic of Life, to be offered in parishes by the division of Social Ministry and Education.

• Making a commitment to become familiar with the pastoral letter "Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy" and to advocate for economic justice.

• Making a commitment to pray for peace, and to fast and abstain from meat on Fridays.

• An active quest for peace in your daily lives.

• A willingness to encourage involvement by your parish social ministry committee in peace activities and in local justice issues.

• Remaining active in efforts to influence government policies on peace.

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